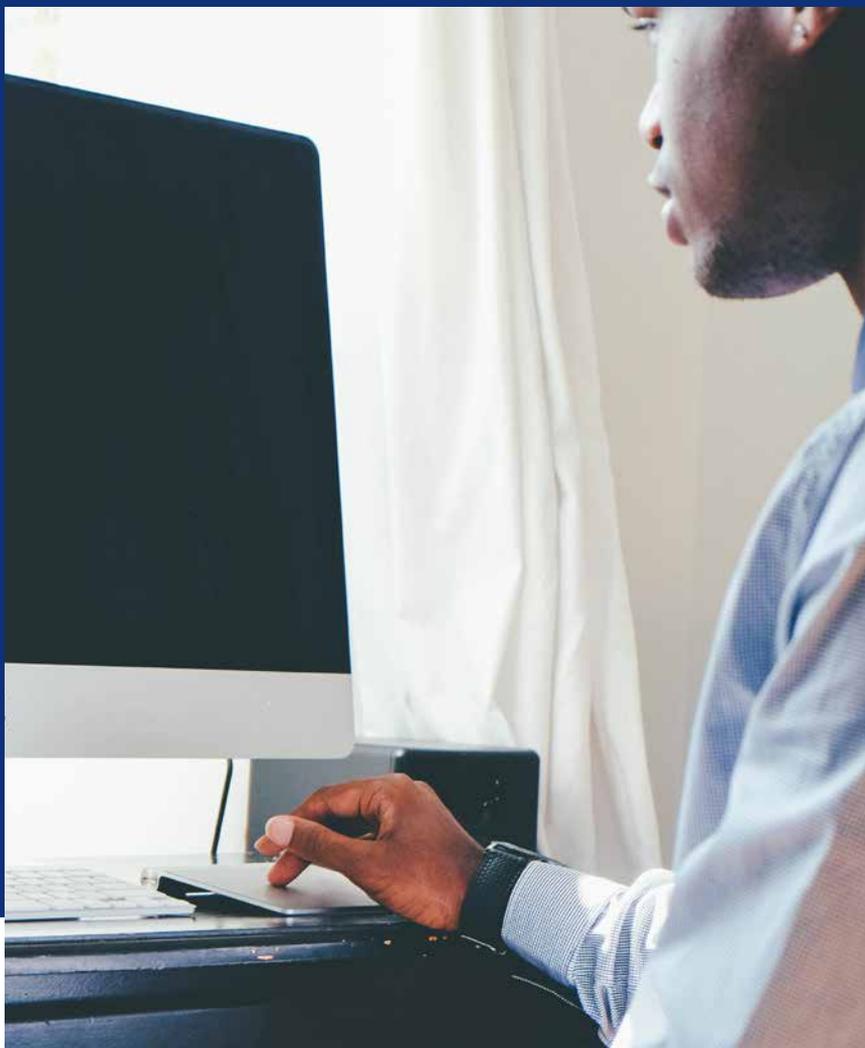


# MAURITIUS

## NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY

### SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

#### CROSS-SECTOR 2017-2021



Republic of Mauritius



International  
Trade  
Centre

This National Export Strategy (NES) is an official document of the Government of Mauritius. The NES was developed on the basis of the process, methodology and technical assistance of the International Trade Centre (ITC) within the framework of its Trade Development Strategy programme.

ITC is the joint agency of the World Trade Organization and the United Nations. As part of the ITC mandate of fostering sustainable development through increased trade opportunities, the Export Strategy section offers a suite of trade-related strategy solutions to maximize the development payoffs from trade. ITC-facilitated trade development strategies and road maps are oriented to the trade objectives of a country or region and can be tailored to high-level economic goals, specific development targets or particular sectors, allowing policymakers to choose their preferred level of engagement.

The views expressed herein do not reflect the official opinion of ITC. Mention of firms, products and product brands does not imply the endorsement of ITC. This document has not been formally edited by ITC.

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**MAURITIUS  
NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY  
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT  
CROSS-SECTOR**

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**2017-2021**



Republic of Mauritius



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## ACRONYMS

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AFRC	Albion Fisheries Research Centre	MEXA	Mauritius Export Association
BOI	Board of Investment	MICCP	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
CBBR	Centre for Biomedical and Biomaterials Research	MICCP	Ministry of Industry, Commerce and Consumer Protection
CRIGS	Collaborative Research and Innovation Grant Schemes	MITIA	Mauritius IT Industry Association
EM	Enterprise Mauritius	MoFARIIT	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
FAREI	Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute	MoFED	Min. of Finance and Economic Development
FDI	Fashion and Design Institute High-level Steering Committee on Innovation under PMO	MRC	Mauritius Research Council
HRDC	Human Resources Development Council	MSB	Mauritius Standards Bureau
IPO	Industrial Property Office	MSIRI	Mauritius Sugar Industry Research Institute
MBEC	Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives	MTCI	Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation
MBGS	Mauritius Business Growth Scheme	NCB	National Computer Board
MCCI	Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry	NPCC	National Productivity and Competitiveness Council
MEHTESR	Min. of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research	OTAM	Outsourcing and Telecommunications Association of Mauritius
		QMS	Quality management system
		WIPO	World Intellectual Property Organization

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# INTRODUCTION

The Mauritian economy underwent an era of intense economic growth beginning in the late 1970s. From 1978 through 2014, Gross National Income (GNI) per capita increased from US\$ 1,020 to US\$ 9,630.<sup>1</sup> As illustrated in the following chart, this expansion took place in two principal phases. The first phase occurred between 1985 and 1996, during which GNI grew by an annual rate of 12%. The economy then stagnated for the next five years, before embarking upon a new era of expansion in 2003. From 2003 to 2013, GNI grew by a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 8.4%.

This growth was supported by reforms in the institutional, regulatory, and business environments in conjunction with the pursuit of sound macroeconomic policies and a willingness to engage in trade and investment. In particular,

1. World Bank Databank

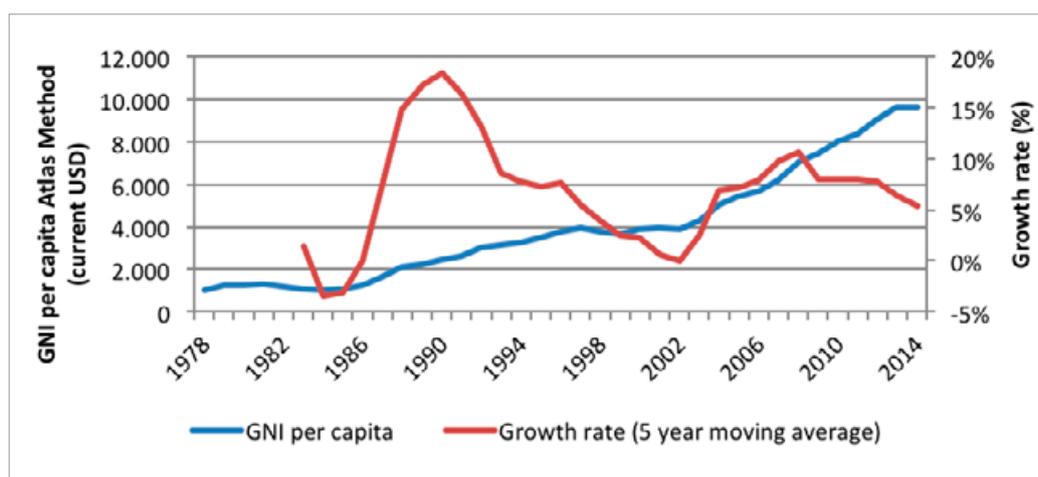
the economy was opened up to more competition, tariffs and trade barriers were lowered, the tax system was streamlined, and labour and business regulations were simplified.<sup>2</sup>

These efforts paid significant dividends, helping to raise the living standards of the population and further the country's integration into regional and world markets.<sup>3</sup> Indeed, this period of impressive expansion resulted in Mauritius graduating from the low income to the middle income segment of the World Bank's classification.

2. Sviryzdenka, Katsiaryna and Petri, 2014, "Mauritius: The Drivers of Growth – Can the Past be Extended"? IMF draft working paper. Zafar, A. (2011). Mauritius: An Economic Success Story. In P. Chuhan-Pole & M. Angwafo (Eds.). Yes, Africa Can: Success Stories from a Dynamic Continent. (p. 91-106). Washington, DC: World Bank

3. MCB. MCB Focus No 58. Mauritius: Fast-tracking our graduation to a high-income country. July 2014.

Figure 1: Economic growth in Mauritius (1978 - 2014)



Source: World Bank



Photo: (cc) pixabay

In its pursuit of continued progress, the Government of Mauritius has established a goal of becoming a high income country by 2020. While worthy, this goal is certainly ambitious. Despite advances over the past three decades, economic activity has been volatile, even in the best of times. In addition, growth has levelled off in recent years – GNI expanded by just 1% in 2014, and Mauritius has been hit hard by recent developments in the global economy.

As such, if Mauritius wishes to become a high income country, it must make concerted efforts to pursue a number of development priorities. Among these, skills development is arguably one of the most important. Indeed, it has long been known that skills are an important component of competitiveness, and that exporters tend to have more access to skilled workers when compared to non-exporters.<sup>4</sup> Not only do improved skills lead to greater productivity, output, and differentiation, they can also attract greater levels of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI). This FDI can in turn propagate even more knowledge transfer, thereby completing a virtuous circle of investment and skills development.<sup>5</sup>

While investment in human capital is a consistent requirement for countries wishing to achieve sustainable growth, it is all the more important for a middle income country wishing to become a high income country, such as Mauritius. Many nations have found themselves stuck in the middle income classification, subject to the “middle income trap”. Although rising wages put pressure on their competitiveness, they find it difficult to move away from low-cost economic models and develop more robust secondary and tertiary industries. Avoiding this trap requires improvements in productivity as well as dedication to moving from a low value added economy to a higher value added economy through human capital development. To this end, the burden on Mauritius is higher than usual. While other countries can leverage a growing middle class to drive growth, the limited size of the Mauritian market makes it even more critical that Mauritius enhance its competitiveness abroad.

It is in this context that the National Strategy for Skills Development forms an integral part of the overall National Export Strategy. Enhancing the country’s capacity to produce highly skilled and qualified workers will play an important role in attracting foreign investment and enhancing Mauritian competitiveness abroad. In addition to providing a framework for enhancing the overall skills development sector, the present strategy also seeks to address specific skills-related constraints in each of the NES priority sectors. As such, it will be implemented in parallel and in concert with each of the sector strategies.

4. ILO. Skills for trade and economic diversification. A Practical Guide. 2012.

5. UNCTAD. Investment Advisory Series. Series B, No 5. Best Practices in Investment for Development. 2011.

# CURRENT CONTEXT AND DIAGNOSTICS ANALYSIS

## CURRENT CONTEXT

The Mauritian skills development sector falls within the purview of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (MoEHR). The MoEHR is responsible for developing and implementing the government's overall policies in the areas of education

and human resource development. Its priorities are guided by the Education and Human Resources Strategy (2008 – 2020), which provides the strategic framework for addressing constraints for the various education sub-sectors and ensuring equitable and quality education for all. Within this framework, the MoEHR currently operates according to the following principles:

### Box 1: Vision and mission of the MoEHR

---

#### Vision

*A quality education for all and a human resource development base to transform Mauritius into an intelligent nation state in the vanguard of global progress and innovation.*

#### Mission

*To develop a culture of achievement and excellence by promoting an efficient and effective education and training system that is inclusive and integrated, comprehensive and holistic.*

*To foster innovation and to generate new knowledge for the socio-economic and sustainable development of the nation.*

*To ensure learning opportunities accessible to all, provide learners with values and skills to further their personal growth, enhance their critical and exploratory thinking and encourage them to innovate and to adapt to changes in an increasingly globalised environment.*

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**Source:** Extracted from MoEHR. Education and Human Resources Strategy. Pg. 11.

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Whereas the MoEHR governs all education and human resource related areas, the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC), which operates under the aegis of the MoEHR, has been tasked specifically with promoting the development of a skilled labour force. Its objectives are to (i) promote human resource development in line with national economic and social objectives; (ii) stimulate a culture of training and lifelong learning at the individual, organizational and national levels to enhance employability of the labour force and increase productivity; and (iii) provide the necessary human resource thrust for a successful transformation of the country's economy into a knowledge economy.<sup>6</sup> To facilitate coordination, the HRDC leverages a tripartite structure representing employees, employers, and policy makers that enables a feedback loop.

6. <http://www.hrdc.mu/index.php/about-us/about#our-objectives>

National education and skills related qualifications are overseen by the Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA). Its role is to (i) develop, implement and maintain the National Qualifications Framework (NQF); (ii) ensure compliance with provisions for registration and accreditation of training institutions, (iii) ensure that standards and registered qualifications are internationally comparable; (iv) recognize and evaluate qualifications for the purpose of establishing their equivalence; and (v) recognize and validate competencies acquired outside the formal education and training systems.<sup>7</sup>

The education and skills development sector is organized according to the NQF. The NQF comprises 10 levels, ranging from Level 1 (Certificate of Primary Education) to Level 10 (PhD).

7. <http://www.mqa.mu/English/AboutUs/Pages/Mission.aspx>

Figure 2: Mauritius National Qualifications Framework

LEVEL	PRIMARY / SECONDARY EDUCATION	TVET / WORKPLACE	TERTIARY EDUCATION	LEVEL
10			Doctorate	10
9			Masters Degrees eg MA, MSc, M.Phil Postgraduate Certificates, Postgraduate Diplomas	9
8			Bachelor with Honours, Conversion Programmes	8
7			Bachelor (ord. Degree)	7
6		Diploma	Diploma	6
5	HSC / GCE 'A' Level / BAC / IBAC	Certificate	Certificate	5
4				4
3	SC / GCE 'O' Level			3
2				2
1			Certificate of Primary Education	1

Source: <http://www.mqa.mu/English/Pages/Framework%20Services/NQF.aspx>

## Primary and Secondary Education

The primary and secondary education that serves as the bedrock for skills development has remained a government priority since independence. Both primary and secondary education are based on the British education system.<sup>8</sup>

Children begin their primary education at age five, and it lasts for six years. These six years are in turn divided into three stages, each of which has a two-year duration. In addition to preparing children to adjust to the school environment, this education covers an array of subjects, including basic science, the environment, the arts, history, geography, mathematics, literacy, and health and physical education. Primary education is currently concluded once children achieve their certificate of primary

8. <http://www.classbase.com/Countries/Mauritius/Education-System>

education (CPE). Reforms are currently under way, however, and the CPE will be phased out in favour of a more student-centric and holistic approach to evaluation that includes continuous assessment and monitoring.<sup>9</sup>

Students then move on to secondary education. After four years of study, they write O-levels in at least six subject areas.<sup>10</sup> Those students wishing to continue their secondary education can pursue an additional two years, after which they take A-level examinations. The A-levels are administered by Oxford University.

Following the completion of secondary education, students may opt to pursue a tertiary or Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) education.

9. MoEHR. National Curriculum Framework (primary).

10. <http://www.classbase.com/Countries/Mauritius/Education-System>

## Box 2: Ongoing reforms in primary and secondary education

Historically, the Mauritian secondary education system included a track of pre-vocational training programmes. Ongoing reforms, however, will remove these programmes to prepare students better for any eventual vocational training. This change was initiated because pre-vocational training programme trainees have been found to suffer from a very low level of primary literacy and numerical skills. These deficiencies have affected the ability of trainees to retain the skills being transferred to them.

In addition to removing the pre-vocational training programmes, new reforms will:

- Introduce the Cambridge technical diploma.
- Introduce a new, higher-level stream of polytechnics that will eventually go up to Levels 6 and 7. The infrastructure for this faculty is already built. Areas of training will include ICT and health services.
- The role of the TEC is also being reviewed, and its mandate will be adjusted accordingly

## Tertiary Education

Tertiary education in Mauritius falls within the purview of the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC). Its role is to govern post-secondary education and allocate government funds to Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs).<sup>11</sup> TEIs currently offer over 750 programmes and courses.<sup>12</sup> TEC has the responsibility to accredit programmes of private TEIs which totalled some 300, while the public TEIs count over 450 programmes.

11. <http://tec.intnet.mu/>

12. [http://tec.intnet.mu/search\\_courses\\_programmes](http://tec.intnet.mu/search_courses_programmes)

There are 10 publically funded tertiary education institutions in Mauritius, namely the University of Mauritius, the University of Technology, Mauritius, the Mauritius Institute of Education, the Mahatma Gandhi Institute, the Rabindranath Tagore Institute, the Open University of Mauritius, Université des Mascareignes, the Mauritius Institute of Training and Development, the Mauritius Institute of Health, and the Fashion and Design Institute.<sup>13</sup>

13. [http://tec.intnet.mu/public\\_institutions](http://tec.intnet.mu/public_institutions)

In addition, there are more than 50 private institutions offering tertiary education in a wide range of subjects, including management, accounting, medicine, dentistry, and IT.<sup>14</sup> The majority of these are local counterparts of overseas institutions. Programmes range from the sub-degree to the PhD levels, and instruction is done both face-to-face and via distance learning. Most examinations are administered by the Mauritius Examinations Syndicate, although some are administered directly by the originating institution or its local counterpart.

## TVET

The TVET sector is regulated by the MQA, which is responsible for ensuring the quality of programmes and recognizing the equivalence of technical qualifications. The MQA approves courses and registers institutions and personnel.<sup>15</sup>

The Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) is the main provider of TVET programmes, which are financed through the HRDC Levy Grant System. The MITD runs programmes focused on providing qualified human capital at the mid-professional level.<sup>16</sup> At the same time, it also runs courses at the National Diploma level. Its courses cover the following sectors: agro industry, automotive, beauty care and hairdressing, building construction and civil engineering, electrical and electronics engineering, handicraft, information and communications technology, jewellery, management, mechanical engineering, printing, textile and apparel, tourism and hospitality, and wood trades.<sup>17</sup> The MITD also provides skills certifications for the private sector. There are over 350 other registered TVET providers, most of which focus on business and IT skills.

TVET is offered to students, employees, and the un-employed, and participants in vocational programmes can partake in apprenticeship programmes. These involve four days on the job and one day at the training centre. There is also a link between the vocational and tertiary systems. It is possible for a student to move from vocational training and pursue a degree. Employees, meanwhile, can benefit from qualification assessment courses and non-grading/award courses.

The HRDC Levy Grant System plays a key role in the TVET ecosystem of Mauritius. This is a training grant scheme based on cost-sharing between employers and the HRDC. Employers who contribute monthly to the training levy are eligible to receive subsidies. These employers

can recover a portion of expenses for training courses that are job-related and that lead to the acquisition of new skills. Employers can apply for reimbursements under the following specific schemes:<sup>18</sup>

- **In-house training scheme:** provides subsidies for in-house training programmes (up to MUR 100,000 per day, subject to restrictions).
- **Overseas training scheme:** refunds 50% of the cost of an economy air fare up to a maximum of MUR 30,000 per trainee.
- **Training needs analysis scheme:** provides subsidies for firms conducting TNAs, up to 25% of eligible grant refund.
- **Multimedia facilities scheme:** Registered training centres using their own/rented building, infrastructure and training facilities will be eligible for refund of 50% of the cost on purchase of new multimedia equipment.
- **Foreign expertise scheme:** Registered training centres can claim 50% of relevant training expenses up to a ceiling of MUR 200,000 per week for a maximum period of two weeks in the event they bring in foreign resource persons in scarcity or in priority areas to conduct training in Mauritius.
- **Pre-operational training incentive scheme:** an advance equivalent to 50% of the estimated qualifying training costs during the first year of operation of firms that are in the process of being set up.

In 2014, the levy grant system supported 7,804 training programmes and 41,382 participants.<sup>19</sup> The total amount disbursed was valued at MUR 203,050,792. In all, 55% of training institutions made use of the system.

The top beneficiaries of programmes by sector were finance and insurance, real estate and business services (29.3% of training programmes); manufacturing (17.8%); wholesale and retail trade (14.7%); hotel and tourism (10.3%); community, social and personal services (7.4%); information technology (5.7%); transport, storage and communication (5.5%); construction (4.3%); and agriculture and fishing (3.9%).<sup>20</sup>

14. [http://tec.intnet.mu/private\\_institutions](http://tec.intnet.mu/private_institutions)

15. <http://ministry-education.govmu.org/English/educationsector/Pages/TVET.aspx>

16. <http://ministry-education.govmu.org/English/educationsector/Pages/TVET.aspx>

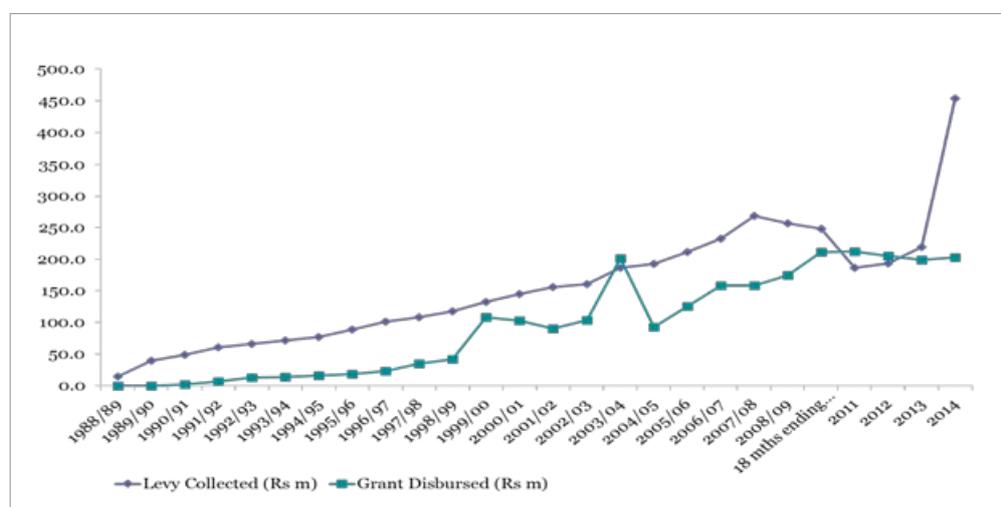
17. <http://www.mitd.mu/courses.php>

18. <http://www.hrdc.mu/index.php/levy-grant-incentive-schemes>

19. HRDC

20. HRDC

Figure 3: Historical analysis of the levy grant system



Source: HRDC

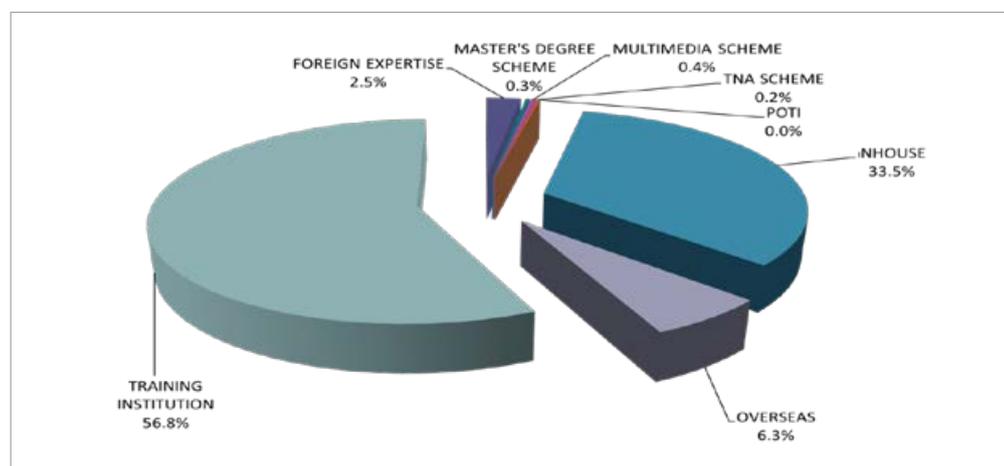
Figure 4: Training programmes by sector

Sectors	Training programmes # (%)	Participants # (%)	Amount refunded (Rs) # (%)	Ratio of training programme to amount refunded	Ratio of cost to participants	Ratio of Training programme to participant
Finance & Insurance, Real Estate & Business Services	2285 (29)	7,276 (17)	46,996,984 (23)	20,567	6,459	0.31
Manufacturing	1390 (18)	7,327 (18)	37,341,164 (19)	26,864	5,096	0.19
Wholesale and Retail Trade	1148 (15)	6969 (16)	36,679,444 (18)	31,951	5263	0.16
Hotel & Tourism	801 (10)	7416 (18)	20,827,839 (10)	26,002	2809	0.11
Community, Social & Personal Services	581 (7)	2,726 (7)	12,912,707 (6)	22,225	4,737	0.21
Information Technology	441 (6)	1,899 (5)	11,347,753 (6)	25,732	5,976	0.23
Transport, Storage & Communication	431 (6)	2,257 (5)	12,853,494 (6)	29,822	5,695	0.19
Construction	339 (4)	1,624 (4)	8,913,543 (5)	26,294	5,489	0.21
Agriculture & Fishing	306 (4)	1,118 (3)	8,169,958 (4)	26,699	7,308	0.27
Others	82 (1)	2,770 (7)	7,003,706 (3)	85,411	2,528	0.03
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>7804</b>	<b>41,382</b>	<b>203,050,792</b>	<b>26,018</b>	<b>4,907</b>	<b>0.19</b>

Source: HRDC

The following chart illustrates the breakdown of disbursements:

Figure 5: Training scheme disbursements



Source: HRDC

The Industry Training Advisory Committees (ITACs) serve as the main mechanism for coordinating industries' needs with the activities of educational institutions. Organized by the MQA, there are currently 21 ITACs, each of which covers a priority sector. They comprise representatives from the public and private sectors, and their role is to establish unit standards and qualifications for each sector. Unit standards define learning outcomes and the type and quality of evidence that should result in an award of credit.<sup>21</sup> The qualifications become national qualifications at various levels of the NQF.

Other efforts for coordination include the "Decum" initiative of the MITD. This is an industry-TVET ad hoc working group that is set up to define curriculums for TVET institutions. The eventual curriculums are based on detailed job requirements as provided by firms; the TORs of employees are deconstructed and all relevant skills are integrated into the curriculum. These newly designed curriculums then become a national curriculum that can be offered by any institution. Another initiative is the "Skills Working Group" under the Ministry of Labour. This is a consultative public-private body whose goal is to develop programmes/diplomas. These efforts are focused on higher-level discussions. The Skills Working Group identifies broad areas that should be integrated into national policies, rather than defining detailed technical content of courses. Lastly, there are a number of coordination initiatives at the sector level. These include an ICT academy from the MITD, as well as the efforts of MITD to work with FAREI in developing apprenticeship programmes.

## Combating unemployment

There are a number of TVET programmes geared at helping unemployed people enter or re-enter the workforce. To this end, the National Empowerment Foundation (NEF) runs a placement and formation programme and offers a number of skills development courses in areas including housekeeping for cruise ships, food and beverage for cruise ships, cleaning and stewarding, plumbing, electrical, mechanics, bar service, ladies tailoring, paint work for concrete, wood and metal, and fabrication of aluminium openings.<sup>22</sup> More than 50% of unemployed participants find a job after 6 months.

Another initiative is the Youth Employment Programme (YEP). The YEP is implemented by the Skills Working Group, a public-private initiative of the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development and the Joint Economic Council.<sup>23</sup> Its goal is to promote the transition of young people from the spheres of education into the workforce. Its main objectives are to enable unemployed youth to obtain training/placement for an initial period of one year, with the possibility of permanent employment thereafter on condition of satisfactory performance; to ensure that appropriate training is provided to youth to promote the development of necessary skills in the labour force; and to assist employers in obtaining appropriate skilled manpower. To facilitate this, the YEP has established a database for jobseekers, it subsidizes 50% of the youth's salary for the first year of employment, and it subsidizes the cost of approved training (up to 50%, not exceeding Rs7500 per person). The specific subsidies vary

21. <http://www.mqa.mu/English/publications/Documents/Magazine/2010/Pages%2011%20-%202017.pdf>

22. <http://www.nef.mu/>

23. <http://www.yep.mu/howitworks.php>



Photo: (cc) pixabay

depending on education levels and salary. A chief complaint, however, is that the scheme does not attach any conditions associated with long-term employment. As such, it does not incentivize companies to keep the young people once the scheme has ended. Instead, the youth's salary doubles at the end of the year, thereby corrupting employer incentives.

Lastly, HRDC has recently launched the Graduate Training Employment Scheme (GTES). Its goal is to enhance the employability of unemployed graduates by providing them with skills that match the requirements of the private sector. The programme lasts between three and 12 months (inclusive of placement). The Government covers the cost of training fees (up to MUR 80,000 per graduate), and it also provides a monthly stipend of MUR 3,000 to each graduate for the duration of the programme. Thus far, three instruments have been developed to implement GTES:<sup>24</sup>

- i. Joint Tertiary Education Institutions (TEIs) and industry designed courses;
- ii. Joint Training Institutions (TIs<sup>25</sup>) and industry designed courses;
- iii. Industry certifications and professional courses.

24. <http://gtes.hrdc.mu/>

25. MQA-registered training institutions or enterprises delivering MQA approved courses

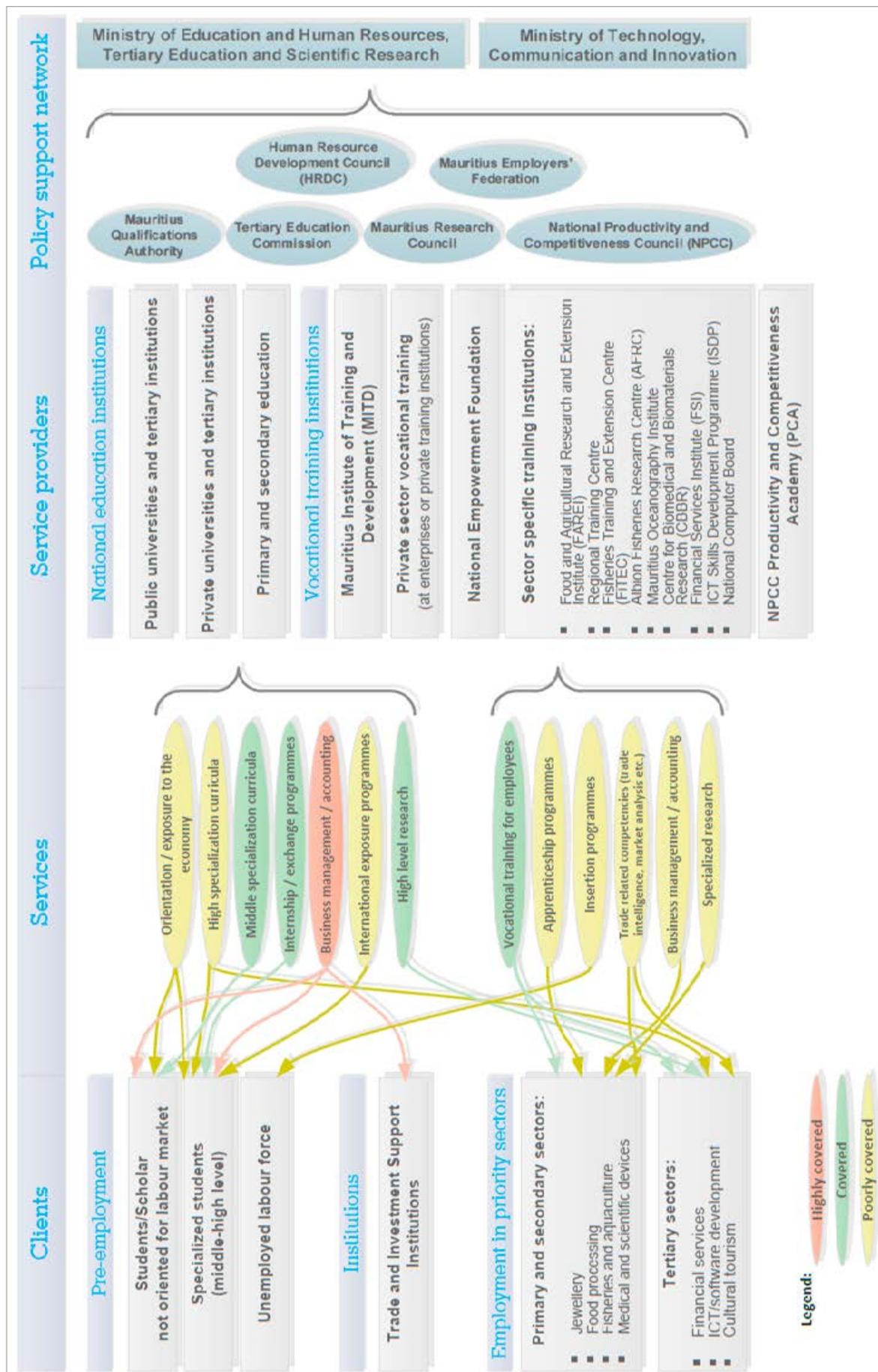
### Private training institutions

The Mauritian education and skills development ecosystem is supported by a number of private training institutions. These institutions usually operate from the 4th to 6th Levels of the NEF, and one of their main goals is to bridge the gap between vocational training and degree programmes. Indeed, private training institutions provide for the ability to circumvent the public sector requirements for entry into tertiary education. Key sectors that are covered include management, HR, administration, tourism, and communications. These programmes communicate with both academic partners as well as industry representatives. Courses are embedded with soft skills development to ensure employability.

## SERVICE MAP

The skills development function is best illustrated by a service map. The service map conveys a visual representation of the interactions between the policy support network, service providers, and the ultimate clients. As such, it helps to show the flow of services from provider to recipient. The quality of the services provided is colour coded to highlight particular gaps in service provision.

Figure 6 : Mauritius skills development service map



## EXISTING POLICIES AND SUPPORT

The Government of Mauritius has long recognized the importance of skills development to its socio-economic goals. The following policies and efforts reflect the Government's most notable attempts to address persistent issues:

- **Establishment of HRDC** – The HRDC, established under the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research, is the apex body to guide policies on skills development. It was founded by the HRD Act in 2003 based on the recommendations contained within a report on National Integrated Training Strategy (prepared by an ILO consultant).<sup>26</sup>
- **Tertiary Education strategy** – The Tertiary Education Strategy 2013 – 2025 was prepared by the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research. Its overall goal is to move Mauritius towards a knowledge-based economy by 2025. It seeks to meet the following objectives: *“foster development of skills and knowledge through increased access to quality tertiary education; promote the development of higher education with a view to inculcating values for responsible and caring citizenship; continuously improve quality and teaching and learning in tertiary education, offer opportunities for lifelong learning through open and distance learning and use of information and communication technology; develop effective linkages between academia and industry to address the skills and technology needs; and develop a culture of research and innovation to foster creativity and innovation and adaptability to the fast changing needs of industry.”*<sup>27</sup> To this end, it proposed five strategic objectives: (i) widening access and ensuring equity, (ii) improving quality and relevance, (iii) internationalization of tertiary education, (iv) enhancing research and innovation, and (v) strengthening governance and financial sustainability.<sup>28</sup>
- **Education and Human Resource Strategy Plan (2008–2020)** – This plan proposed broad interventions to transform Mauritius into a knowledge-based economy and promote equal educational opportunities. It provides a strategic framework for addressing constraints for all education sub-sectors.
- **National Human Resource Development Plan** – There have been two versions of the NHRDP, one launched in 2007 and one in 2009. The NHRDP serves as a policy framework for meeting skills development needs. In particular, they sought to reduce the mismatch between labour supply and demand by providing information about required skills and skills shortages in various parts of the economy.<sup>29</sup>
- **Individual sector strategies** – A number of industry-specific strategies and roadmaps have been elaborated that identify key skills requirements and deficiencies from the sectoral perspective, such as the National ICT Strategic Plan and the Roadmap for the Mauritian Financial Services.
- **Sector-specific skills-gap assessments** – HRDC has developed sector-specific skills-gap assessments in 2012 for the following sectors: agriculture, financial intermediation, ICT/BPO, and Manufacturing / Exporting enterprises.

Despite these positive efforts, real advancements have been elusive. A particular concern has been the weak implementation and monitoring of the numerous recommendations provided over the years. Tangible progress will require more coordinated action as well as the implementation of comprehensive and concrete initiatives based on the identified capacity gaps.

## TRADE SUPPORT NETWORK ANALYSIS

The skills development function is supported by a wide range of support institutions in both the public and private sectors. The following table lists the key institutions involved in the Mauritian skills development space. Given the large number of institutions, this list is not exhaustive, particularly with regard to sub-sector training offerings. Instead, it highlights those institutions bearing most relevance to skills development in general and the NES priority sectors in particular.

26. <http://www.hrdc.mu/index.php/about-us/about>

27. <http://tertiary.govmu.org/English//DOCUMENTS/STRATEGY%20PAPER%202013%20WEB%20VERSION.PDF>. Pg 15.

28. <http://www.maurice-info.mu/wp-content/uploads/2013/08/Strategic-Plan-Presentation-FINAL.pdf>

29. <http://www.hrdc.mu/index.php/nhrdp>

Table 1: *Main trade support institutions***Policy support and coordination**

- Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research
- Ministry of Technology, Communication and Innovation
- Human Resource Development Council
- Mauritius Research Council
- Tertiary Education Commission
- Mauritius Qualifications Authority
- Mauritius Employers' Federation
- National Productivity and Competitiveness Council (NPCC)

**Universities**

- **Public:** Open University of Mauritius; University of Mauritius; University of Technology; Université des Mascareignes
- **Branch campuses:** EILM University, Middlesex International JSS, University of Wolverhampton (Mauritius Branch Campus), Aberystwyth LTD operating as Aberystwyth University (Mauritius Branch Campus), Greenwich Albany Ltd trading as Greenwich University, Pakistan (Mauritius Branch Campus)

**Other training providers**

- **Accounting:** London College of Accountancy (private); Aberystwyth LTD operating as Aberystwyth University (Mauritius Branch Campus); AEA Co Ltd (private); Boston Campus Ltd (private); BSP School of Accountancy & Management Ltd (private); Charles Telfair Institute; Ebene School of Accountancy and Finance Ltd (private); Elite School of Business and Finance Ltd (private); FTMS Global Education; Glamis Business School Ltd (private); Grant Thornton (Business School) Ltd (private); Mauritian Management Association (MMA); Middlesex International JSS (Mauritius) Ltd (private); PTC LTD (PRIVATE); Rays School of Business and Finance; Rushmore Ltd (private); Sagittarius (Centre for Information Technology and Business Studies (Mauritius)) Ltd (private); Surrey Management & Business School Ltd (private); The Executive Business and Computational Institute; Y K Business School Ltd (private).
- **Arts and Culture:** Mahatma Gandhi Institute (public); Rabindranath Tagore Institute (public)
- **Business and Soft Skills:** Amity Institute of Higher Education (tourism focus); Belstar Training Centre (investment focus); BSP School of Accountancy & Management; Centre d'Études Supérieures de la MCCI; Centre for Legal and Business Studies; Elite School of Business and Finance; Glamis Business School; Grant Thornton (Business School); Institute of Marketing and Management; Rushmore Business School; Whitefield Business School; Y K Business School (all private)
- **Education:** Mauritius Institute of Education (public)
- **Engineering/mechanics:** JSS Academy of Technical (private); Vocational Training Institute (private); Lycée polytechnique FLACQ (MITD); Rushmore Ltd (private); Talent Solutions Ltd (private).
- **Fashion:** Fashion and Design Institute (public)
- **Francophonie:** Alliance Française de l'île Maurice (private)
- **Generalist:** Charles Telfair Institute (private); National Empowerment Foundation (public)
- **ICT:** The Datamatics Computer Centre (private); Aberystwyth LTD operating as Aberystwyth University (Mauritius Branch Campus); African Leadership Unleashed Ltd operating as African Leadership College; Amity Global Business School; Amity Institute of Higher Education; Ceridian (Mauritius) Learning Centre Ltd (private); Charles Telfair Company Ltd operating as Charles Telfair Institute; EILM University (Mauritius Branch Campus); Elite School of Business and Finance Ltd (private); Fashion and Design Institute; Greenwich Albany Ltd trading as Greenwich University, Pakistan (Mauritius Branch Campus); Jhurry Rya (JR School) Co. Ltd (private); JSS Academy Ltd (private); Mauritius Chamber of Commerce and Industry; Middlesex International JSS (Mauritius) Ltd (private); Rishi Dayanand Institute; Royal Engineering and Architecture Ltd (private) (trading as Atlantis Business School); Rushmore Ltd (private); Sagittarius (Centre for Information Technology and Business Studies (Mauritius)) Ltd (private); Spherinity Ltd (private); Talent Solutions Ltd (private); The Executive Business and Computational Institute; Whitefield Business School Ltd (private); Y K Business School Ltd (private).
- **Medical:** Anna Medical College and Research Centre (private); Apollo Bramwell Nursing School (private); Indian Ocean Dental School and Hospital (private); Mauritius Institute of Health (public); Padmashree Dr. D.Y. Patil Medical College (private); Sir Seewoosagur Ramgoolam Medical College (private)
- **Tourism:** Jhurry Rya School (private); Vatel Hotel & Tourism Management School (private); Ecole hôtelière Sir Gaetan Duval (private); Charles Telfair Company Ltd operating as Charles Telfair Institute; Amity Institute of Higher Education; Rushmore Ltd (private).

#### TVET + priority sector specific

- Regional Training Centre (cane and agro processing) (private)
- Mauritius Institute of Training and Development (MITD) (public/private board)
- Fisheries Training and Extension Centre (FiTEC) (public)
- Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC) (public)
- Mauritius Oceanography Institute (public)
- Centre for Biomedical and Biomaterials Research (CBBR) (under MRC)
- FAREI (Food and Agricultural Research and Extension Institute) (public)
- Mauritius Institute of Professional Accountants (MIPA) (private)
- International Institute of Technology Research Academy (IITRA)
- Financial Services Institute (public)
- Insurance Institute of Mauritius (private)
- National Computer Board (parastatal)
- ICT Skills Development Programme (ISDP)

#### Private sector companies – skills development hub

- **Medine education hub:** integrated project / campus – Architecture, Research and innovation, Management
- **Recruitment agencies:** some provide basic training services (CV writing – behaviour in work environment)

While these institutions vary significantly in terms of capacities and mandate, it is possible to draw a number of general conclusions regarding the support network. Firstly, coordination is lacking between the public and private sectors, and even within the public and private sectors themselves. The lack of appropriate coordination is a particular concern for the HRDC given its role as the apex body for skills development. The relationship between public and private sector should also be enhanced at the MITD. To this end, the MITD must make efforts to develop new mechanisms for integrating private sector comments and requirements into its programming.

Lack of coordination is also an issue in the support networks catering to specific priority sectors. A frequent roadblock is the fact that universities and training institutions do not meet the specific needs of industry. One of the chief reasons often cited is a lack of communication and linkages between these institutions and the private sector.

Similarly, advocacy tends to also be lacking throughout the network. This issue is intimately connected to the weak coordination between stakeholders, as increased information flow would lead to greater advocacy capabilities.

## CONSTRAINTS AFFECTING THE CROSS-SECTOR FUNCTION

Constraints affecting skills development function in Mauritius were organized according to their level of occurrence. National level constraints affecting the entire export sector in Mauritius were organized under three categories:

**Policy and regulatory issues:** these issues generally re-pole the type of key external limiting factors that can affect the service providers and receivers in a specific trade-related cross-sector function.

**Supply-side issues:** these are the issues affecting the service providers of the cross-sector function, and can range from capacity, to the types of services covered (service gaps).

**Demand-side issues:** these are issues affecting the service beneficiaries (usually the private sector, but not limited to it) and include problems related to the capacity to identify lacking services related to the cross-sector function, the lack of advocacy to request for lacking services, etc.

These three constraints allow for the categorisation of problems as they occur in the cross-sector's service map.

In addition to the broad national level constraints, the NES also identified constraints related to cross-sector functions occurring specifically in each of the seven NES priority sectors. Those very specific constraints will be listed here as well.

## POLICY AND REGULATORY ISSUES

### Box 3: Policy and regulatory issues

- Evidence of weak and missing relationships especially between industry and academia
- Policies favouring high proportion of university graduates in the population have contributed to exacerbate the skills mismatch and undermine low-end skills availability
- Procedures pertaining to curriculum revisions are lengthy
- Lack of exposure to and valorisation of industries present in Mauritius as from primary and secondary school
- No policy framework organizing public and private education institutions, especially when they cover the same fields
- The current “YEP” scheme does not incentivize long-term youth employment
- Policies related to foreign employees are progressively being restricted

#### Evidence of weak and missing relationships especially between industry and academia

From the national level Trade Support Institution Survey conducted in the framework of the NES, evidence was shown that some critical linkages are either weak or altogether missing with the skills development cross-sector. One instance is related to the weak links between the academic infrastructure (including Tertiary Education and TVET institutions).

Survey results indicated that while universities such as the University of Mauritius and University of Technology are connected to their policy making and regulatory institutions such as the Ministry of Tertiary Education, and the Tertiary Education Commission, neither group reported connections with the main TSIs that provide direct trade services-related support to the private sector, including EM, MEXA and MCCI.

These issues were well identified by HRDC and other skills development institutions in Mauritius. A number of attempts to breach these connection gaps were undertaken. One of these initiatives was the establishment of linkage platforms that come up with recommendations to inform training providers of industry needs. The initiative, however, remains small scale and not well renowned among private sector operators. This actually shows that even if some linkages are there, they are not structured and strong enough to allow bridging the current skills gap effectively.

The feedback loop between industry and academia is also weak and contributes directly to the skills mismatch issue.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 1.1.

#### Policies favouring high proportion of university graduates in the population have contributed to exacerbate the skills mismatch and undermine low-end skills availability

The Tertiary Education strategy developed in 2010 set up strong objectives for the country and promotes high level education as the main career pathway. Indeed the government’s objective was to increase the graduates ratio to 73% - a “one graduate per family” policy. This policy together with the previous incentives leaning towards promotion of tertiary education have contributed in creating the current structural imbalance between the envisioned tertiary economy and the actual sectors requiring skills in the country, a lot of which are still from the primary and secondary sectors.

As a result, there is a common perception in the population that the only worthy career path goes through a higher education, and there is thus some negative judgment for employment in agriculture, industry or manufacturing, all considered as low-level “manual” jobs.

Among the NES priority sectors however, particularly jewellery, agro-processing, fisheries and aquaculture, and engineering of medical and scientific devices, there is a strong demand for workers with relevant vocational expertise, and less so for higher university diplomas.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 1.3.

### Procedures pertaining to curriculum revisions are lengthy

Revision of curriculums is a necessary step in Mauritius, given the current mismatch between provision of courses and the industry's needs. However, universities report that engaging in development of new curriculums or adjustment of existing ones is a very lengthy and multi-year review procedure which discourages most tertiary institutions to engage in heavy changes. This is one of the key factors that create the current status quo situation.

A potential solution would be to integrate changeable modules in existing curriculums that could be attuned to what the industry is requiring. A certain percentage of interchangeable modules within fixed curriculums could then be modified every two years to adjust to the needs of the industry, without full curriculums change.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 1.2.

### Lack of exposure to and valorisation of industries present in Mauritius as from primary and secondary school

One of the main problems identified in the national level analysis of the NES is that some of the key export sectors do not have local labour supply in some areas, and very weak skills available locally in others. Some sectors of the economy in the primary and secondary categories do not readily attract young people who consider employment there as doing menial jobs. Mauritians perceive that the only way to succeed in life is through higher education.

Exposure to the agricultural, manufacturing and industrial sectors as early as in primary and secondary schools would be key to improving the image of these sectors among students. It would help reverse the current situation and students would then choose these sectors not because they have failed in the national exams but because of their growing personal interest. In many European and Asian primary schools, manual courses are taught very early on. Courses on sewing, cooking, construction or even gardening may gain their interest and valorise these occupations among youngsters. Interest in such occupations may gain an early start if taught in schools in Mauritius. Secondary school students will receive more information about these industries and related jobs through farm visits or other types of exposure. Such early activities could help to rebuild interest in the primary and secondary sectors in the long term.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 2.4.

### No policy framework organizing public and private educational institutions, especially when they cover the same fields

Currently there is a growing popularity among enterprises to turn to private educational organisms to build the required capacities of their employees. There are a number of motivations in this choice, and the overall lack of confidence in the public sector is very certainly one of them.

This in itself is not a problem, as the more service providers there are, the better off is the private sector to find the particular service it requires. However, the issue is in the duplication of efforts and training areas provided both by public and private educational institutions as well as the limited coordination among them to adjust roles and responsibilities.

A clear policy would help divide roles and responsibilities in a clear cut manner to avoid duplication and dispersion of efforts and public finance.

Indeed, in some cases resources are pumped by public institutions for services that other private institutions are providing – services that may include more financial resources, higher coverage levels and sometimes a better quality of training. This duplication results in the dispersion of public resources which are ultimately wasted.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 1.5.

### The current "YEP" scheme does not incentivize long term youth employment

The currently applied YEP scheme provides for salary rebates for young employees through subsidies. The subsidies go as high as 50% of the salary – the percentage varies depending on the level of education and on a case by case basis. However, the scheme does not foresee any conditions attached to the long-term sustainability of these posts. This does not incentivize companies to keep the young people once the scheme is over as their salary increases suddenly without a proportional increase in qualification. In worse cases the salary can double for employers.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 1.7.

### Policies related to foreign employees are progressively being restricted

The important skills gap identified in the primary and secondary economic sectors is also being exacerbated by relatively restrictive policies related to import of foreign workforce. Currently work permits are mostly delivered for highly skilled workers, in line with the will to raise the overall level of qualification in Mauritius. However, this prevents firms requiring basic skillsets to find adequate workforce to pursue operations.

In addition, firms from all sectors of the economy have reported expensive and lengthy processes to hire foreign workers. A specific procedural issue has come out from firms in many sectors, pertaining to limitations for foreign workers to bring their spouses in case of relocation to

Mauritius. This situation has led to divorces and cases where the couple leaves shortly after arriving. Indeed, spouses of qualified professionals are often qualified professionals themselves, and they get bored not being able to work. This issue has an important bearing on the decision of the employee to accept a job in the country and considerably limits the possibility to import foreign workforce.

Same issues affect the possibility of bringing foreign trainers in educational and vocational training institutions. This has a negative impact on innovation capacity in new areas and sectors of the economy and enforces the status quo of curriculums.

- **Severity:** ● ● ● ● ●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 1.6.

## SUPPLY-SIDE ISSUES (SERVICE PROVIDERS-SIDE)

### Box 4: Supply-side issues

- Persistent skills mismatch between industry and the education infrastructure
- Difficulties for educational institutions to identify best suited private sector representatives to collaborate with
- Significant duplication of educational offering among tertiary institutions and strong competition
- Tertiary institutions' educational methods are overall outdated, do not emphasise enough on analytical thinking generation and focus rather on memorization of factual information
- Enterprises rarely offer training programmes to their personnel

### Persistent skills mismatch between industry and the education infrastructure

The education infrastructure (including TVET and the tertiary education) is not well-aligned with the requirements of the industry – both in terms of traditional sectors (as established by the high unemployment rate), as well as in the case of emerging sectors. In recent years, the percentage of unemployed (as part of total unemployed) with a tertiary education has more than doubled. There are reasons for that, which will be explained further.

Nascent sectors such as aquaculture and ocean economy are not supported by specific curriculums at universities which do not invest into modules of exchanges or connections.

There is a lack of know-how/expertise for production of new and differentiated products at the industry level partially because of poor supply of professionals specializing in specific technical areas which ultimately stems from absence of tailor-made/specialized technical courses at universities.

An organized and reinforced feedback loop – operating either as a stakeholders forum or a standing committee – between the demand side (industry) and supply side (education providers) is lacking.

The skills mismatch issues also extend to the TVET infrastructure. It has been reported that the professional training provided to candidates passing out from TVET institutions are not geared towards the market demand



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for vocational jobs. In addition, TVET institutions also face some capacity challenges which affect their ability to dedicate resources to reorient their curriculum and course offerings towards market demand.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objectives 1.1. and 3.1.

#### Difficulties for educational institutions to identify best suited private sector representatives to collaborate with

Inputs required by educational institutions for curriculum development are very specific. Interlocutors required from the private sector need to have a very good understanding of the capacities and skills required from the sector firms at each level of their organizational structure and hierarchy. However, these inputs also need to be representative of the given industry as a whole, and not just a specific company's needs. The challenge for educational institutions is often to strike the right balance between these two extremes and to find the right interlocutor.

While industry or sector associations would appear to be the right interlocutors to get a broad industry picture, their inputs tend to remain broad and general, not providing educational institutions with enough material for developing new courses (in some cases, it looks like all required

capacity building is already there, but associations are simply not aware of it). This highlights an intrinsic problem in some sector associations' functioning and capacity to vehicle good quality inputs from their members.

In addition, the issue varies among different sectors. Sometimes associations are very representative of their sector and some only represent part of the actors. In the latter cases, getting inputs from these non-representative bodies leads to controversy and highlights conflicting interests.

In this context, there is a currently used informal practice and preference to consult individual companies, sometimes the same ones each time because it is easier. The risk of receiving inputs carrying individualistic interests thus remains there.

If the level of sector associations' capacity to understand and convey their members' labour supply requirements is improved, these should become the main counterparts for educational institutions. For now, they remain the counterparts for governance level institutions such as HRDC. For curriculum development, micro level private sector representatives are still used.

- **Severity:** ●●●●○
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 3.1.



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### Significant duplication of educational offering among tertiary institutions and strong competition

Tertiary education providers such as universities themselves are not coordinating with each other. There is significant duplication of academic programmes, especially in the case of institutions that have been set up recently. There is little focus on gauging the skills requirements of Mauritius for the future, and instead programmes are being established solely based on current demand and the attractiveness of courses for future or current students.

Initially universities and tertiary institutions specialized in one or two specific areas. However, the recent fast growth of universities has led to a rather horizontal expansion. An illustration of this is the HR management area. Only one university was offering HRM and now all five universities provide this course. The same has happened with the business administration and finance curriculums. This is reinforced by the fact that universities chose courses that are easy to build, such as business administration. Indeed experts in this area can be easily identified and the courses standardised. This leads to a fierce competition over a very limited national market. Universities indeed report a very acute competition among their peers.

There is definitely a role to play for TEC to limit this phenomenon which hinders alignment of current courses with the needs of the different sectors of the economy. Courses offered should be organized through a platform led by TEC.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 1.4.

### Tertiary institutions' educational methods are overall outdated, do not emphasise enough on analytical thinking generation and focus rather on memorization of factual information

An important number of companies have reported that young university dropouts have a low level of analytical capacity thus reducing their levels of adaptability in the working context. Even with high level diplomas, students are sometimes unable to adjust to new environments.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objectives 2.1. and 2.2.

### Enterprises rarely offer training programmes to their personnel

A low proportion of enterprises currently invest in internal training plans and HR development programmes. This low level of investment in skills is in many occurrences fed by a turnover fear within companies' management. The idea that if one invests in a person's skills and that this person will automatically turn to the competition to get a higher salary, is still strongly ingrained in private sector mentalities and needs to be overcome.

The turnover rate of a company is actually a strong indicator about the company's working conditions, career development opportunities, pay levels, and the dynamics of the sector, among other things. Sometimes this turnover is project-based and sometimes it actually benefits the sector through the cross-fertilization it creates. If indeed the turnover in a company is high, there is a need to improve self-assessment capacity to adjust HR strategies where it is required.

All in all, the insufficient availability of in-house training plans limits skills development during assignments within companies and limits the capitalization by companies on their own personnel.

HRDC currently offers support for companies to build in their own training plans through the TNA and the Levy Grant schemes. This support should be complemented by overall sensitization about the approach and how to tackle turnover of personnel in case it occurs.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●○
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 1.8.

## DEMAND-SIDE ISSUES (PRIVATE SECTOR)

### Box 5: Demand-side issues

- Problem of mentality in some companies that skills development is not an important investment versus capital
- Cultural considerations do not encourage young people to have a motivational and ambitious approach to work environment
- Difficulties for companies to share their HR development plans with educational institution as it is considered confidential and sensitive information for competition
- Generalized public-private mistrust and lack of dialogue, owing to previous failed attempts
- Important proportion of Mauritian students are attracted by education and carrier paths abroad

#### Problem of mentality in some companies that skills development is not an important investment versus capital

Even though mentality is shifting progressively to invest more in training of the human resources, many companies still see intangible investments as not essential for their competitiveness. However, this aspect will need to be changed collectively to ensure transition from a capital- to knowledge-based economy, as envisaged by the Government. Still today, enterprises tend to not engrain HR / skills development as part of their long-term development strategy. This is directly demonstrated by a very low proportion of companies having an internal training plan and dedicated budget.

One of the contributing causes may be the lack of organization - in the form of sector associations. Higher organization levels typically lead to the discovery of such types of critical insights through analysis and consensus. For emerging and existing sectors where such type of collaboration does not exist, this input remains a gap.

This leads some firms to envisage skills requirements in a very short-term perspective, which in turn does not provide training institutions with sufficient information to adjust their offering. The development of new curriculums and courses being a lengthy process, it requires educational institutions to receive long-term requirements and perspectives from the private sector.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objectives 2.3. and 3.1.

#### Cultural considerations do not encourage young people to have a motivational and ambitious approach to work environment

Stakeholders reported that intrinsic cultural factors, specific to Mauritius, affect the approach young people have to their first employment. They mentioned that parents usually discourage their children to go for “subsistence-work” or work that is not providing a comfortable resources level as well as a comfortable life (tertiary sector is mostly the only one regarded). Parents usually prefer supporting the subsistence of their children fully until such time that they find employment with the high standards that they aspire for their children. This level of “comfort” does not encourage young people to work harder than is necessary towards their first employment.

- **Severity:** ●●●○
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 2.4.

#### Difficulties for companies to share their HR development plans with educational institution as it is considered confidential and sensitive information for competition

As mentioned previously, educational institutions have attempted to put in place frameworks to instore feedback loops with the industry. However, they report that they found it difficult to persuade enterprises to give them information about their hiring requirement forecasts as they feel it is information that could reveal their development and diversification strategies. This also shows that there is a critical lack of confidence and mistrust in the public sector. Companies fear that their sensitive information will be revealed to other operators.

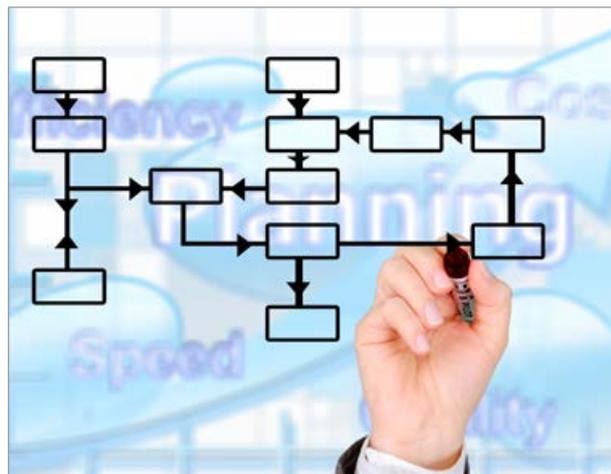


Photo: (cc) pixabay

This issue also depends on the level of organisation and structure of the sector. A well-organized sector, where there is a strong representative sector association is less inclined to refuse sharing their HR development plans. In the event there is no such structure, the competition among companies prevails as the leading force forging decisions within companies. There is no agreed dialogue and thus poor connection with educational institutions.

There is a certain risk that in the future companies will be more confident sharing what they perceive as sensitive information such as skills development plans to private training institutions. The mistrust in the public structures and the higher prices of private training institutions, instead of rejecting them, may lead firms to believe that confidentiality is part of the service package and tempt them to turn to private structures.

- **Severity:** ●●●●○
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 3.1.

### Generalized public-private mistrust and lack of dialogue, owing to previous failed attempts

From the previously discussed constraints, the level of organization of a sector seems to impact the public-private dialogue positively. However, there is also evidence that even in sectors with a high level of organization, the financial services sector as a case in point, there is reticence among sector actors to collaborate with the national development partners. The perception of lack of trust among the private sector regarding the public sector has been identified as an important cause.

A related factor is the perception in the private sector of the slow pace of sector development initiatives led by the Government, and coupled with survey/workshop fatigue. The private sector is thus generally unwilling to collaborate. This is also revealed by the low level of attendance

and participation in supporting meetings involving the public sector, even sometimes including training activities. Whatever the root causes may be, there is an important need to build this trust and involve the private sector in a collaborative fashion in identifying the critical skills-based needs of the future.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 1.1. and 3.1.

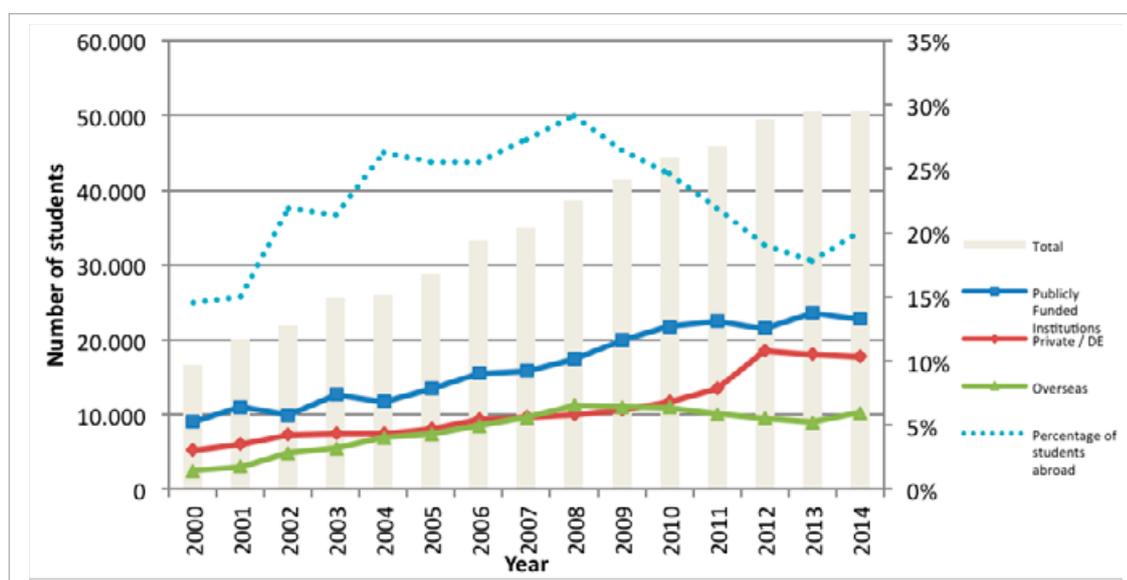
### Important proportion of Mauritian students are attracted by education and carrier paths abroad

The skills mismatch created through structural economic shifts and pro-higher education policies has led to an important proportion of highly educated Mauritians being interested in pursuing their studies or careers abroad. As shown in Figure 7, the overall tendency for overseas studies among Mauritian students is growing together with the growing number of students. Fields attracting Mauritian students abroad included medicine, engineering, law and business/commerce/marketing. Medicine and engineering are indeed fields that remain insufficiently covered in Mauritius which may explain the tendency to look overseas. This is not the case for law and business-related studies, which could point to an education quality issue.

A certain proportion of these students tend to stay abroad. Among the diaspora from Mauritius, OECD's figures (Figure 8) show that as much as 43.7% of highly educated Mauritians live abroad. This highly demonstrative figure suggests that there is an important problem of alignment between courses offered by universities and the areas of specialization required by the local economy.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities under operational objective 1.1. and 3.1.

Figure 7 : Tertiary education enrolment



Source: Participation in Tertiary Education 2014, TEC.

Figure 8 : Mauritian diaspora statistics

	2010/11					
	OECD and selected non-OECD destinations			OECD destinations		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
Population 15+						
Emigrant population (thousands)	64.8	76.0	140.8	62.8	74.4	137.2
Recent emigrants (thousands)	..	..	..	10.2	10.9	21.0
15-24 (%)	9.7	8.6	9.1	9.5	8.3	8.9
25-64 (%)	78.1	80.6	79.4	78.4	80.9	79.7
65+ (%)	12.3	10.9	11.5	12.1	10.8	11.4
Low educated (%)	28.1	38.7	33.8	28.6	39.1	34.3
Highly educated (%)	40.3	29.7	34.6	40.9	30.0	35.0
Total emigration rates (%)	11.5	13.0	12.2	11.2	12.7	12.0
Emigration rates of the highly educated (%)	44.0	43.4	43.7	43.7	43.2	43.4

Source: Connecting with emigrants, OECD, 2015.

## SECTOR SPECIFIC ISSUES

### FISHERIES AND AQUACULTURE

Overall in the fisheries and aquaculture sector, firms have reported that they find it difficult to identify locally available skills for a large variety of positions in their companies. One of the main reasons mentioned, which aligns with the overall cross-sector issues identified, is the lack of attractiveness of the sector among Mauritian population. As mentioned previously, through the policies put in place and other factors, the young population is rather interested in the tertiary economic sectors and progressively abandons agriculture, manufacturing and industry. Additionally, some of the segments of the sector indeed imply specifically tough and sometimes even dangerous working conditions, which do not contribute to the reputation of the sector. Together with reputation and interest level problems, there are some specific institutional issues that transpired during sector-specific consultations:

#### Limited external technical and scientific support to the aquaculture sector (R&D, TVET and university level)

Mauritius Oceanography Institute (MOI) is a leading research institution supporting the fisheries and aquaculture sector and provides information on oceanographic conditions (bathymetry, waves and tides, etc.) and environment status around Mauritius' islands. However, it does not have sufficient expertise in aquaculture. In this regard MRC could focus on improving research in this particular area.

Further, it has been mentioned strongly by industry operators that the Albion Fisheries Research Centre (AFRC) suffers from an increasing lack of capacity and frequent staff changes, disabling it to ensure transfer of acquired techniques and high level support to operators and especially SMEs. For instance, AFRC does not conduct sufficient research on possible local species (groupers) for aquaculture, and especially considering it is a small-scale culture. FMM, the local industry leader, circumvents the issue by internalizing most of the R&D activities it requires.

On the tertiary education side, currently only two indirect university modules exist covering the aquaculture sector in Mauritius. These are provided by the Faculty of Agriculture at the University of Mauritius. These curriculums are yet marginal and very little scientific collaboration at the international level exists. There is also no involvement of the industry in this course.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities relevant to the sector

### JEWELLERY

The jewellery sector, part of the traditional manufacturing sectors in Mauritius, is affected by the same issues as were identified on a broader cross-sector scale, including the phenomenon of progressive disinterest from younger Mauritians. The sector, and especially its SMEs, mostly relies on internal firms' training when receiving new workers. On the side of training institutions, there is no critical mass of trainees to widen the scope of the training offering. Specific areas requiring skills development support were identified by the Jewellery Council, which are design and stone setting. These are now being offered by MITD but with a low trainee turnover capacity. Firms also need to sponsor their employees for such courses because of the limited demand.

Larger firms that export to big retailers in Europe tend to import foreign workers since they cannot access the required skills locally. Indeed there is an important difference in the design and techniques between local traditional small manufacturers and the larger exporting enterprises. Skillsets required by both segments of the sector are extremely diverse, especially regarding design. The SMEs manage to build up skills for their own workers themselves to maintain a constant quality and design level but the larger firms do not find adequately skilled employees in Mauritius and most rely on imports of workforce. However, firms face problems on this front too, as has been mentioned previously. Indeed work permits are issued in the "skilled worker" category, which restricts the possibilities to cover for the poor local lack of low-skilled/specialized workforce.

### AGRO- PROCESSED FOODS

The agro-processed foods sector is equally affected by the limited low-end skills availability, and especially so at the production level. Agriculture indeed suffers from an ageing workers population and an insufficient renewal of skills. Although training infrastructure exists, structural socio-economic factors and national policies have shifted the poles of attraction to other sectors of the economy. If Mauritius wants to ensure long-term sustainability of the sector, particular attention will need to be given to this issue. The following specific constraints affect the processed food sector in addition to the broad and structural constraints:

### Lack of highly technical skills required for the emerging segments of the sector such as food processing

Food processing is a relatively new sector in Mauritius, and has not been accompanied adequately by training institutions as of yet. Agro-engineers and food technologists with an industrial background are skillsets that are in high demand by the processing sub-sector but the competencies required are not currently available in Mauritius. Training programmes pertaining to these specifications are lagging in terms of coverage and quality.

At firms' level, the short-term approach to skills development still prevails and limits investment in training provision, owing to the absence of immediate return on investment and also the fear of losing the most skilled workers to competitors.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities relevant to the sector

### Research areas are poorly identified and allocated in the sector

The agro-processing sector has particularly suffered from a lack of backward and forward linkages with research institutions, such as FAREI and tertiary institutions and has received limited attention from the MRC. The processing sector being at nascent stages has not yet mobilized sufficient attention and resources from the education infrastructure. This has led to an overall poor research activity and a lack of alignment between the areas covered by research institutions and the specific fields where the industry needed inputs from them.

- **Severity:** ●●●●○
- **PoA reference:** Activities relevant to the sector

## MEDICAL AND SCIENTIFIC DEVICES

The medical and scientific devices sector is an emerging sector in the Mauritian economy and thus also suffers from a lack of accompaniment in terms of skills development provision. This sector, however, presents the particularity of requiring highly technical and specific skills which are sometimes difficult to access. On the side of educational institutions, the same issue of critical mass availability comes up, coupled with the difficulty and cost of getting specialized trainers in this particular sector, limiting their willingness to engage. A strong case will need to be built by the private sector to the policy setting institutions such as HRDC and MRC to orient resources to support the sector. Coordination with private sector training institutions will also need to be ensured. In addition, the following specific constraints were identified by sector-stakeholders:

### Shortage of skilled labour, in particular at middle management level

Companies report a lack of business management skills in Mauritius. Considering that business management and administration is actually the most provided curriculum among tertiary institutions, public and private, this points to another issue. On the one side, it strongly questions the intrinsic quality of the courses provided, as well as their level of alignment with latest theories of management (innovative and less centralized approaches to management etc.) which are sometimes practised among foreign investment firms of developed economies. On another, business management courses are not integrated as part of specialized technical curriculum. This leads to a large number of technically specialized students having no background on managerial aspects. The opposite is also true – graduates of business management schools suffer from very low level specification in technical areas.

Issues limiting import of qualified expatriates (procedures and spouses work permits issue) aggravate this problem.

- **Severity:** ●●●●○
- **PoA reference:** Activities relevant to the sector

### Vocational training does not develop hand in hand with the sector

Currently there are no specific and specialised training courses provided by the MITD for the medical and scientific devices sector, since there was no critical mass for the training institution to react, and because of the high investment required by the training technology and equipment. Training is provided fully by companies themselves.

In the longer term, initial and continuing training in the areas of biology, micro-biology, industrial mechanics and maintenance, need to be developed further, including specific training on clean-room use.

- **Severity:** ●●●●●
- **PoA reference:** Activities relevant to the sector

### Lack of awareness about the medical and scientific devices sector at the institutional level

On the public sector level, institutions do not yet fully grasp the potential and do not understand the nature of this highly sophisticated sector. This lack of awareness is specifically important on the technical and regulatory aspects. This is highlighting a need for capacity building at institutional level to understand better a fast evolving sector.

- **Severity:** ●●●●○
- **PoA reference:** Activities relevant to the sector

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## FINANCIAL SERVICES

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The financial services sector has attracted a fair amount of attention from government officials and policy makers who have seen in this sector a high potential for developing the country and transiting to a service-based economy. As part of the initiatives to develop the sector, courses on finance were included into main tertiary institutions in Mauritius. Today, all five Mauritian universities provide degrees relating to finance. Being part of the tertiary sector of the economy, the sector does not face the same issue as seen in the previous cases i.e. the difficulty to attract workforce. However, the question of qualification of the workforce still remains. The degrees provided by Mauritian universities are very generic and fail to equip graduates with the knowledge required as reported by firms in the sector. As noted in the national-level constraints, universities in Mauritius compete strongly with each other to get more students and thus focus their efforts on the attractiveness of their courses rather than their alignment with the needs of the local companies. The process of elaboration of new courses is also seen as lengthy and difficult by universities, which often prefer the status quo. The following specific constraints were identified in line with these issues:

### Inadequate skills limit the development of higher value added services and products

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The sector's development is constrained chiefly by the lack of skills in areas such as risk management, compliance, legal, valuation, complex financial products, asset management, and investment advisory. The university curriculums are generic and do not provide instruction in specific areas of finance. Linkages between industry and academia are weak, and there is little cooperation to design curriculums or to provide practical experience through internships. Even when employers note that graduates are well-trained, their lack of practical experience is a persistent issue. In addition, the lack of more demanding job openings means that there is little demand for the appropriate training. It should be noted that the Financial Services Institute (FSI) is currently being established with a mandate to fill technical knowledge gaps.

- **Severity:** ●●●●○
- **PoA reference:** Activities relevant to the sector

### Difficulties importing qualified labour hinder skills development and value addition

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Given the dearth of local skills in areas of complex financial and legal services, Mauritius will need to rely upon foreign labour for certain parts of the value chain, at least in the short-term. Even so, business visas continue to be an issue. They take a long time to process, and spouses are not allowed to work (they must apply for separate work permits). The framework for business

visas is far easier and more flexible in other jurisdictions. Immigration is also hindered by limited housing stock, the lack of cultural pursuits, the lack of adequate education for children, remoteness of the island, and difficulties in assimilation.

- **Severity:** ●●●●○
- **PoA reference:** Activities relevant to the sector

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## ICT – SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

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Similarly, as with the financial services sector, the ICT sector has benefited from a great deal of attention from policy makers and attracts a large number of scholars every year. ICT-related courses are spread among a variety of educational institutions, including public and private tertiary schools as well as vocational training institutions. A national programme called ICT Skills Development Programme (ISDP) has been established anticipating a large workforce demand for the sector. The programme mostly entails schemes encouraging young peoples' employment in ICT-related companies and placements. However, the problem in the case of the ICT courses provided by the educational institutions in Mauritius is the level of modernity of the materials taught. Some of the methods taught cover outdated mechanisms, which create a skills mismatch with the requirements of the local firms. The following specific constraints have been identified by sector stakeholders:

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## CULTURAL TOURISM

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Cultural tourism, although part of a long established sector in Mauritius, has not received much attention because of the predominance of leisure and resorts-type clientele attracted by the country. However, this particular sub-sector represents an opportunity to value and preserve the rich cultural heritage of Mauritius. In terms of skills, much remains to be done to ensure proper workforce supply for this sector, as it is at a conceptual or nascent stage. The educational institutions, both at vocational as well as at tertiary levels, do not yet offer courses related to this sector. As in other nascent sectors, there is no formation of a critical mass of students. The sector, nevertheless, could attract a fair share of students geared towards the tourism sector if the right courses were available and presented to students as an interesting opportunity with promising career outcomes.

# THE WAY FORWARD

Mauritius is coming off of more than two decades of exceptional economic growth that has resulted in the country's elevation to middle income status. The Government has set ambitious goals for the economy, and is now pushing to achieve high income status in just a few short years. Despite impressive accomplishments and lofty ambitions, the road ahead is a difficult one. Growth has tapered off, and Mauritius has been hit hard by the continued down-turn in the global economy. It now finds itself at a turning point. If the country is to prosper in the face of these challenges, it must make efforts to avoid the fate that has befallen some of its middle-income cohorts, many of whom have failed to counteract waning competitiveness with a move towards higher value added activities.

Avoiding this "middle income trap" and ensuring future economic prosperity will require access to an appropriately qualified labour pool. The skills development sector will play an integral role in fostering sustainable socio-economic development in Mauritius and promoting export-driven growth. Yet the local education and TVET framework has faced persistent challenges that threaten the economy's ability to maintain and increase its competitiveness in a changing global market. To this end, policy and regulatory, supply side, and demand side constraints and deficiencies in the skills development ecosystem will need to be addressed.

In resolving these constraints, care must be taken to ensure that changes to the skills framework are aligned not only to the country's future aspirations, but also to its current needs and to the realities of industry on the ground. Indeed, the government's ambition has at times itself been counterproductive –although it would like to move very quickly towards a knowledge-based economy, Mauritius still relies heavily upon primary and secondary sectors. Policy makers have to some extent ignored this and tried to reorient the entire workforce towards services. This strategy has created a gap for the primary and secondary sectors upon which the economy currently relies. Concerted efforts must therefore be made to engage in more effective strategic planning. Through proper coordination, the private and public sectors will be better able to foster the development of a labour pool that is equipped to meet the needs of both the current and future economy of Mauritius.

## VISION

The NES consultations gave stakeholders the opportunity to come together and define their vision for the skills development sector. This statement embodies the ambitions of the sector, and as such, can be used to rally stakeholders around a common goal.

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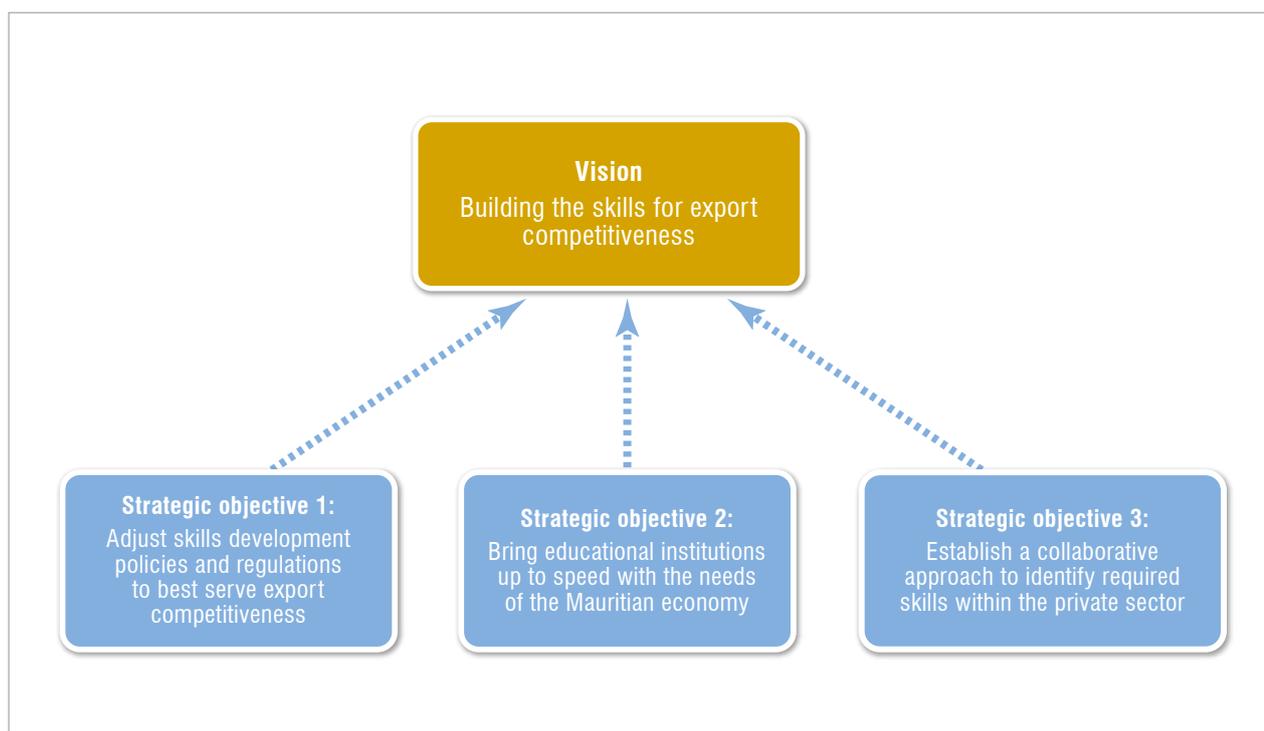
“ Building the skills for export competitiveness ”

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## STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The skills development vision will be supported by three strategic objectives. These objectives provide a framework for addressing constraints, and they highlight key areas where action is required over the coming five years.

Figure 9 : *The strategic scope*



### **Strategic Objective 1: Adjust skills development policies and regulations to best serve export competitiveness.**

The first strategic objective will seek to reorganize the skills development ecosystem through a comprehensive set of policy and regulatory reforms. The first step will be to formalize an adequate coordination framework and streamline the mechanisms for revising curriculums. Efforts towards reorganization will see the goals of tertiary education institutions aligned with the aspirations of the national economy and the elimination of un-needed duplication within the educational framework. Work will also be done to ensure that adequate and clear divisions of responsibilities exist between the public and private sectors. The pool of qualified labour, meanwhile, will be enhanced through reforms to foreign worker programmes and through the review and updating of employment schemes and training programmes. The following operational recommendations fall under this strategic objective:

1. Establish education-industry formalized and systematized exchange platform
2. Streamline curriculum revision mechanisms
3. Revise policies related to tertiary education goals to align with national economy
4. Encourage reorientation of Mauritian universities in specific fields to avoid duplication
5. Establish a clear responsibilities division between public and private educational institutions
6. Facilitate procedures for foreign workforce employment
7. Review employment schemes to improve long-term youth and unemployed inclusion
8. Promote existing schemes for training and skills alignment initiatives



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### **Strategic Objective 2: Bring educational institutions up to speed with the needs of the Mauritian economy.**

The second strategic objective seeks to ensure that the skills development ecosystem is aligned to both the current and future needs of the Mauritian economy. This will be done firstly by upgrading the capacities at universities and other tertiary education institutions to ensure that their offerings are on par with international best standards. Focus will also be placed on promoting connections between educational institutions and enterprises so that research, educational outcomes, and practical experience are aligned to the needs of industry. Lastly, efforts will be made to promote important sectors that have fallen out of favour with the populace. To this end, sensitization programmes will raise the profile of key sectors in primary and secondary schools. At the same time, researchers will be encouraged to engage in activities that may aid the development of these emerging sectors. The following operational recommendations fall under this strategic objective:

1. Bring Mauritian tertiary education to a high level of quality and recognition
2. Upgrade education methods in universities
3. Increase linkages between educational institutions and enterprises
4. Promote agricultural, industrial and manufacturing economic sectors in primary and secondary schools
5. Refocus research on emerging sectors to accompany their development

### **Strategic Objective 3: Establish a collaborative approach to identify required skills within the private sector.**

The final strategic objective focuses on promoting sector-specific skills development in key industries. Firstly, it will create mechanisms for feedback between sectoral representatives and the national skills development coordination platform. This will ensure that the private sector is involved in identifying skills gaps and defining skills requirements. Lastly, the strategy will undertake a number of sector-specific skills development initiatives in support of the NES priority sectors. As such, this strategic objective will be implemented jointly with each of the sector strategies.

The following operational recommendations fall under this strategic objective:

1. Establish sector-specific mechanisms and terms of reference for skills gap identification
2. Conduct sector-specific initiatives to develop skills in NES priority sectors

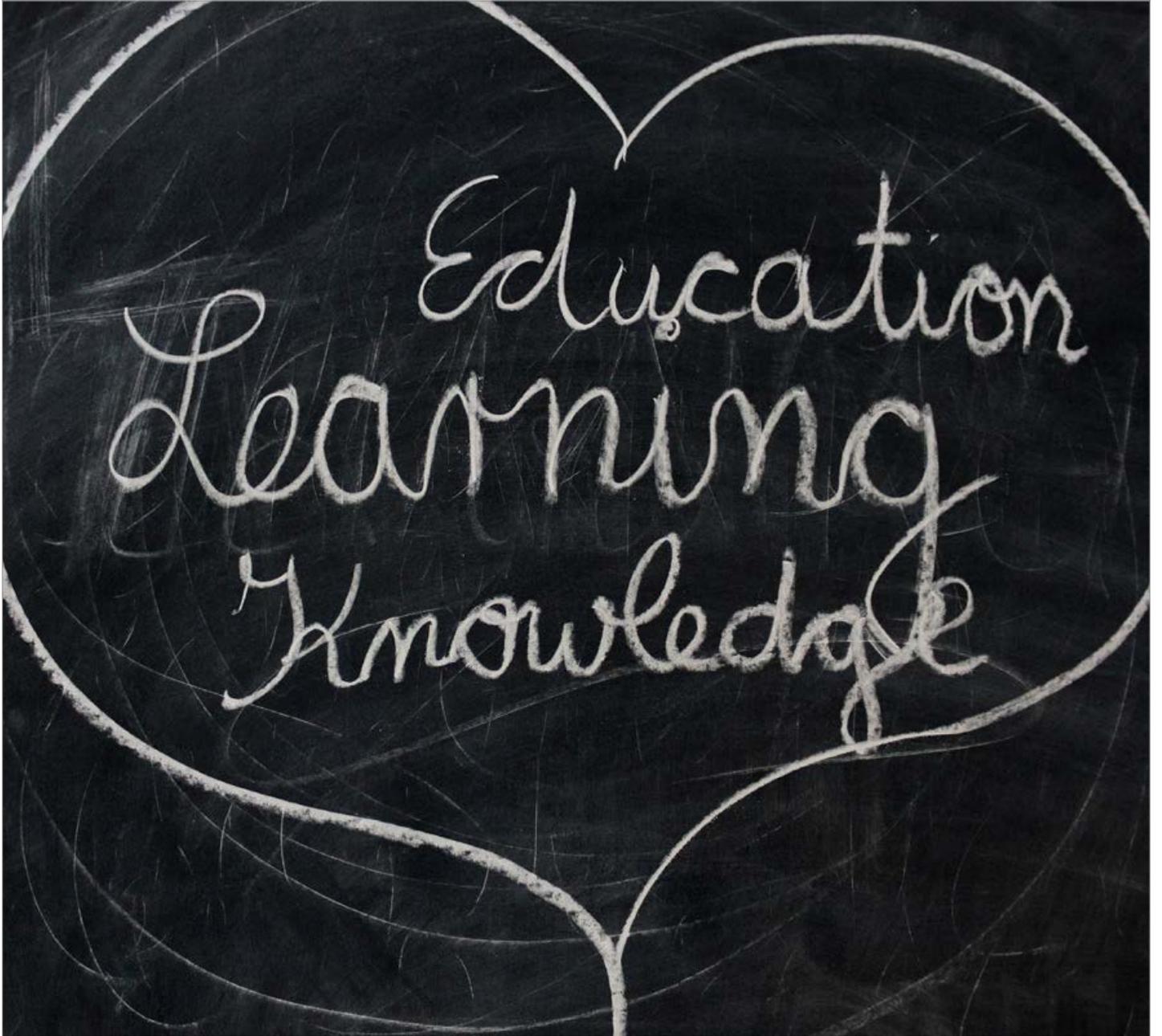


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# IMPLEMENTATION MANAGEMENT FRAMEWORK

This comprehensive skills development strategy, part of the NES Mauritius, endeavours to generate the conditions for a favourable expansion of the cross-sector so as to contribute to overall socio-economic development.

Nevertheless, a strategy in and of itself is not enough to ensure the cross-sector's sustainable development. Such development will require the elaboration and coordination of various activities. While the execution of these activities will allow for the strategy's targets to be achieved, success will depend upon the ability of stakeholders to plan and coordinate actions in a tactical manner. Apparently unrelated activities must be synchronized across the public sector, private sector, and NGO communities to create sustainable results.

Indeed, the skills development strategy is not the strategy of any specific institution; rather it is the strategy of Mauritius, and to ensure its success, it is necessary to foster an adequate environment and create an appropriate framework for its implementation. The following section presents some of the key success conditions considered necessary for the strategy to be implemented effectively and achieve self-sustainability and long lasting benefits for the country.

## **Establish and operate a public and private coordinating platform and its subsidiary organ**

A key success criterion for the skills development strategy is stakeholders' ability to coordinate activities, monitor progress and mobilize resources for the implementation of the strategy. It is recommended that the country establishes a cross-sector-specific platform under the NES Secretariat for public-private deliberations that acts in an advisory capacity to the NES Secretariat, the Government and the private sector over issues related to or affecting the skills development cross-sector and its strategy.

The formal dialogue platform will require a high level involvement of the TSN members (public and private), as their role is crucial and will impact the effectiveness with which the strategy is implemented. Likewise, the ability of the private sector to provide inputs to the strategy implementation process will influence the success of the strategy significantly.

The stakeholders' group consulted during the design process is composed of a panel of representatives from key institutions, involving Ministries and the TSN members. It also comprises private sector representatives from all segments of the cross-sector. As such, once its mandate is appropriately adjusted, this group of stakeholders is best positioned to serve as the public-private platform responsible for the coordination of the strategy implementation. It will also be required that a nominated Secretariat representative coordinates, monitors and mobilizes resources for implementing the strategy.

The main functions of the public-private platform should be the following:

- i. Act as a consultative group pertaining to the skills development cross-sector, enabling the private sector and government representatives to identify priority issues;
- ii. Coordinate and monitor the implementation of the strategy by the Government, private sector, institutions or international organizations so as to ensure strategy implementation is on track;
- iii. Identify and recommend allocation of resources necessary for the implementation of the strategy;
- iv. Elaborate and recommend revisions and enhancements to the strategy so that it continues to respond best to the needs and long-term interests of the cross-sector;
- v. Propose key policy changes to be undertaken, based on strategy priorities, and promote these policy changes among national decision makers;
- vi. Guide the Secretariat in its monitoring, coordination, resource mobilisation, and policy advocacy & communication functions so as to enable an effective implementation of the strategy;

As discussed above, the public-private platform should be supported by a Secretariat representative to complete the daily operational work related to implementation and management of the strategy. The core responsibilities of the Secretariat representative should be to:

- A. Support and organise the regular meetings of the public-private platform.
- B. Monitor progress and impact of strategy implementation.
- C. Coordinate strategy implementation partners.
- D. Mobilize resources to implement the strategy.

Specific tasks falling under these broad areas of activities include:

- Formulating project proposals including budgets for implementation of activities of the strategy;
- Developing annual and bi-annual work plans for approval by the public-private platform;
- Collecting information from project implementation and preparing regular monitoring reports to be submitted to the public-private platform;
- Advocating in favour of the strategy to public and private partners;
- Executing any other tasks given by the public-private platform.

### Private sector support and participation

The private sector should benefit from the strategy implementation through improved productive capacities, reduced costs of doing business, facilitated administrative procedures, enhanced access to finance, etc. However, the private sector has clearly expressed during the strategy design process its willingness to contribute, directly or in partnership with public institutions, to the implementation of the strategy. Their implementation efforts can range from providing business intelligence to institutions, contributing to development projects, establishing processing and transformation units, advocacy, etc. In brief, the private sector's practical knowledge of business operations is essential to ensuring that the activities of the strategy are implemented and targeted effectively.

### Sensitization of implementing institutions to build ownership

The key implementing institutions detailed in the PoA need to be informed of the content of the strategy and the implications for their 2016-2025 programming. This sensitization is essential to building further ownership, and it provides institutions with the opportunity to review the PoA to confirm the activities they can implement immediately, in the medium and long term. Such a programming approach will permit better resource allocation within the responsible agencies. This allocation can be formalized by integrating the activity of the strategy in the programme planning of the institution. While the financial dimension is often required, the human resource element is no less important.

### Financial resource mobilisation for implementation

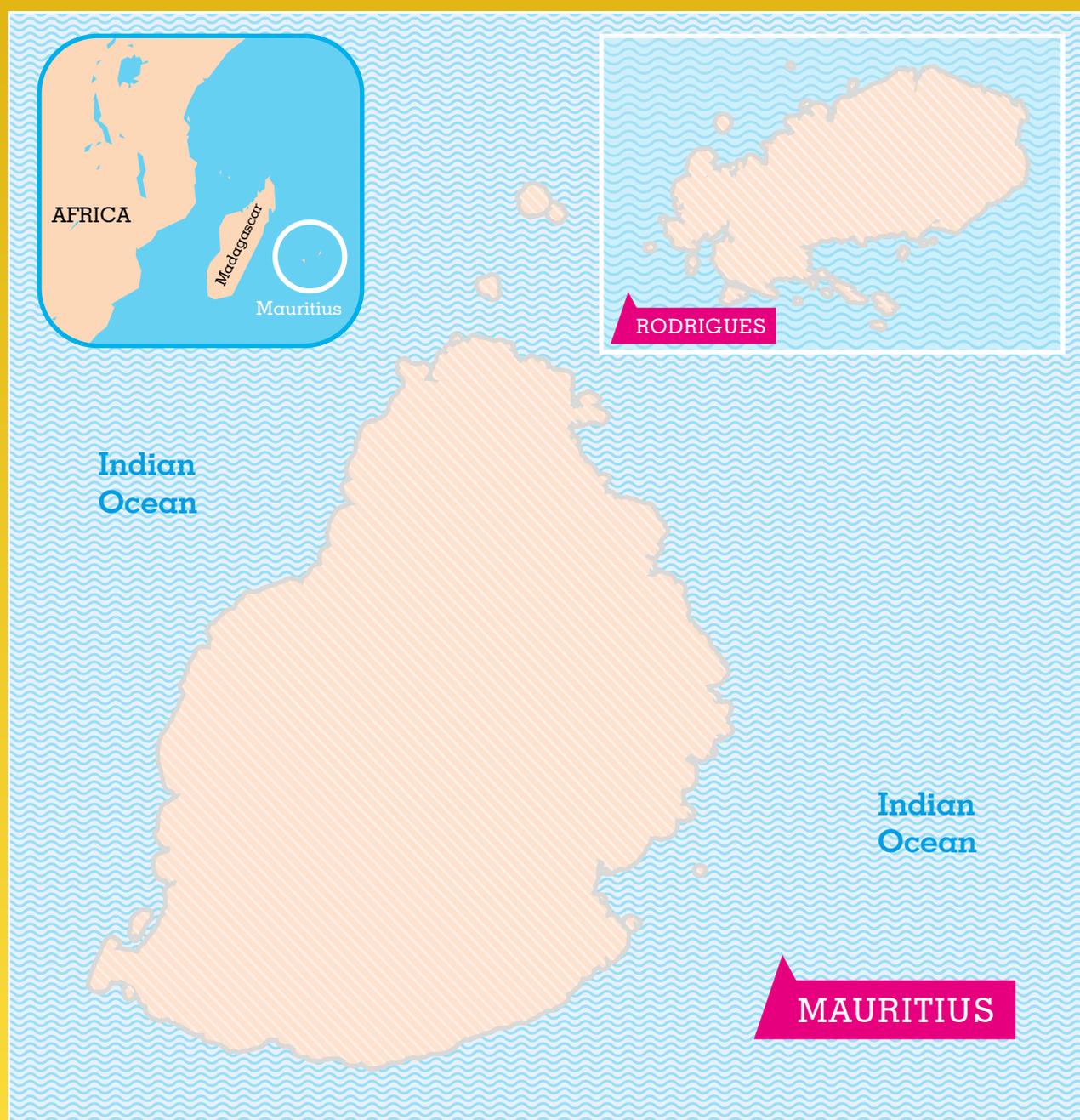
While resource mobilization is only part of the solution, it plays a crucial and indispensable role in supporting the strategy implementation. An integrated resource mobilization plan should be elaborated as soon as the NES is adopted. Resources mobilisation involves planning the

sequencing of communications with donors, project design, project proposals/application and resources collection and management. This should facilitate, leverage and strengthen the impact of diverse sources of finance to support sustainable and inclusive implementation, including national resources, development aid and private investment.

- **National resources through direct budget and support programme:** The Government will need to validate a defined minimum budget support towards the implementation of the different strategy components of the NES, including the skills development cross-sector. This support for the strategy's activities will demonstrate the government's commitment to the initiatives.
- **Alignment of donors' support and interventions with the strategy:** The public-private platform, together with the authorities, will have to capitalize on the significant momentum gained as part of the strategy design process and leverage it for a smooth and efficient implementation. International development agencies can indeed use the strategy as the logical framework for their programmes as they will surely benefit from its favourable conditions for operation (i.e. political endorsement, private sector buy-in, and improved collaboration with national institutions). The PoA of the strategy should serve the public-private platform as well as the national institutions to improve communication and facilitate the negotiation, planning, coordination and evaluation of commitments made in the context of development aid, in particular through the development of programmes and project proposals aligned with the priorities of the strategy.
- **National and foreign investment:** The strategy design stakeholders' group is composed of representatives from national institutions, the TSN and the private sector. If this group becomes the public-private platform, the strategy should benefit from a solid channel of communication, capable of conveying reliable information to the companies about the export-related opportunities in the cross-sector, and in turn of communicating to the Government the needs that investors have identified to operate successfully. Investment flow in Mauritius could serve as a valuable driver of certain specific areas identified in the strategy and requiring support. Even so, it must be targeted at specific prospects to benefit the cross-sector's development as detailed in the future perspective section of the present strategy

**MAURITIUS**  
**NATIONAL EXPORT STRATEGY**  
SKILLS DEVELOPMENT  
CROSS-SECTOR

PLAN OF ACTION



**Strategic objective 1 : Adjust skills development policies and regulations to best serve export competitiveness**

Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=high 2=med 3=low	Implementation period				Beneficiaries	Targets	Lead implementer	Supporting implementers	Possible funding source
			2017	2018	2019	2020					
1.1. Establish education-industry formalized and systematized exchange platform	<p>1.1.1. Put in place a national skills development coordination platform, led by HRDC, which would regroup all sectors of the economy which will inform skills development programmes of universities, TVET, and private sector training providers. The platform will consist of the following sub-divisions that are relevant for NES priority sectors :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Services sectors: Financial services, ICT-Software development, Cultural Tourism</li> <li>» Industry: Jewellery, Processed fish, Agro Processing, Medical Devices</li> <li>» Agriculture: Aquaculture, Agriculture</li> </ul> <p>The platform can be expanded to the rest of the economic sectors gradually:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Industry: Textiles</li> <li>» Manufacturing: Clothing, Artisanal products</li> <li>» Etc.</li> </ul> <p>In each of these subdivisions, sector working groups would be formed.</p>	1				» Mauritian economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» TORs of the platform developed and agreed with key representatives in each sector</li> <li>» Platform put in place</li> </ul>	HRDC	Ministry of Education and Human Resources, Tertiary Education and Scientific Research (MoEHR), relevant Ministries, sector associations, Universities, MITD, private sector training institutions		
1.2. Streamline curricula revision mechanisms	<p>1.1.2. For each of the sector working groups, identify an interlocutor at the sector level to communicate with academia. This interlocutor should ideally be a sector association or a sector representative with strong stakeholders' support that will be able to channel proper technical information required for curriculum design.</p> <p>In the NES priority sectors, it is suggested to have the following counterparts: ICT: MITA/OTAM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Agro processing: FARE/Chamber of commerce</li> <li>» Fisheries and aquaculture: MEXA/PP sub-sector platforms</li> <li>» Financial services: Global Finance Mauritius</li> <li>» Jewellery: SMEDA</li> </ul> <p>The following nascent sectors would be best represented by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Cultural tourism: Ministry of Arts and Culture</li> <li>» Medical devices: sector steering committee</li> </ul> <p>For each of the sectors, representatives of all relevant educational institutions should be part of the working groups, i.e. all educational institutions providing courses that are covering subjects relevant to the sector (including private). HRDC staff to facilitate discussions in all meetings.</p> <p>1.1.3. Each sector working group should be scheduled to meet at least once a year to review the curriculums, which would represent seven meetings a year for NES priority sectors, and could be extended upon inclusion of other sectors of the economy.</p> <p>1.2.1. Existing curriculums are to be revised through the national skills development platform and the relevant sector working groups. A yearly review of all existing sector-relevant courses is to be done and new proposals agreed through TEC, MITD and the MoEHR.</p>	1				» Mauritian economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» MOUs are signed with each sector counterpart and the exchange is formalized</li> <li>» MOUs signed with relevant public and private educational institutions to participate in the coordination meetings once a year.</li> <li>» Assigned HRDC staff is moderating and streamlining these meetings.</li> </ul>	HRDC	MoEHR, relevant Ministries, sector associations, Universities, MITD, private sector training institutions		
						» Mauritian economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» At least seven sector working group meetings per year carried out.</li> </ul>	HRDC	Relevant Ministries, sector associations, Universities, MITD, private sector training institutions		
						» Mauritian economy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» National skills development platform set as the reference point for curriculum revision</li> </ul>	TEC, MQA	MITD, Relevant Ministries, sector associations, Universities, private sector training institutions, HRDC		

**Strategic objective 1 : Adjust skills development policies and regulations to best serve export competitiveness**

Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=high 2=med 3=low	Implementation period					Beneficiaries	Targets	Lead implementer	Supporting implementers	Possible funding source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021					
1.2. Streamline curricula revision mechanisms	1.2.2. Minor adjustments and corrections on existing curricula will be made on a yearly basis. Proposals for new curricula will be done on a yearly basis and discussed. Upon approval an ad hoc technical committee on the elaboration of the curricula will be set up by the sector working groups.	1					» Mauritian economy	» Existing and new curriculum review system set up	TEC, MQA	MITD, Relevant Ministries, sector associations, Universities, private sector training institutions, HRDC		
	1.2.3. Priority areas for major interventions for curriculum revision are: » Financial services: increase level of specialisation of the current courses » ICT/Software development: review and upgrade fully the current offering to new available systems and tools	1					» Mauritian economy	» The curricula for financial services are reviewed by end-2017 » The curricula for Software development are reviewed by end-2017	TEC, MQA	MITD, Relevant Ministries, sector associations, Universities, private sector training institutions, HRDC		
1.3. Revise policies related to tertiary education goals to align with national economy	1.3.1. Conduct a broad analysis of the Mauritian economy and its skills category requirements in the next three years on current trends, particularly focusing on the proportions required for primary, secondary and tertiary sectors.	1				» Mauritian economy	» Broad skills analysis carried out with a forecast on required skills categories and qualification levels	MoEHR	TEC, HRDC			
	1.3.2. Review the targets setup through the Tertiary Education Strategy of having 73% of graduates in the country to a figure which is aligned with youth employment requirements of the country, spread evenly among the key economic sectors. Align new targets with the findings in 1.3.1.	1				» Mauritian economy	» Targets of the TES recalculated.	MoEHR	TEC		Budget 2016-2017	
1.4. Encourage reorientation of Mauritian universities in specific fields to avoid duplication	1.3.3. Review public budgeting among primary/secondary, TVET and tertiary public education based on weighting of skills levels requirements for the economy, identified in 1.3.1.	1				» Mauritian economy	» Budgets recalculated based on the new targets	MoEHR	TEC, MoEHR		Budget 2016-2017	
	1.4.1. Organize round table meetings between the five leading universities to agree on specific areas of specialization for each university. The objective would be to reinforce synergies between the institutions and exchange programmes, as well as to reduce the competition and duplication of efforts. The round table would then come up with a list of courses in which students could exchange with the other university to obtain credits. Involve the sector groups under the national skills development coordination platform in this work.	2				» Universities	» At least two series of round table meetings a year until 2018	TEC	HRDC, Universities			
1.5. Establish a clear responsibilities division between public and private educational institutions	1.4.2. Crystallize the agreements emerging from the universities' round tables through policies, in the longer term, to gradually consolidate and fix the acquired consensus and decisions.	2				» Mauritian economy	» New policies consolidated by end 2020	TEC	MoEHR			
	1.5.1. In line with the analysis carried out in 1.3.1. and the results of round table meetings of universities in 1.4., develop a list of fields for specialization of public educational institutions and fields for private schools.	1				» Mauritian economy	» Terms of reference developed for public and private educational institutions	TEC	MoEHR			

**Strategic objective 1 : Adjust skills development policies and regulations to best serve export competitiveness**

Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=high 2=med 3=low	Implementation period				Beneficiaries	Targets	Lead implementer	Supporting implementers	Possible funding source
			2017	2018	2019	2020					
1.5. Establish a clear responsibilities division between public and private educational institutions	1.5.2. Formalize a regulation for private investment in education to encourage and restrict the private institutions to some specific areas requiring reinforcement. Same to be done for public institutions. Areas for private sector institutions could be specifically linked with nascent NES sectors such as medical devices, aquaculture and agro processing, but are to be reconfirmed through the analysis in 1.3.1.	1					» Mauritian economy	» Regulation developed and approved	TEC	MoEHR	
1.6. Facilitate procedures for foreign workforce employment	1.6.3. Rationalize business management courses provision among public and private schools and develop exchanges possibilities among different tertiary institutions (public or private). 1.6.1. Streamline procedures related to work permits and occupational permits reception in scarcity areas in Mauritius such as in the manufacturing sector, skilled labour in jewellery sector, sea food processing sector and construction. 1.6.2. Establish a facilitated procedure for the spouse of a foreign worker to receive work and residence permits.	3					» Mauritian economy	» New structure of business schools developed » Network for exchanges put in place	TEC	MoEHR	
1.7. Review employment schemes to improve long-term youth and unemployed inclusion	1.7.1. Amend the YEP programme, to attach a condition requiring the issuance of a contract for the young employees after the subsidy programme and implement a gradual reduction of the subsidy. 1.7.2. Attach a contracting condition to the Placement and Training programme of the NEF.	2					» Mauritian economy	» New procedures for foreign workers employment put in place	MLIRET	BOI	
1.8. Support the streamlining of productivity-related skills throughout the private sector	1.8.1. Develop a systemic approach to drive productivity; develop a nation-wide productivity improvement programme that is holistic and that will need to be set in corporate strategies of all enterprises in Mauritius. 1.8.2. Require enterprises in the NES priority sectors to adopt the productivity programme's requirements. 1.8.3. Support enterprises, particularly SMEs, in the implementation of the productivity requirements through capacity building initiatives, particularly on-the-job trainings.	2					» Mauritian economy	» Spouses can receive a residence permit easily and stay long enough in Mauritius before finding employment	MLIRET	BOI	
1.9. Promote existing schemes for training and skills alignment initiatives	1.9.1. Hold a promotional campaign among enterprises on the HRDC training levy and the GTES, encouraging enterprises to take part in the schemes, through presentation of long-term advantages. 1.9.2. Promote the GTES scheme to students within universities through sensitization campaigns.	2					» Mauritian economy	» New condition attached to the YEP » New condition attached to the Placement and Training Programme » Sectors promoted through the NEF	MLIRET	MoEHR, TEC	
							» Mauritian economy	» Sectors promoted through the NEF	NEF	HRDC, MoEHR	
							» Mauritian economy	» Productivity programme developed and launched	NEF	HRDC, MoEHR, MITD	
							» Mauritian economy	» All priority sectors enterprises adopt the recommendations by end 2018 » All other enterprises adopt the recommendations by end 2019	NPCC	NPCC	
							» Mauritian economy	» SMEs in the priority sectors supported to implement productivity recommendations	MoEHR	MITD	Growth Opportunity for SMEs (GOSM)
							» Mauritian economy	» Promotional campaign carried out among enterprises	NPCC	HRDC	
							» Mauritian economy	» Desk set up in five universities	HRDC	MoEHR, TEC	

**Strategic objective 2: Bring educational institutions up to speed with the needs of the Mauritian economy**

Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=high 2=med 3=low	Implementation period					Beneficiaries	Targets	Lead implementer	Supporting implementers	Possible funding source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021					
2.1. Bring Mauritian tertiary education to a high level of quality and recognition	2.1.1. Put in place a national professional development framework led by TEC for university teachers, which integrates regular training, visits to leading international universities, assisting leading educational innovation conferences, as well as symposiums in their respective fields and areas of competency. Give the status of Professor Emeritus to leading Professors.	1					» Universities	» National professional development framework put in place » Capacity building offer by TEC is broadened » Status of "Professor Emeritus" put in place	TEC	Universities, MoEHR, HRDC		
	2.1.2. Regularly invite leading teachers and scholars who are acknowledged international experts in their respective fields, to give seminars or conferences in Mauritian universities. Maintain strong linkages with these leading teachers and develop long-lasting partnerships in view of common research projects.	2					» Universities	» At least two international teachers invited per year per curriculum » Invited teachers interested in returning	Universities	TEC		
	2.1.3. Develop a national competency framework for digital skills for teachers and teaching assistants of Mauritian universities. Teaching staff should receive training in relevant digital technologies and pedagogies as part of initial training and continuous professional development. This should be integrated into national professional development framework under 2.1.1.	1					» Universities	» National competency framework for relevant digital skills established, part of the professional development in 2.1.1.	TEC	Universities, MoEHR, HRDC	Budget 2016-2017	
2.2. Upgrade education methods in universities	2.1.4. Each university to stimulate research and thought leadership in their specialization areas (as per agreements of the universities roundtable meetings in activity 1.4.1.) through integration of research projects in each curriculum, selection of best students and retention of their involvement in university research after degrees reception. Develop MOUs with leading international universities in these specialization areas and establish connections for Mauritian teachers to: » Advertise current research and findings by universities in Mauritius » Develop common research projects with these universities	1					» Universities	» Number of scholars involved in research increases by 20% » At least 15 MOUs developed by 2020 by all five universities of Mauritius	Universities	TEC		
	2.1.5. Encourage affiliation of public universities in Mauritius to international regulatory bodies like QAA (UK), AMBA, etc.	3					» Universities	» At least one university affiliated by 2020	MoEHR	TEC, Universities		
	2.1.6. Develop alternative and more flexible modes of delivery of materials, especially targeted at currently employed people. These could include, but not limited to: » Evening seminar programmes » Online courses and materials availability » Teaching videos » Assign credits and certificates to the completion of these materials.	2					» Universities	» Each university in Mauritius to develop at least one alternative course module » Credits and diplomas assigned to new course modules	Universities	TEC		
2.2.1. Within the national professional development framework for Mauritian teachers, include a module on new educational techniques and assimilation methods, favouring critical thinking and strengthening analytical skills of students. The following methods should be taught: » Inquiry-Based Learning » Problem-Based Learning » Active Learning » Case Study Method » Cooperative Learning » Team Projects assignments	1					» Universities	» Educational method programme integrated into the professional development » The programmes covers all six areas	TEC	Universities, MoEHR, HRDC			

**Strategic objective 2: Bring educational institutions up to speed with the needs of the Mauritian economy**

Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1 = high 2 = med 3 = low	Implementation period					Beneficiaries	Targets	Lead implementer	Supporting implementers	Possible funding source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021					
2.2. Upgrade education methods in universities	<p>2.2.2. Through the reviews of curriculums at universities (activity 1.2.1.), readjust formats of courses to integrate new ways of delivery and learning. Each mandatory course will need to be accompanied by at least one of the following formats of delivery:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Laboratory and practical learning</li> <li>» Continuous assessment in seminars</li> <li>» Learning through research projects</li> <li>» Development of presentations/public speaking</li> <li>» E-learning</li> </ul>	1					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Formats reviewed through the sector platforms.</li> <li>» Each mandatory course integrates a module of practical or research based complement</li> </ul>	Universities	TEC, national skills development coordination platform		
	<p>2.2.3. Develop new student assessment methods, examining not only the level of factual knowledge but also soft skills of students such as quality of team work through common projects, presentation and communication skills – ability to transfer messages effectively while generating interest, analytical skills, etc. The new assessment methods should also focus on an outcome-based and continuous assessment rather than on final/bi-annual examinations. The new assessment methods to be passed on to teachers through the national professional development framework in 2.1.1.</p>	1					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» New assessment method in place integrating soft skills assessment</li> </ul>	Universities	TEC		
	<p>2.2.4. Promote the development of digital education centres in universities in addition to traditional libraries.</p>	2					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Universities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» At least three digital libraries created by 2020</li> </ul>	Universities	TEC		
2.3. Increase linkages between educational institutions and enterprises	<p>2.3.1. Strengthen linkages and collaboration mechanism between Mauritian educational institutions and enterprises through the following initiatives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Formulate internship programmes between private sector and universities / TVET development coordination platform.</li> <li>» Integrate within universities' or MITD's course visits from guest speakers from the Mauritian private sector/companies to deliver special training sessions to Mauritian students. Similarly, invite successful Mauritian companies to give speeches at universities.</li> <li>» Send teachers on national and international industry visits to provide them with first-hand learning experiences and to help build industry linkages. To be done through the national professional development framework.</li> <li>» Selected universities to initiate research studies covering specific challenges faced by the industry to generate thought leadership and find appropriate solutions (disseminate results through their network and through universities).</li> </ul> <p>2.3.2. The industry linkages creation initiatives in activity 2.3.1. to be integrated in year one of a student's experience and be systemized throughout in order to ensure the knowledge is properly built.</p>	1					<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Educational institutions</li> <li>» Enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Internship programmes commonly formulated and included in each curriculum</li> <li>» Guests from private sector visit courses and give speeches</li> <li>» At least one visit is conducted to the industry every five years by each teacher through the national professional development framework in 2.1.1.</li> <li>» At least 10 research projects in line with industry's needs are initiated</li> </ul>	Universities	TEC, HRDC, national skills development coordination platform		
							<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Educational institutions</li> <li>» Enterprises</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>» Industry linkages start from year one of each curriculum</li> </ul>	Universities	TEC, HRDC, national skills development coordination platform		

**Strategic objective 2: Bring educational institutions up to speed with the needs of the Mauritian economy**

Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=high 2=med 3=low	Implementation period					Beneficiaries	Targets	Lead implementer	Supporting implementers	Possible funding source
			2017	2018	2019	2020	2021					
2.4. Promote agricultural, industrial and manufacturing economic sectors in primary and secondary school	2.4.1. Include sensitization initiatives in primary and secondary schools in areas such as: » Aquaculture and ocean economy » Agriculture » Hospitality and culinary arts » Handicrafts » Manufacturing This could be a thematic day with manual activities and representatives from the fields attending to explain to children. 2.4.2. Include manual activities into the courses to stimulate interest in manufacturing and handicraft works at an early age.	2					» Primary and secondary education	» At least one sensitization initiative conducted for every class.	Primary and secondary schools	MoEHR, HRDC		
								» Primary and secondary education	» Manual activities courses integrated in the curriculum	Primary and secondary schools	MoEHR, HRDC	
2.5. Refocus research on emerging sectors to accompany their development	2.5.1. In connection with activity 2.1.4, initiate research initiatives on emerging sectors of Mauritian economy such as : » Aquaculture and ocean economy » Food processing » Cultural tourism » Medical devices manufacturing 2.5.2. Establish communication mechanism, disseminating research results to the stakeholders of the relevant sectors.	1					» Universities	» At least one research project launched in all four sectors	Universities	National skills development coordination platform, MRC		
								» Universities	» Feedback loop mechanism in place	Universities	National skills development coordination platform, MRC	
	2.5.3. In line with 2.1.2, invite international leading teachers and scholars in the four emerging sectors to present their research and findings in Mauritius in their fields.	2					» Universities	» At least one international teacher invited for an emerging sector	Universities	TEC		

**Strategic objective 3: Establish a collaborative approach to identify required skills within the private sector**

Operational objective	Activities	Priority 1=high 2=med 3=low	Implementation period				Beneficiaries	Targets	Lead implementer	Supporting implementers	Possible funding source
			2017	2018	2019	2020					
3.1. Establish sector-specific mechanisms and terms of reference for skills gap identification	<p>3.1.1. In each sector of the economy, reach an agreement among private sector representatives/the sector association on the internal feedback loop mechanism to present well-constructed information to the national skills development coordination platform in activity 1.1.1.</p> <p>The mechanism put in place should establish the common definition of required skills for the industry and an internal sector review process to incorporate long-term requirements of all sector representatives.</p> <p>In the NES priority sectors, this information will be transferred through the following interlocutors to the academia :</p> <p>ICT: MITIA / OTAM</p> <p>Agro processing: FARE/Chamber of commerce</p> <p>Fisheries and aquaculture: MEXA/PP sub-sector platforms</p> <p>Financial services: Global Finance Mauritius</p> <p>Jewellery : SMEDA</p> <p>The following nascent sectors would be best represented by:</p> <p>Cultural tourism: Ministry of Arts and Culture</p> <p>Medical devices: sector steering committee</p>	1				Private sector	<p>Sector-specific mechanisms identified in mature NES priority sectors (ICT, Agro processing, Fisheries and aquaculture, Financial services, Jewellery) by end-2017</p> <p>Sector-specific mechanisms identified in nascent NES priority sectors (Cultural tourism, medical devices) by end-2017</p>	Sector associations/ private sector operators	HRDC		

**Specific activities required in NES priority sectors pertaining to skills development (taken from sector-specific POAs)****Links to sector activities (numbering as per sector POA)**

<b>Fisheries and Aquaculture</b>	
3.3. Ensure consistent supply of workforce for the fisheries and aquaculture sector	3.3.1. 3.3.2. 3.3.3.
<b>Jewellery</b>	
1.1. Upgrade public vocational training in Jewellery	1.1.1. 1.1.2.
<b>Medical and scientific devices</b>	
3.1. Align the education infrastructure with the requirements of industry	3.1.1. 3.1.2. 3.1.3. 3.1.4. 3.1.5. 3.1.6.

**Specific activities required in NES priority sectors pertaining to skills development (taken from sector-specific POAs)**

**Links to sector activities (numbering as per sector POA)**

**Software development (ICT)**

1.1. Improve human capital and talent retention in the sector

1.1.1.

1.1.2.

1.1.3.

1.1.4.

1.1.5.

1.1.6.

1.1.7.

**Branding**

3.6. Foster development of online services for branding and promotion

3.6.1.

3.6.2.

**SME integration**

2.2 Improve the skills of the SME sector

2.2.1.

2.2.2.

2.2.3.

2.2.4.

2.2.5.



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