



## **Terms of Reference for Conduct of Labour Market Study**

### **Background**

Through UNESCO, the African Development Bank (AfDB) is supporting South Sudan to create an enabling environment for diversified and resilient socio-economic development that could reduce its fragility. This support particularly focuses on Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) for value chain development that would result in economic diversification and resilience. The choice of TVET courses to focus on if they must be labour-responsive is better informed by a labour market study.

A couple of labour-market studies have been conducted in the past, including the TVET Rapid Assessment (UNESCO, 2018), which narrowly looked at TVET and labour market dynamics; the Labour Market Assessment and Review (UNESCO, MoL, and EMPOWER, 2018), which was based more on desk review and less on field data; and others conducted by the UNESCO partners (NRC, ACROSS, FCA, OPRD) implementing the Strengthening Technical and Vocational Education and Training in South Sudan project. These had their limitations. They were “rapid” studies combining limited desk review and limited field-generated data. They focused on limited geographical areas of interest and thus could not present a nationwide market outlook. Further, they cannot now be relied on as some changes might have taken place recently in the market.

In the absence of a comprehensive labour market study, TVET provisions risk mismatch between the employable skills needed by the industry and what the training institutions are producing. As a result, skills development in South Sudan has been supply-driven with limited engagement with private sector/industry to ensure relevance. Moreover, this has been compounded by lack of well-equipped facilities that led to graduates with theory and limited practical skills, curricula that focus on trade-specific skills with little to no integration of transversal skills which are much needed in the world of work today. The dominance of basic/foundational level (3-6 months duration) TVET provision in the TVET system in the country resulted in graduates not adequately trained to compete on the labour market. Consequently, it has been observed that foreign workers offer much of the needed skilled labour in South Sudan.

The South Sudan government aims to regulate employment of foreign workers, prioritizing job opportunities for its citizens, as outlined in the Labor Act of 2017. While the country’s current labour force includes a significant number of people with limited education and skills, there is increasing demand for well qualified workforce to support emerging economic sectors such agro-processing, manufacturing, hospitality, construction, etc. The government emphasis on agriculture as a target sector to develop to diversify the economy and reduce the overreliance on oil requires highly skilled workforce that can add value to products to make the country’s products competitive in the domestic and international market. This requires strengthening the capacity of the training institutions to produce highly skilled graduates with relevant skills (both trade-specific and transversal) that would enable them to secure gainful or productive employment and compete with skilled workforce from the neighbouring countries employed in the country’s labour market. The relevance of the skills comes with matching the training – course content, scope, and standards – to

market demands. Thus, under the project “Support to TVET for Value Chain Development” UNESCO intends to commission a labour market study to provide information on employment dynamics and market needs to inform the choice of TVET courses to be prioritized under this and other skills development projects.

### **Country Context and Situation**

Human capital development in South Sudan is among the lowest. This is the result of destruction of skills training facilities during the decades of civil war (1983-2005; 2013-2018) and low public investment in education in general and skills development in particular over the years since independence. The weak national economy heavily hindered national plans to develop the skills training sector to capacitate the youth to enable them to be catalyst of development. The few skills development institutions beside the universities that are contributing to skills development are mostly rebuilt by the development partners, and they run short project-based training programmes mostly targeting the informal sector of the economy. Moreover, until the development of the TVET Level 1 curriculum, the National Qualification Framework, and the Occupational Standards, there existed multiple curricula without any qualification standards and implementation structure, which contributes not only to skills mismatch but also lack of opportunities for progression in the TVET path. The limited number of these institutions and their limited enrolment capacities have huge bearing on the supply of skills in general leaving the country with skills deficit. Consequently, skilled work is predominantly performed by foreign workers with limited or no transfer of skills and knowledge to the locals. This foreign labour is both expensive and unsustainable. In addition, the local youth feel economically disenfranchised, which is a potential for further conflict driven by negative coping mechanisms. The continuation of this situation puts at risk both the country’s dream of reaping demographic dividends associated with its youthful population, and political stability if we maintain that an exceptionally high youth unemployment rate makes countries more prone to political instability<sup>1</sup>, or that youth unemployment and underemployment are threat to the social, economic and political stability of nations<sup>2</sup>.

While steps have been taken to address the issue of quality and relevance of skills development programmes through the development of occupational standards, qualification framework, quality assurance framework, skills identification strategy, and improved coordination mechanism guided by the Unified TVET policy, formal TVET still has very low enrolment rates compared to informal TVET. The latter attracts young people with low education/literacy levels, which impacts the capacity of the graduates to compete favourably in the labour market. This is not surprising given the low adult literacy rate in the country – overall 34.52% with 40.26% for male and 28.86% for female<sup>3</sup>, and the low enrolment in school (with estimate of 2.8 million of school going age out of school<sup>4</sup>). In addition,

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<sup>1</sup> Azeng, Theresa F. and Yogo, Thierry U. (2013). Youth Unemployment and Political Instability In Selected Developing Countries, Working paper Series N° 171 African Development bank, Tunis, Tunisia.

<sup>2</sup> Se for example, Urdal, H. (2006) ‘A Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence’, International Studies Quarterly. 50(3): 607-630; and Urdal, H. (2012). ‘Clash of Generations? Youth Bulges and Political Violence’. Expert Paper N° 2012/1, United Nations Population Division, New York. Available at: [http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/expertpapers/Urdal\\_Expert%20Paper.pdf](http://www.un.org/esa/population/publications/expertpapers/Urdal_Expert%20Paper.pdf) (Accessed 20 March 2025).

<sup>3</sup> UNESCO Institute of Statistics (UIL) estimates of 2018.

<sup>4</sup> Ministry of General Education and Instruction Out of School Mapping, 2021.

the low enrolment of girls in school, the low completion rate at the basic education level does not only affect progression to post-primary but also participation in TVET formal training particularly in the STEM-based trades. This puts girls and women at a disadvantage in the labour market as their skills often fall below the industry requirements.

The humanitarian outlook for 2025 is described as dire, with an estimated 9.3 million people, or 69% of the population needing assistance due to conflict, food insecurity, malnutrition, the impact of the Sudan crisis, severe flooding, and an economic crisis<sup>5</sup>. Five of these factors driving the humanitarian crisis can be mitigated by skills development, economic growth with related expansion in the labour market, and improved service delivery. This implies a critical role for TVET, the tertiary institutions, and industry. For example, conflict is man-made resulting from power and resource factors. Food insecurity results from combination of the conflicts (national and sub-national), curtailed and/or low production capacity, and natural disasters (mainly floods and drought), and high food prices. Malnutrition is a product of food insecurity, which can be mitigated by improving food production and purchasing power of the communities. Severe flooding is a perennial phenomenon, which continuous to ravage communities because of limited local mitigation capacity. The economic crisis results from stagnated economic growth aided by overreliance on oil, conflicts (internal and external), and lack of strategic investment in the productive sectors of the economy. The TVET system, the tertiary institutions, and industry can play their role better only when facilitated with credible data on the supply and demand dynamics of the market.

### **Objective of the Study**

The labour market study to be conducted aims to provide credible information for TVET stakeholders to better understand the labour market condition, occupations and skills in demand in South Sudan and the major labour-receiving or employing sectors in the country, by state or specific geographic locations to inform decision making. Thus, it is expected that the findings of the study will not only present a broad picture of the current and anticipated labour market, but also location-specific picture so that the findings are useful for both policy interventions (which are upstream interventions) as well as downstream interventions, such as trainings in the institutions.

### **Specific Objectives**

1. The study should help stakeholders gain a full understanding of the labour market condition (prevalence of informal versus formal labour market, existence of opportunities for TVET graduates, and challenges facing TVET graduates in the labour market).
2. Support stakeholders to identify the types and levels of skills in demand in the market.
3. Provide insights to TVET providers on the types of TVET programmes that meet immediate and anticipated labour needs
4. Identify opportunities, strength and challenges related to the capacity of TVET institutions to supply adequate gender and market responsive labour for the immediate and anticipated labour needs.

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<sup>5</sup> United Nations Humanitarian Needs and Response Plan for South Sudan 2025. Accessible at <https://humanitarianaction.info/document/humanitarian-needs-and-response-plan-south-sudan-2025#page-title>

5. Provide insights into the potential contribution of the private sector to the development of human capital responding to both the market needs as well as the gender disparity in the labour market.

### **Deliverables**

The following are the expected deliverables for the assignment:

1. An inception report describing in sufficient details the research framework to conduct the study (including elaborate methodology, proposed sample and sampling plan, work plan) within the timeframe indicated based on the main demographic, social, and economic characteristics of South Sudan in general, and specific geographic locations in the country. The framework should include the key questions to be asked.
2. Interim/draft report on the key findings.
  - a. The report should capture the current situation of the labour market and existing micro-businesses in South Sudan, including trends, challenges and opportunities for sustainable employment and self-employment opportunities; sectors and sub-sectors identified with high potentials for employment opportunities, and the skills demanded for each sector. The skills should include both soft-skills and hands-on skills, and the levels of these skills. It should also include the types of microbusinesses that can be developed by using skills that are required for the sectors and sub-sectors identified to have high potential for employment opportunities.
  - b. Further, the report should describe any pre-conditions necessary for sustainable micro-businesses based on the community and local market needs, private sector's current engagement and future needs and investment.
  - c. Finally, it should include statement on feasibility assessment and value chain analysis of key types of businesses identified in the key sectors and sub-sectors of the labour market.
  - d. Presentation of the key preliminary findings and recommendations
3. Final report reflecting incorporation of feedback generated from a validation workshop for stakeholders as well as UNESCO project team. The final report can include relevant recommendations on curriculum reform/development and training content, length and modalities.

### **Scope of the Study**

The proposed study will be a sample survey to be conducted nationwide with mixed methods employed for the study. The focus of the study should include:

- 1) Assessing the main demographic, social, and economic characteristics of the country as well as of specific geographical locations as different states may have demographic, social and economic characteristics different from others, and to avoid specific states getting lost in the big picture of the country.
- 2) Assessing and analyzing the current situation of the labour market and existing micro-businesses in the country, including trends, challenges and opportunities for sustainable employment and self-employment opportunities.
- 3) Identifying and analyzing sectors and sub-sectors with high potentials for employment opportunities.

- 4) Mapping and analyzing the skills demanded for each sector or sub-sector. The skills should include trade-specific (hands-on) and transversal or green skills, and their levels.
- 5) Mapping and analyzing types of microbusinesses that can be developed by using skills that are required for sectors and sub-sectors identified to be with high potential for employment opportunities.
- 6) Identifying any pre-conditions for sustainable microbusinesses based on the community and local market needs, private sector's current engagement and future needs and investment.
- 7) Mapping and assessing private sector employers and their contribution to apprenticeship placement of youth and provision of jobs.
- 8) Feasibility assessment and value chain analysis of key types of businesses.

## **Methodology**

Mixed methods approach should be used in the conduct of the study. These will include conducting desk review of relevant secondary data, interviews and meetings with relevant stakeholders with a focus on members of the South Sudan Chamber of Commerce, Industry and Agriculture (SSCCIA) at the central (national) and state level, the South Sudan Engineering Council, South Sudan Manufacturers Association, South Sudan Fisheries Association, Farmers Associations, Hospitality Industry Association, Honey Producers Association, and others representing the major labour-receiving or employing sectors, relevant TVET line ministries, INGOs and NNGOs involved in TVET, faith-based organizations involved in TVET, relevant UN agencies (mainly ILO and UNDP). The study may also benefit from field visits to observe community environment to assess the needs of microbusinesses and conduct feasibility assessment on the potential microbusiness ideas relevant to the sectoral skills in demand. Market observations and interviews of existing local businesses may also be considered to enrich the study. In conducting the field data collection, the contractor should ensure that the process is grounded on human rights and gender equality approaches underpinned by inclusivity and sensitivity to power dynamics, vulnerabilities and inequalities among the respondents. Throughout the study, the contractor is expected to maintain high levels of confidentiality ensuring processes and practices throughout the study conform to the UNESCO principles on the protection of personal data and privacy or by extension the Principles on the Protection of Personal Data and Privacy for the UN System Organizations.

## **Qualification and Experience**

### ***Education***

The lead researcher should have advanced university degree (Master/PhD) in the field of Education, Economics, Political Science, Social Sciences, and any other field relevant to the assignment. Other members of the research team must have at least a bachelor's degree in relevant field plus a post-graduate qualification in monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL).

### ***Work Experience***

- UNESCO is interested in hiring only a firm with proven record of accomplishment in working with skills development sector and experience conducting market analyses, evaluations, and baseline surveys in international settings. The firm should present at least three references from previous assignments undertaken.

- More than ten (10) years of work experience in skills development sector in coordination with government on policy development, qualification standards setting, curriculum development, labour market assessment, evaluations, and surveys.
- Experience working for International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) or the United Nations System in a post-conflict situation.
- Familiar with the TVET governance systems in South Sudan and the East African region.
- Extensive experience analysing data and preparing analytical reports for international assignments. Sample of previous written report should be submitted.

### **Competencies**

Competencies required for this assignment (of the team leader unless coordination and writing roles are assigned to others) include excellent coordination, facilitation and writing skills; ability to work in a team and to communicate in a timely and professional manner; and ability to work virtually and to cope with all virtual limitations and challenges as the situation may dictate in the assignment station. Fluency in English is a must, and ability to speak in Juba Arabic is an asset.

### **Evaluation Criteria**

**The technical evaluation will be out of 700 Marks and weighted out of 70% while Financial evaluation will be out of 30% to make the total 100%**

<b>No</b>	<b>Criteria</b>	<b>Obtainable Mark</b>
1	Education: The lead researcher should have a minimum of Masters university degree in the field of Education, Economics, Political Science, Social Sciences, and any other field relevant to the assignment. A PHD is an added advantage. Other members of the research team must have at least a bachelor's degree in relevant field plus a post-graduate qualification in monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning (MEAL).	<b>100</b>
2	Proven record of accomplishment in working with skills development sector and experience conducting market analyses, evaluations, and baseline surveys in international settings. Provide 3 References of previous assignments undertaken in the 5 years	<b>100</b>
3	Minimum of ten (10) years of work experience in skills development sector in coordination with government on policy development, qualification standards setting, curriculum development, labour market assessment, evaluations, and surveys	<b>100</b>
4	Technical Proposal (How the Technical Proposal Addresses the TOR)	<b>250</b>
5	Proven Experience working for International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) or the United Nations System in a post-conflict situation	<b>50</b>
6	Familiarity with the TVET governance systems in South Sudan and the East African region.	<b>50</b>
7	Extensive experience analysing data and preparing analytical reports for international assignments. Provide at least 2 samples of previous written report should be submitted.	<b>50</b>

	Sub total	700 (70%)
	Financial Evaluation	30%
	<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>

## How to Apply

Interested firms should submit their expression of interest by email addressed to [procurement.juba@unesco.org](mailto:procurement.juba@unesco.org) by **30 April 2025**. The subject should read “Application for Labour Market Study Consultancy”. The following are mandatory when submitting the application/expression of interest.

- 1 pager cover letter indicating qualifications/experience of the firm and statement of suitability for the assignment.
- A detailed technical proposal describing the approach and methodology of the assignment, a work plan, and brief comments on the firm’s understanding of the Terms of Reference.
- A financial proposal detailing the daily rate of the consultant and other relevant cost such as transportation, training of emulators among others. All cost elements (fees, travel, meetings, etc.) must be costed. The total sum of these elements will be the cost of the assignment.
- Organization profile and up-to-date curriculum vitae of the expert/team lead
- Valid operational registration certificate issued by a duly mandated authority. Important to indicate in the cover letter the length of time the firm has been in existence as a registered entity.