



Lessons learned for the TEI OP-VET

23rd October 2024

A partnership project

4 pillars, 1 Toolbox

1. REQUEST-
BASED
TECHNICAL
SUPPORT

2. FUNDING OF
INNOVATIVE
PILOT
PROJECTS

3. SHARING
KNOWLEDGE &
TOOLS


4. SUPPORTING THE
POSITIVE EFFECTS
OF EUROPEAN
INVESTMENTS

Completed

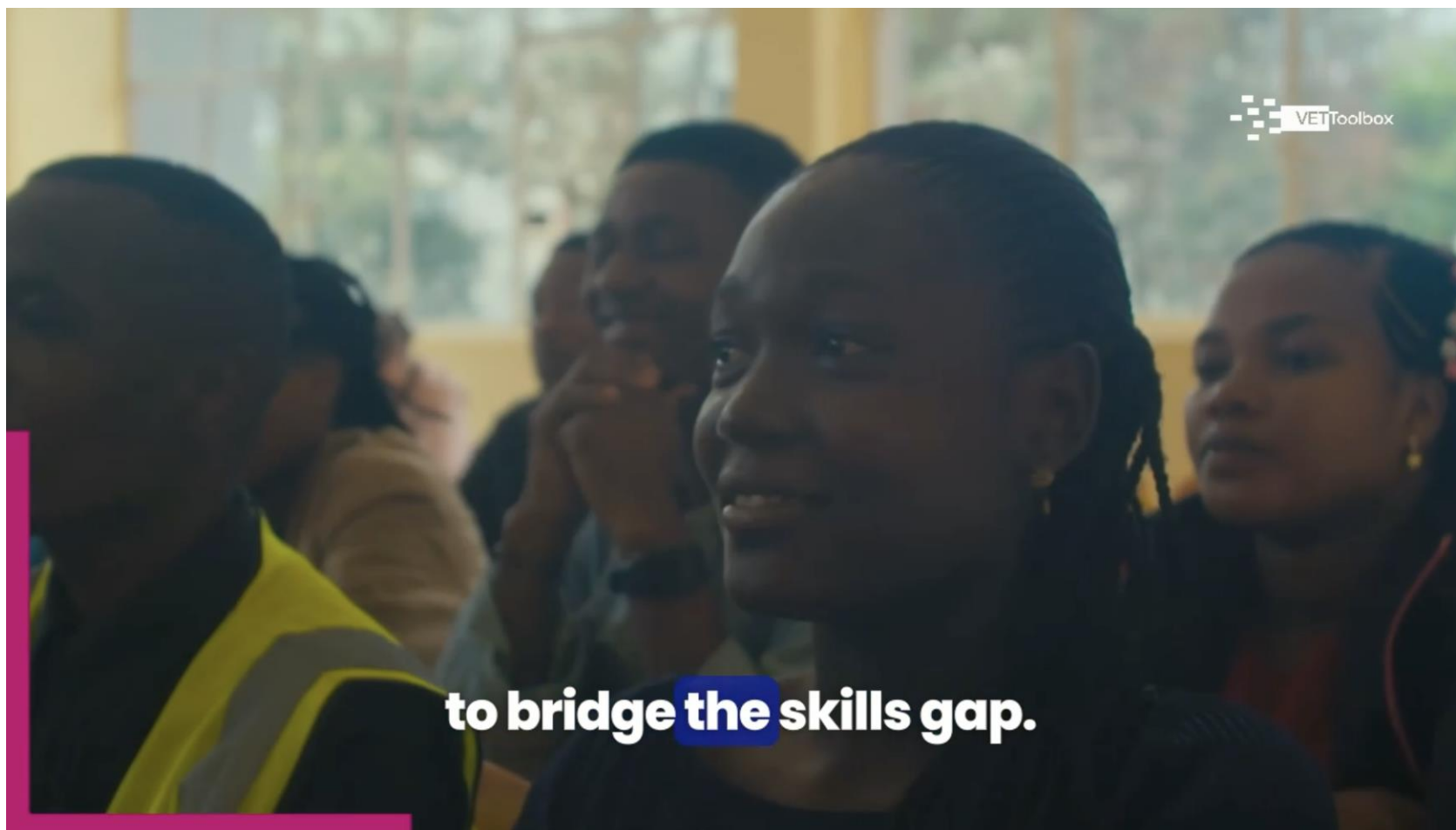
€ 15 million (EU) + 500.000 (BMZ)

 October 2017 - December 2022

€ 15 million (EU) +
1.250.000 (BMZ)

 September 2020 -
March 2025

Piloting an opportunity-driven approach to VET



Piloting an opportunity-driven approach to VET

In how far was VET Toolbox really "opportunity-driven"?

- Developing a **shared understanding** of "opportunity-driven" took a while.
- **"Aha" moment** during Peer Learning workshop mid-2023.
- Expectations from DG INTPA evolved.
- VET Toolbox used a more **flexible approach**, with a broad definition of opportunities and investments, tailored to the realities.

Chosen investment opportunities and impact on employment

- Exploring/identifying **real "investment"** (EU-linked) **opportunities** presented quite some challenges:
 - Defined **list of countries** and set **timeframe** of the VET Toolbox project.
 - Opportunities were not always available in the **specific location and time frame**.
 - In some cases, **not enough agency knowledge of the context** or sufficient **networks** in place to identify relevant opportunities quickly.



Different types of opportunities

Examples:

- **Governmental or EU-promoted investment programmes** (MWI, GHA, UGA, COG/eco-tourism) – visibility, policy backup, promising for effects on VET reform, sustainability and local employment.
 - **Malawi:** The Malawi government initiated a huge 14-year investment, the Shire Valley Transformation Project (SVTP), to boost commercial farming, expected to create over 18,000 jobs in the sector.
- **Investments by private companies** (NGA, SEN, TAN, COD) – high private sector involvement from the start and concrete/current job opportunities (vacancies).
 - **Senegal:** SMT-Volvo extends their sales of trucks and heavy engines which creates a need for qualified maintenance staff in client companies - over 200 employment opportunities have been identified.



Different types of opportunities

- **Evolving governmental or EU regulations and/or priorities** (KEN, COG, MOZ, CIV, COD) – seizing employment opportunities in a labour market environment conducive to (future) investments.
 - **Kenya:** Aligned with EU and Kenyan government priorities on the green economy, VET Toolbox engaged the private sector and developed skills for jobs in the e-waste sector, based not on investments from the private sector but on needs that arise due to green practices/CSR.
 - **Congo:** VET Toolbox selected the agroforestry sector, where private companies are confronted with a growing and evolving demand for skilled labour, particularly to address the specific requirements of wood processing in alignment with recent governmental regulations.
 - **Côte d'Ivoire:** Aligned with government priorities, the project engaged business associations and single companies with concrete employment needs in ICT, renewable energy and eco-construction.

The investment opportunity (type and timing) highly impacts the employment potential.





Piloting an opportunity-driven approach to VET

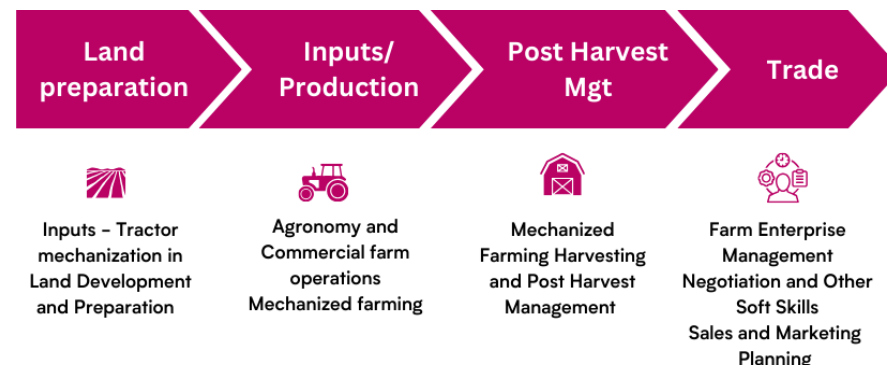
What to consider for the TEI OP-VET?

- **Clear definition and shared understanding of OP-VET and key terms for a more streamlined OP-VET approach needed – communication and promotion!**
- **Realising a paradigm shift**
 - Active participation of the PS from the start – taking into account their priorities/realities
 - Employment as leading principle (not starting from VET-issues)
 - Choice of "investments": type of investment, timing and execution for maximal employment effects
 - A value chain approach for maximal economic and societal benefits

Value chain approach

For VET Toolbox, more or less in the focus, some examples (a.o.):

- **Malawi:** equipping a workforce for the agricultural value chain (as part of the SVTP).



Savannah Zone Agricultural Productivity Improvement Project (SAPIP)
Skills Needs Analysis, WIL and Employment Opportunity

- **DRC:** investment/employment opportunities in the mining value chain sectors: construction, transport, hospitality, and digital services.
- **Nigeria:** a lead company offering in-house training programmes that focus on technical and business skills for cashew farming, production and processing covering the cashew value chain in the country.

Private Sector Engagement

What was done in terms of PSE?

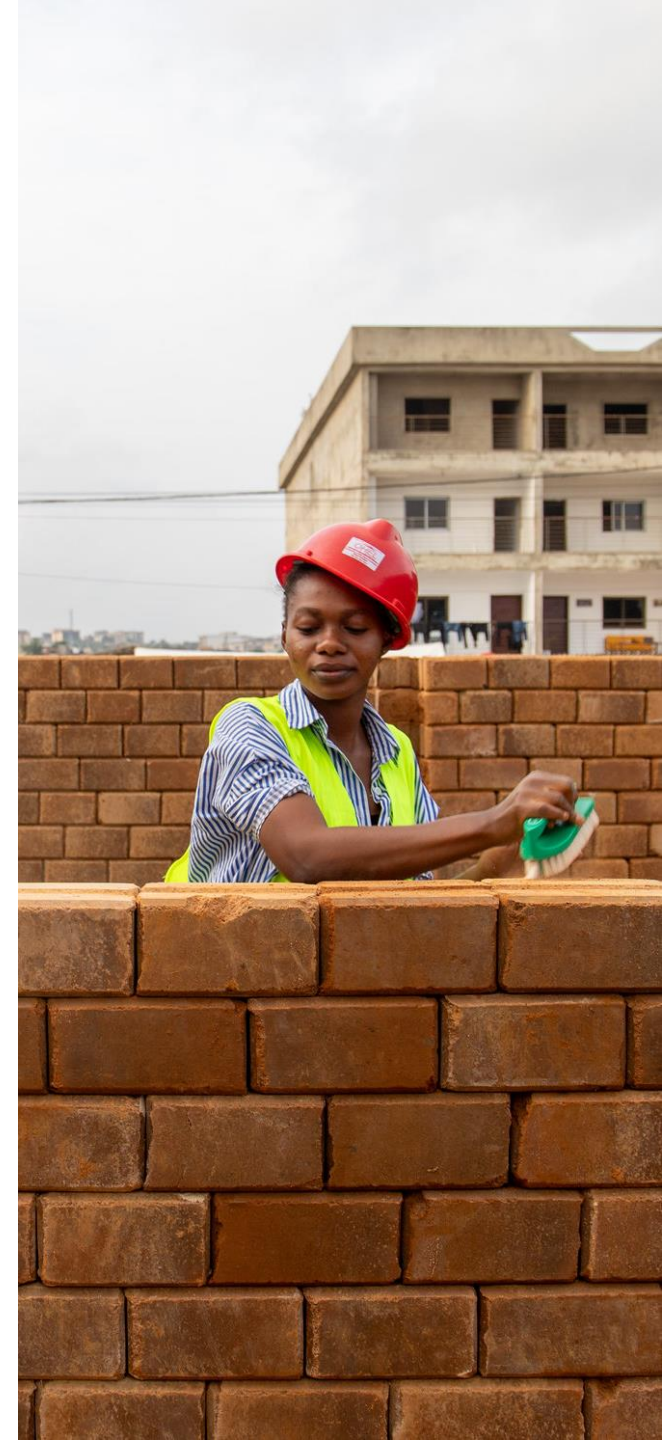
- **PS consultations** mainly through **agency networks** in-country often based on existing relations:
 - Involvement in the opportunity-identification/exploration process.
 - PS key player in set-up/strengthened PPD platforms (1 result area).
 - PS highly engaged in training design/delivery and in transition phase/ commitment to employ graduates.
- PSE took place at different levels:
 - At **strategic higher level** through, business associations/fora, with AU/EU (UGA, GHA, SEN etc.).
 - At the **operational/sector-specific** level (MOZ, NIG, TAN etc.).
- Sometimes, PSE happened via a **bottom-up process**: through word-of-mouth, and PS came up with a concrete opportunity and skills needs (**SEN, NIG, CIV...**).
- **Transversal topics** like decent work/gender have been addressed/promoted but were not necessarily on top of companies' minds.
- **PSE in general lacked a strategic/systematic approach across the 11 countries.**



Private Sector Engagement

Examples:

- **Mozambique:** A business association with several hundreds of registered members takes the lead in the PPD, addressing skills development in the logistics and transport sector.
- **Côte d'Ivoire:** The project identified more than 400 concrete vacancies for which there is a lack of skills within companies in the ICT, renewable energy and eco-construction sectors. The training is fully taking place at the companies, and MoUs were signed to hire the graduates upon completion.
- **Senegal:** The project explored opportunities in a wider scope of sectors. The PS was consulted more broadly at a higher level through the establishment of an advisory board gathering key actors such as the EUD, Chambers of Commerce, and national training funds, to propose and assess current and newly emerging opportunities across sectors.





Private Sector Engagement

What to consider for the TEI OP-VET?

- **Ensure a systematic PSE** along the OP-VET journey, **map concrete steps/tasks of PSE** (who, what, how and if successful?)
→ key question by INTPA
- **At strategic level, ensure PSE via a Strategic Advisory Board**, asking PS actors about their opinions/needs for designing/finetuning and implementing the services
- **Build on existing PPD platforms**, structures/networks via EUDs and bilateral agencies (exchange sessions)
- **2 step-approach for PSE:**
 - Bigger PS players linked to investments, with resources, infrastructure, market influence and network
 - Broader PS eco-system (MSMEs) within the value chain
- **Make a clear difference between PSE and PSD**

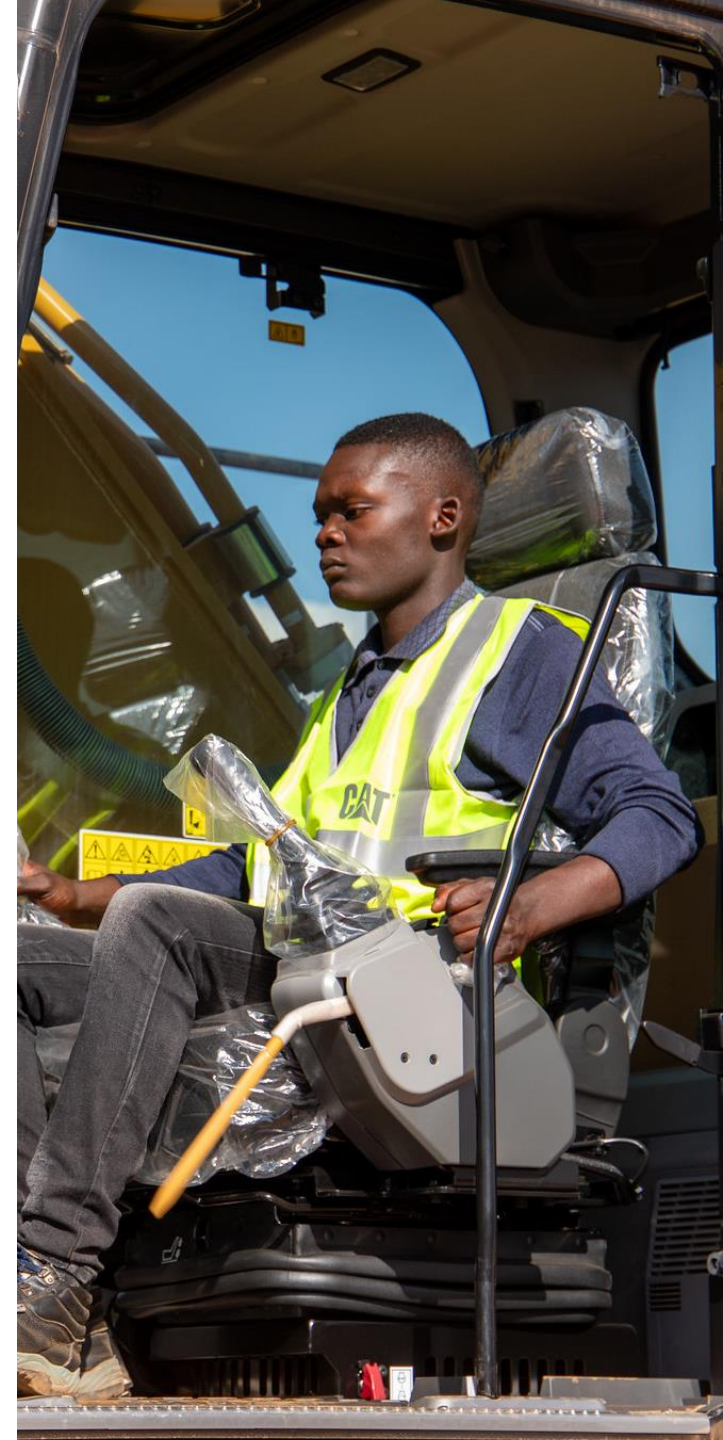
PPD (PPPs)

- **Definition** of PPD rather **loose/flexible**
- VET Toolbox: **new PPD structures** or strengthened **existing PPD structures** for efficient opportunity exploration and project implementation
 - **Operational PPDs**: project implementation and follow-up; address context-specific needs at the sectorial and value-chain level; operational decisions.
 - Meeting quite regularly, but mostly not formalised
 - **Steering PPDs** ensure strategic decision-making and steering of the project.
 - In the form of steering committees, a few times a year
 - **Advocacy PPDs** promote the opportunity-driven approach, strengthen the projects' visibility at the policy level and stimulate VET reform processes.
 - Often in the form of single events (opening/closing)
- **Various PPPs** emerged mostly between companies and VET providers, but also with business associations and VET or employment authorities.
 - **Not all PPPs were formalised!** As it wasn't always the most suitable approach.

Sectoral and cross-sectoral PPDs

Examples:

- **Mozambique:** VET Toolbox helped link the private sector with VET providers and governmental representatives. A business association with several hundreds of registered members leads the PPD in the logistics and transport sector.
- **DRC:** Opportunities were defined in key economic sectors linked to the mining sector value chain. High-level public and private actors from these sectors are represented in a cross-sectoral, high-level PPD that supports the value chain development. Complementary sector-specific PPD structures ensure opportunity-driven skills development in the specific sectors.





PPD (PPPs)

What to consider for the TEI OP-VET?

- **Make use of existing platforms and structures** as much as possible, like business associations for instance, and build their capacities for PPD,
- **A platform for systematic exchange (no one-off)** on **skills development, employment and investment** needs/plans by key public and private actors.
- **Consider opportunity-identifying mechanisms in PPD** for continuous identification and validation of **new investment or employment opportunities** – sustainability/paradigm shift.
- **Organise interactive multi-level structures** where strategic PPDs build a good base for **operational training delivery** that fits the private sector needs in the specific context.
- **Ensure a local private and/or public lead** to improve the **sustainability** of PPDs and guarantee real ownership at the local level.
- **Use PPD to stimulate VET reform** through strategic PPDs, ideally at the regional or national level, that fulfil an **advocacy function** towards the policy level.
- **Address the topic of sustainability** along with **financing possibilities** (joint financing or cost-sharing mechanism) **early** in the process and define an exit strategy before the project ends.

Gender

- VET Toolbox operated mainly in **male-dominated sectors** – gender inclusion turned out to be extra-challenging.
- Responding to PS needs & gender (inclusion) does not necessarily go hand-in-hand.
- Measures were taken – mainly regarding **gender-inclusive training delivery** (not necessarily specific to OP-VET).
- **Targets were achieved:** 39% of all employed graduates are women; 66% employment rate for women, 77% men.

➤ **Considerations for the TEI: Need for a strategic approach**

General conclusion

- The **context** plays an important role, and a **good knowledge/network** on the ground is key.
- **Invest in PSE** - convince them about the added value and get them on board throughout the action (from the start).
- Connect **skills development** to a promising **investment opportunity** that enhances **immediate employment opportunities** and adds value to the local economy.
- Harvest all the **outcomes** of the action – along the **value chain** (define the value chain and envisaged effects).
- Be clear about ambitions regarding **transversal topics** (gender, decent work...) in an OP-VET approach – strategic approach and operationalisation.



| **Any questions?**

Interested in future sessions on
specific topics/services?



| Thank you!



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