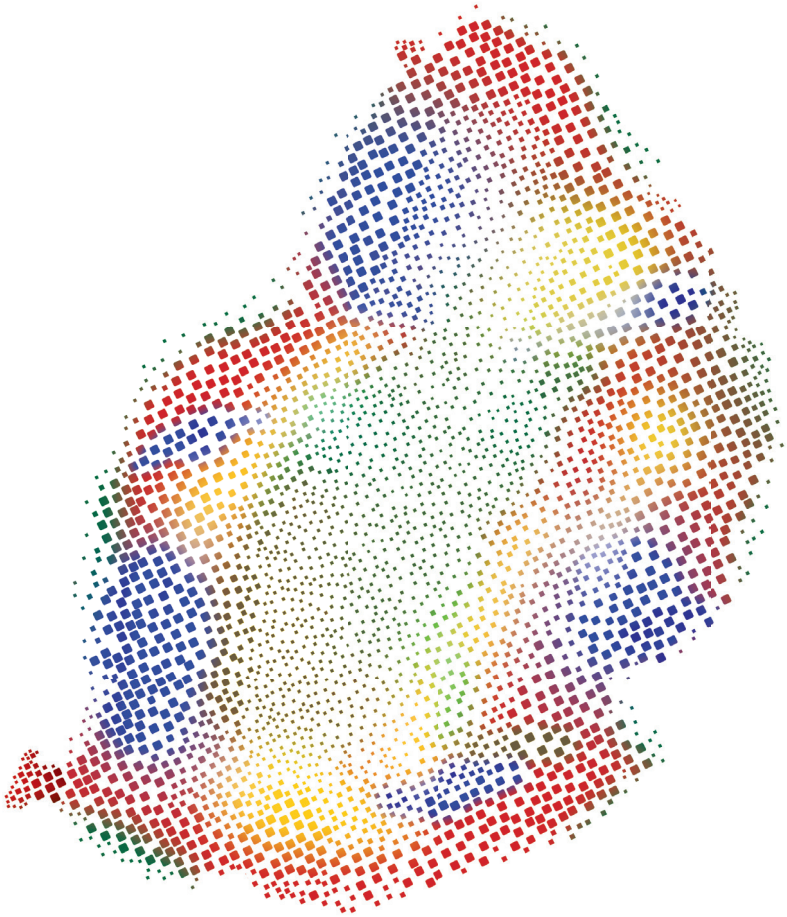
National Skills Development Strategy

2022-2026

Executive summary



A roadmap for tomorrow's skills

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Foreword

Skills are the global currency of the 21st century. Prior to the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economy and the world of work in general were already witnessing perpetual changes in the demand for appropriate skills sets. The COVID-19 pandemic has put to the fore the importance of a skills strategy that is structurally responsive to external shocks, as well as flexible enough to accommodate dynamic demands.

Without proper investment in skills, individuals do not make use of their full potential and do not optimally contribute to socio-economic growth, which erodes the competitive edge of economies. While certain hard skills will lose importance over time, other types of skills will be needed to cater for the impacts of technological, digital, socio-economic, geopolitical, and sanitary disruptions. Rapidly evolving skills needs raise challenges for labour market and skills development systems in most countries. Mauritius is no exception, and the supply of appropriate skills is a perpetual challenge. Given the sustained transformation of the economy, skills shortages exist, and stakeholders find it increasingly challenging to craft policies to deal with this situation. Job seekers face difficulties in finding job opportunities matching their qualifications, and employers grapple with the lack of skilled human resources. Consequently, some degree of misalignment between the supply and demand for skills is inevitable, particularly in the short run. However, the costs of persistent mismatch and shortages can be substantial. Individuals are also affected, as skills mismatch can bring about a higher risk of unemployment, lower wages, lower job satisfaction and poorer career prospects besides a decrease in productivity at enterprise level.

The formulation of the National Skills Development Strategy 2022-2026 grows out of the increased need for skills development to contribute towards addressing economic, social and developmental realities. Based on 2019 data, Mauritius was classified as a high-income country (World Bank 2020b) by the World Bank, which now categorises the island as an upper middle-income country (World Bank 2020b; 2022). The sustained supply of appropriate skills will therefore be one of the determining enablers that will contribute to upholding or improving this categorisation. The NSDS aims at underpinning and supporting Mauritius to achieve sustained growth and maintain its competitiveness in the long term. The timely implementation of the actions and targets set out in the strategy will support the development of a well-skilled and adaptable labour force.

Success will necessitate the involvement of all partners within the skills development space, including government, employers, education and training providers, non-governmental organisations and the society at large. An appreciation of the respective roles and responsibilities that each individual must play and shoulder so that our people and our economy can reach its full potential will also be required. The Strategy and its Action plan are the result of the collective effort of Ministries, parastatal bodies, education, training providers and private sector representatives, all vested with the common goal of improving and reforming the skills development system of Mauritius.

Acknowledgements

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[February 2018-August 2019]

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2. Mr T. Appadu, Permanent Secretary, Prime Minister's Office (from February 2018 to February 2019).
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Acronyms

E&T	Education and Training
ECTS	European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
ECVET	European Credit System for Vocational Education and Training
EDB	Economic Development Board
HE	Higher Education
HRDC	Human Resource Development Council
ITET	Institute of Technical Education and Technology
LGS	Levy Grant System
MoETEST	Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology
MoIDSC	Ministry of Industrial Development, SMES and Cooperatives
MIE	Mauritius Institute of Education
MITD	Mauritius Institute of Training and Development
MLHRDT	Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training
MQA	Mauritius Qualifications Authority
PML	Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd
SIC	Strategy Implementation Committee
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WoW	World of Work

Introduction

1. Introduction

1. The quality of a nation's education and training system impacts its long-term economic growth and income distribution, and a country's improved education and training system can lead to an improved future. Improvements in the skills of a nation's human capital can have enormous impacts on its economic development and future well-being.

2. The journey of the economic transformation of Mauritius has been remarkable. The country's economy has made significant strides since independence, and Mauritius has now been conferred the status of an upper-middle income country by the World Bank (World Bank 2022b). Mauritius followed the traditional path of economic development, from primary to secondary to tertiary sectors, and is now paving its way towards a knowledge-based economy. The concept of knowledge economy is based on the view that information, knowledge and high skills are requisites of economic growth and development.

3. The country's economy is driven by the services sector, which accounts for around 76% of GDP. The services sector is highly diverse, ranging from infrastructure services such as telecommunications, logistics and financial services, to tourism, ICT & business services, and social services such as health and education. Government policies now seek to stimulate economic growth in several areas, keeping inclusiveness, peace, democracy and governance, security, sustainability, ecology and connectivity central to development. In building the economy of the future, the Government Programme 2020-2024 is premised on the following areas of development: embracing the fourth industrial revolution and investment in cutting-edge technologies, including Artificial Intelligence, robotics, blockchain and Internet of Things; youth empowerment and development, digitalising public services and creating an e-Mauritius; promoting digital entrepreneurship, innovation and Research and Development; investing in technology accelerators and incubators targeted to Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises sector; encouraging the shift to modern organic and niche production in agriculture; boosting the conventional and smart construction sector; rebranding the tourism sector and targeting new markets; developing the fintech eco-system; promoting innovation-led and technology-intensive production to build export competitiveness; developing the blue economy; boosting the creative industry; and developing the circular economy, amongst others. Whilst the competitiveness of Mauritius is based on a large number of factors, the availability of highly skilled labour plays an important role.

4. Because improved education and training affords individuals high-quality knowledge and skills needed for contemporary labour markets, Mauritius recognises that today's strategic investments in the development of its people are the foundation of tomorrow's socio-economic development. As a modern nation, Mauritius wants to elevate its people's skill level to create a workforce with the required competencies for existing and emerging sectors.

5. To be able to achieve these goals, there was a need for an overarching framework that would create the right conditions to develop a skilled and capable workforce that contributes to and benefits from economic growth.

6. Human resources are undoubtedly at the heart of any economic development process, hence the need to foster skills and competencies of people for competitive economic advantage. The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) proposes a framework to create a development system that promotes foresightedness, responsiveness, inclusion and employability. The strategy is responsive to the changing demands of the local and global economy, and helps promote and also sustain social and economic development. It endeavours to build upon existing strengths and opportunities, taking into consideration both international best practices and endogenous knowledge and realities. The NSDS provides the vision and direction for skills development over the coming years, setting out the major commitments and key reforms that government needs to embark on and implement in partnership with relevant institutions, industry, workers and society. The intricate multiple responsibilities of all the different partners for the implementation of the strategies and the specific actions are crucial to the success of the NSDS.

7. The key driving force of this strategy is improving the effectiveness and efficiency of the skills development system. It is recognised that education, training and lifelong learning are fundamental to sustainable economic and social development. These should, therefore, form an integral part of comprehensive economic, social and labour market policies and programmes. The goal of the NSDS is to ensure that all these multiple structures and agents are mobilised towards a common purpose to ensure relevant and quality skills development initiatives in the medium to long term.

8. With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, the global economy and the World of Work (WoW) have faced significant tremors and have been severely impacted. It is fair to assume that COVID-19 can happen in waves, meaning that actions to counteract its impact within education and training systems and the world of work will also need to be cyclical.

9. The NSDS seeks to promote a skills development system and architecture that effectively responds to the needs of the labour market and also provides the skills needed by the recovering economy. The strategy seeks to establish and promote closer links between the WoW and the world of education and training. Our competitive advantage lies in the quality of our human capital and we therefore need to galvanise the efforts of all stakeholders with a view to creating a national synergy in developing a competent and skilled workforce for the country. The implementation of a fit-for-purpose NSDS will accelerate the process of transforming Mauritius into an increasingly skills-based society.

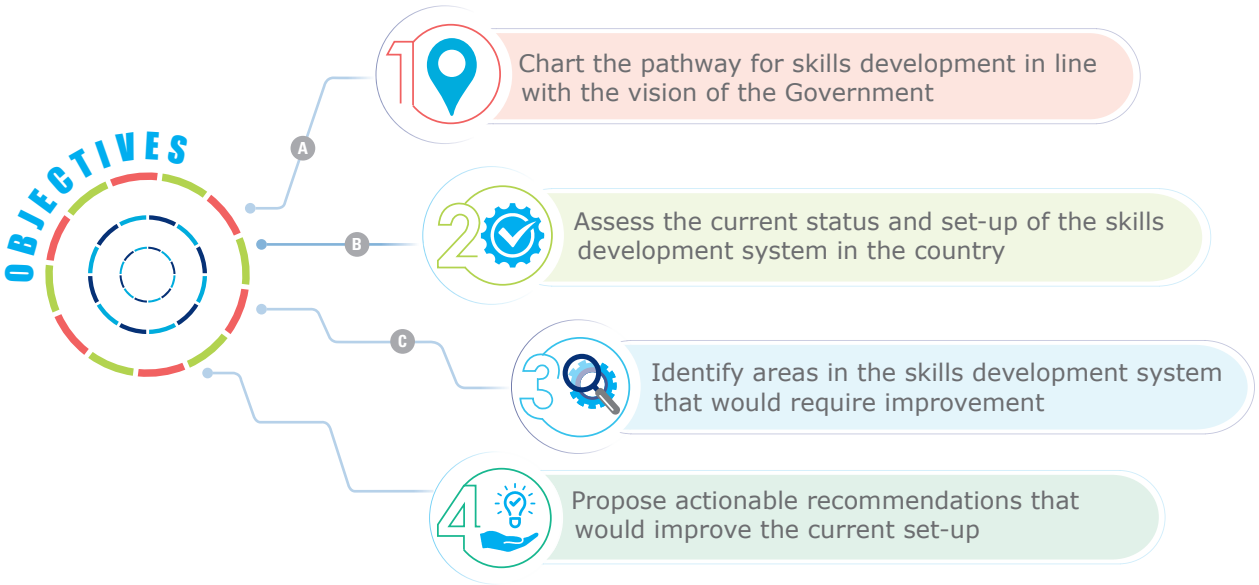
Objectives of the Strategy

2. Objectives of the Strategy

10. With the technical support of the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) and collaborating partners, the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) has developed the National Skills Development Strategy 2022-2026 (NSDS).

11. The main aim of the NSDS is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of the skills development system in Mauritius so that it is more responsive to the upcoming skills challenges, particularly with the manifold challenges brought about by the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic and the Russia-Ukraine conflict. Against this backdrop, the objectives of the NSDS have been mapped out as depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Objectives of the strategy



3. Project governance and methodology

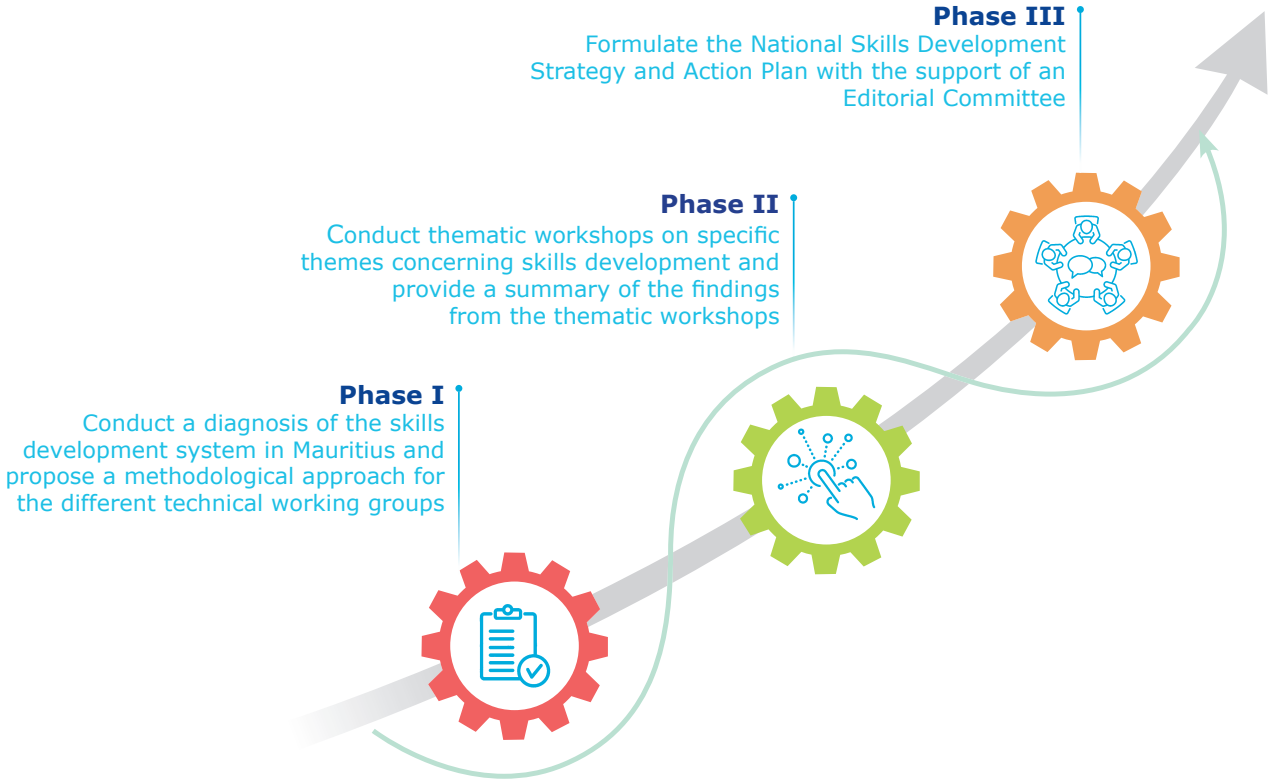
12. The Société Française d'Exportation des Ressources Educatives (SFERE) was awarded the contract to provide technical assistance to the HRDC to implement the project.

13. A steering committee comprising both public and private sector stakeholders was set up to oversee the development and formulation of the NSDS.

14. A three-tiered approach was adopted to develop the NSDS (Figure 2). The first phase comprised a thorough diagnosis of the local skills development and education system in order to generate a methodological approach for different technical working groups. Thematic workshops followed in the second phase, whereby stakeholders were engaged in brainstorming sessions and collectively came up with possible ways to address identified issues. In the third phase, the Strategy and Action plans were developed.

15. The Strategy and the Action plan were developed by an Editorial Committee comprising members from both public and private sectors. The Strategy was submitted for consultation to a wide range of stakeholders, and input sought from the public at large. The HRDC has coordinated the consultation and drafting process.

Figure 2: Phases for the development of the NSDS



Strategies

4. Strategic framework: a common vision for the skills system of Mauritius

16. The NSDS is anchored around three main strategic clusters, namely:
    - Improving skills system effectiveness;
    - Tackling skills imbalances; and
    - Strengthening the E&T system to prepare and empower young people for the future.

17. Each cluster comprises a set of strategies. Figure 3 depicts the strategic clusters and their corresponding strategies.

Figure 3: Main clusters and related strategies

4.1 Strategic cluster 1: Improving skills system effectiveness

4.1.1 Strategy 1: Develop and maintain occupational and qualification standards

A. The issue

18. There are many reasons that culminate in skills imbalance, such as:

- Information asymmetry on skills needs;
- Lack of skills needs anticipation at national level;
- Investment in training that does not always rely on systematic skills needs analysis;
- Absence of a professional ecosystem to provide customised training;
- Lack of a systematic framework to augment microlearning in upskilling in specific skills;
- Lack of future skills needs analysis at enterprise level; and
- Lack of harmonisation of data and trend analysis by different institutions for informed policy decisions.

B. The strategy

19. Occupational standards can help bridge the gap between the labour market needs and those who possess skills, knowledge and the output of education or training, or even prior experiences. Inherent to this strategy are the voices of employers. To this end, the occupational standard defines the necessary competences to fulfil the tasks inherent to an occupation.

20. Occupational standards would incorporate the voices of employers and could provide a strong basis for an institutional set-up to more efficiently respond to the skills needs in different sectors.

21. This would be a basis for more demand-led training and pave the way for more relevant training programmes. This tool has the potential to lend employers more control over training provision in their area of activity and also provide a system to communicate skills needs.

22. Micro-credentials can better structure microlearning. Employers can also rely on micro-credentialing programmes to provide the right type of focused training to new or transitioning employees who need to improve their skills.

C. Methodological implementation

23. Developing an occupational standard requires comprehensive, complete and accurate data on the skills, knowledge and competences necessary for a good performance. The establishment of occupational standards starts with a deep job analysis. Occupational standards should only be developed after the analysis of functions, duties and tasks of the relevant trade has been carried out by experts in the field. This will ensure that any occupational standard developed will be closely aligned with and relevant to current and future labour market needs.

24. Review the legal framework to allow training centres to deliver training based on micro-credentials.

D. Likely outcomes

25. The development of a common format for occupational standards and assessment criteria enables the promotion of national consistency and helps to ensure that standards are easily understood by various users, i.e. employers, higher education (for articulation of qualifications), policymakers, examination/ awarding bodies, HR managers, educators, trainers and lecturers, new entrants in the labour market and job seekers.

26. In addition, programmes leading to qualifications may also include microcredentials as components of learning, provided the overall design of the programme is coherent and meets the qualification outcomes and strategic purpose. This approach enables a more modular and flexible way to learning whereby micro-credits could potentially be cumulated.

27. Education and training standards can be developed from the activities defined in occupational standards. They include learning outcomes which describe what people will be able to do at the end of a learning programme. They might also include learning objectives to ensure that the necessary skills and knowledge are developed by a person to enable him or her function at an agreed level in an occupation. Subsequently, training can be better aligned with the technical needs of an occupation, ultimately leading to a reduction in skills mismatch at enterprise level.

28. Given the above, investment in training through the levy grant system could be better aligned with the enterprises' skills needs to move towards high-quality skills.

4.1.2 Strategy 2: Establish and maintain a centralised and up-to-date repository of occupational qualifications standards to confer operational status to the NQF

A. The issue

29. Information asymmetry among, inter alia, E&T system, WoW, employees, youth and the labour market is one of the causes of skills mismatch. The National Qualifications Framework has yet to reach maturity and full operational status to impact policies and practices.

30. The present qualifications listed on the NQF predominantly:

- Lack widespread recognition and are not necessarily used by all training providers, leading to ad hoc training rather than training based on real skills needs;
- Do not consist of sufficiently detailed information for E&T providers to develop curriculum;
- Are developed using a methodology that is not entirely adapted to the local context; and
- Do not reflect the current skills needs of industry.

B. The strategy

31. Occupational standards are the foundation for designing Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) qualifications, and they provide the principles and techniques for the assessment of qualifications.

32. Once the qualifications are developed, they will need to be accessible to all. The certification standard contains the assessment criteria that activate the NQF as the national repository of the qualifications. The NQF would then be a dynamic key collaboration interface between the E&T system and the WoW, amongst others, for the development and delivery of relevant training.

C. Methodological implementation

33. A permanent steering committee will be set up to endorse and validate the new qualification standards for posting on the repository.

34. The repository will take the form of an online interface where the qualification standards will be published.

D. Likely outcomes

35. The implementation of this strategy will minimise the information asymmetry that exists among stakeholders in the skills system. It will allow the development of relevant courses and thereby reduce skills gap at enterprise level. This repository will, inter alia:

- Promote demand-driven training, thereby helping to reduce skills mismatch;
- Allow employers to use the occupational standards to benchmark their HRD strategies; and also
- Be an important source of information for career planning.

4.2 Strategic cluster 2: Tackling skills imbalances

4.2.1 Strategy 3: Anticipate skills for the future of work

A. The issue

36. A number of factors are also influencing the evolution of skills demand and supply, and if left unaddressed, they are likely to contribute to skills mismatch in the future. These factors include:

- Rapid development in (non)technological innovations;
- Ageing population;
- Information asymmetry on skills needs;
- Investment in training that is not based on systematic skills needs analysis (at enterprise level);
- Lack of harmonisation of data and trend analysis by different institutions for informed policy decisions;
- Lack of medium- and long-term outlook on skills needs to guide universities and other training providers on youth preparation for the future of work;

- Lack of prospective studies to guide planners for informed policymaking on skills development and targeted investment to foster skills development;
- Lack of capacity of employers to foresee their skills needs; and
- Black swan events.

37. Evidence-based information on future skills needs has the potential to inform various policy dimensions and contribute to developing a systematic and comprehensive policy response to imbalances.

B. The strategy

38. Two mechanisms have been identified as feeders to activate the anticipation of skills, namely:

- Establish a mechanism for the anticipation of skills needs through enterprises (short to medium term) (Mechanism 1);and
- Establish a mechanism for the identification of new jobs and the supply of emerging skills (long term) (Mechanism 2).

C. Methodological implementation

39. Mechanism 1 will be activated through inputs from enterprises to the skills needs platform, with the support of industry associations such as Business Mauritius and other key players in the skills development ecosystem.

40. Mechanism 2 comprises a series of methods which can be used to anticipate future skills needs, related though not limited to:

- Sector- and occupation-wise quantitative employment forecasts based on modelling;
- Qualitative methods, including focus groups, round tables, expert interviews, foresight and scenario development;
- Input from Mechanism 1;
- Surveys among employers, i.e. Establishments or enterprises; and
- Tracer studies of schools/graduates and school-to-work transition surveys.

D. Likely outcomes

41. The skills needs anticipation can also form the basis for the development of occupational standards. This strategy is based on how to describe the occupations (short- and long-term) in view of putting them into occupational standards.

42. This range of measures will help project labour market prospects for jobseekers in terms of the ease of finding a job, and also for employers, in terms of potential recruitment problems.

43. Such information and analysis are conveyed to E&T providers for curriculum development and adjustment and intake in different faculties.

4.2.2 Strategy 4: Upskill workforce at middle management, technical and professional levels

A. The issue

44. The local labour force is faced with increasing competition, and as reported by enterprises there is lack of qualified workforce at the supervisory and middle management level across occupational categories such as 'Managers', 'Professionals' and 'Associate professionals'. It is imperative to (re)skill and/or upskill the middle management level for them to go beyond project execution skills to product- and solution- definition skills.

45. These occupational categories act as an important interface between the requirements of top management and the operations. The lack of responsiveness of training centres to address this skills gap is a deterrent to skilling individuals at the middle management level.

46. With the advent of new technologies and the fourth industrial revolution, many repetitive tasks will be potentially automated. Upskilling middle managers, technical and other professionals will be a requisite for enterprises, considering automation and the integration of new practices.

47. Besides, the digital economy has created a huge shortage of people with the necessary digital skills, and the pandemic has disrupted the modes of learning in both workplaces (including apprenticeships) and classrooms. Individuals in middle management should also be trained to make use of online learning platforms and transfer such training in the workplace.

48. Polytechnics Mauritius Ltd (PML) has been set up by the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (MoETEST) to curb the skills issue at this level. The Ministry has also come up with the establishment of the Institute of Technical Education and Technology (ITET). These institutions are expected to contribute to strengthen the availability of workforce at middle professional level to build the ability of the country to engage more in the higher order skills sector. Nevertheless, skills at the mid-management level require continued attention within the skills development system.

B. The strategy

49. Given that the gap in training is felt at the level of mid-career employees, which is equivalent to levels 5 to 7 and 8 to 10 on the NQF (Table 1), training will focus on those occupational categories from NQF levels 5 to 7 and 8 to 10.

Table 1: NQF levels to focus training for mid-level employees

Occupational level/ category	NQF Level	Intervention
Professionals and top management	Levels 8 to 10	Need continuous retraining and adjustment to new management pattern, CPD
Middle management – technical	Levels 5 to 7	Need retraining
Beginners	Levels 3 to 5	Need training
New entrants	Up to level 2	Need upskilling

50. This fast-changing backdrop makes it important for countries like Mauritius to establish a national digital skills programme to develop those types of skills (such as development of computational thinking skills) that will enable young people to adapt to the increasingly digital world.

C. Methodological implementation

51. E&T providers need to develop curricula based on occupational standards which will represent the required skills needs.

52. To be effective, the learning experience needs to be as individualised as possible for each worker at the time of training delivery. An assessment of the worker's level of skills prior to the start of the training will assist in the learner-centred approach to training.

53. Creating an enabling environment to develop the willingness to learn at enterprise level that is focused on long-term learning will provide employees with the initiative and drive to engage in continuous learning.

54. A national digital skills training programme can be worked out to target Mauritians to develop job-ready digital skills.

D. Likely outcomes

55. Middle managers will be able to keep pace with the latest developments. They will be better equipped to adapt to change and improve their own, as well as their organisation's performance. The mid-level people will also be empowered to take responsibility for their own training as lifelong learners. Besides, upskilling and training can also be seen as key differentiators in attracting and retaining the best staff.

4.2.3 Strategy 5: Develop a mechanism to promote skills development among Micro and Small and Medium Enterprises

A. The issue

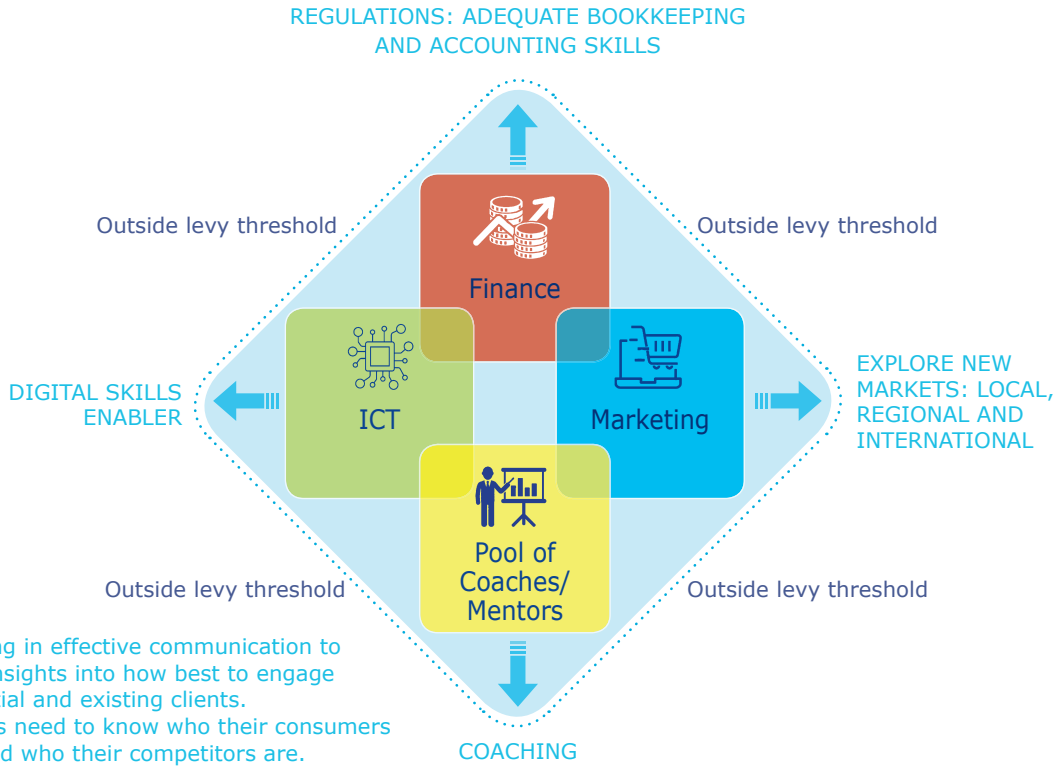
56. Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) face particular challenges due to their limited size and resources. They often struggle to keep abreast of and adapt to new developments in information and communication technologies. They also encounter difficulties finding and retaining qualified staff and providing them with adequate training. Given their small size, MSMEs are also reluctant to release staff to attend training during normal working hours, as this may disrupt work activity. They are thus rendered less (HR)D-active. Broad economic trends considerably exacerbate the situation.

57. The set of measures proposed here complement the 10-Year Master Plan for the SME Sector in Mauritius.

B. The strategy

58. Keeping in mind the specificities of small enterprises, the four main thrusts of the strategy are located in areas depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4: Four main training areas for MSMEs



- Training in effective communication to gain insights into how best to engage potential and existing clients.
- MSMEs need to know who their consumers are and who their competitors are.

C. Methodological implementation

59. MSMEs need experts who are able to suggest relevant solutions for current and emerging digital issues pertinent to their specific needs. It is important to appoint mentors and experts in these areas. Proposed programmes include:

- Exchange programmes for MSMEs to learn from best international practices. Training and exposure to new technologies will allow for the early adoption of new and more efficient ways of conducting business.
- The setting up of a technology watch over technical developments in more mature industries to identify techniques which could be adapted to MSMEs.
- The boosting of MSMEs' innovation capacity by helping position people and their ideas to compete for resources so that they can launch impactful innovations. Linking them with international training providers will help in this endeavour.
- The levy will be rendered cumulative for MSMEs.

D. Likely outcomes

60. The following are the expected outcomes:

- Trained and skilled workforce in the MSME sector;
- Improved retention of employees;
- Improvement of productivity and competitiveness of the MSME sector; and
- Increase in survival rate of MSMEs

4.2.4 Strategy 6: Review framework for curriculum development

(Primary, secondary, Tertiary and TVET)

A. The issue

61. The increasingly complex future requires an education system that moves away from a subject-based, fragmented and compartmentalised approach to knowledge.

62. The Mauritian education system needs to equip students with the skills to thrive in a changing world. It is clear that employers increasingly need employees who are capable of working in unstructured, unpredictable and complex situations and environments. The wider society also requires the same flexibility in this time of significant change and unpredictability, as currently witnessed with the devastating multi-pronged effect of the COVID-19 pandemic. Reluctance to change is frequent, but training institutions, schools and universities will need to embrace new approaches to education, including curriculum development, examinations and assessment.

B. The strategy

63. To build capacity of professional instructional designers (e.g., through industrial placement) that will help develop multi-disciplinary skills among educators, which will transpire in their delivery. The goal of this strategy is to familiarise educators, trainers and lecturers with the knowledge and skills used in the workplace, specifically STEM-related workplaces. This initiative can ignite the

interest of the future workforce in STEM by bringing the reality of the workplace closer to the school.

64. To contribute meaningfully, individuals need to be more versatile in their competencies and more progressive in their thinking. Hence, it is essential that reasoning skills such as logical thinking, critical and creative thinking, and problem-solving skills be developed in primary and secondary education, and mastered thereafter.

65. Rolling out contemporary teaching and learning approaches more broadly could assist students to integrate numerous disciplines to address global change and apply their knowledge to unpredictable and complex situations.

C. Methodological implementation

66. Collaborative learning is an approach that transforms the traditional lecture or teacher-focused classroom into a student-centred classroom. Collaborative spaces are based on the understanding that interactivity and collaboration in small groups produce stronger solutions that would not have been reached individually. They also encourage the sharing of research for enhanced learning. Besides enhancing problem-solving skills, collaborative learning further encourages trust building, communication, practical learning and application, as well as acceptance. It is recommended that collaboration should come from educators and students alike.

67. Collaboration between trainers and mentors in enterprise is the key point for apprenticeship programmes to flourish. Trainers and mentors in enterprise can learn from each other. While the former can keep abreast of the latest technologies in the enterprise, the latter can remain updated in the new pedagogical trends.

D. Likely outcomes

68. The curriculum should:

- Develop interdisciplinary and transversal skills.
- Equip young people with soft skills (creativity, entrepreneurship and autonomy), in addition to necessary skills for better adaptation to the workplace.
- Link social behaviour (life skills, confidence building, sports activities, higher order thinking skills, and so on) with vocational studies.
- Implement STE(A)M courses in TVET.
- Enable educators, trainers and lecturers to adopt inductive teaching approaches.
- Afford students opportunities to work collaboratively.
- Place more emphasis on practical work and continuous assessment.
- Focus on progress and formative assessment.

4.3 Strategic cluster 3: Strengthening the education and training system to prepare and empower young people for the future

4.3.1 Strategy 7: Reskill and upskill educators, trainers and lecturers

A. The issue

69. Enterprises have persistently reported a gap between what is required at the workplace and what is taught by E&T providers. The rigid structure of the curriculum is deplored, as it does not allow the accommodation of improvements to keep pace with the latest developments. A disconnect has often been reported between teaching staff and the latest developments in pedagogy and andragogy as well as industry. This impacts on the mounting of relevant curriculum and delivery of training and may potentially contribute to a lack of preparedness of youth to join the WoW.

70. Educators, trainers and lecturers are responsible for strengthening the links between education and work, establishing new curricula, providing more and high-quality apprenticeships, and other forms of work-based learning. In the coming years, educators, trainers and lecturers will be required to help shape quick and flexible responses to emerging needs with respect to the development of basic, digital and entrepreneurial skills.

B. The strategy

71. The reskilling and upskilling of educators, trainers and lecturers should be part of the culture of the E&T system. Resource persons need to continuously adapt to the changing demands of the workplace and society in general. The training structures of teaching staff should factor in a willingness to learn and increase their portfolio of teaching strategies.

72. An enabling environment such as embedding upskilling and reskilling of the teaching staff in the QA system needs to be strengthened and systematised to further drive the initiated reform of the education system.

C. Methodological implementation

73. With the change of pedagogy into a learner-centred system (inductive pedagogy), the examination of the specific learning needs and changing role of educators, trainers and lecturers is essential for the continuous updating of their professional skills.

74. Improvement in educators', trainers' and lecturers' daily practices may not be achieved through traditional methods, such as workshops, but by building schoolbased learning communities. In some situations, contributions from recognised experts can be brought in through professional learning and development to enhance educators', trainers' and lecturers' practices.

D. Likely outcomes

75. The implementation of this strategy is expected to bring the following changes:

- When educators, trainers and lecturers are linked to the development in the industry, there will be a reduction in skills gap and information asymmetry. The job readiness of young people will be improved.
- Developing professional profiles of educators, trainers and lecturers.
- Talent is identified and nurtured rather than left to chance.
- Mentoring, coaching and supervision will be encouraged.
- Pedagogical training will be provided to educators, trainers and lecturers.
- Promotion of digital use for educators, trainers and lecturers.
- Developing e-learning as a supplement to the traditional way of training/ educating
- A need to shift from unit standard to occupational standard and competency standard.
- All educators, trainers and lecturers will be involved in professional learning and development.
- All educators, trainers and lecturers will be involved in communities of practice.
- All educators, trainers and lecturers will go through an industry placement scheme during their training, comprising refresher placements.

4.3.2 Strategy 8: Improve articulation between Quality Assurance Frameworks for TVET and Higher Education

A. The issue

76. Quality Assurance Systems have traditionally been based on audit and control. In Mauritius, the higher education sector is already operating on a self-assessment and peer review method. The MQA has at this point embarked on the self-assessment approach for registered training institutions. However, there is currently no common framework for policies in quality assurance between TVET and Higher Education. It should be noted that entry requirements have evolved over time, with new qualification pathways in place. This, in turn, demands the development of a systemic quality assurance framework and the review of this framework at regular intervals.

77. Additionally, in the absence of an established credit accumulation system, the articulation of TVET qualifications with academic qualifications in Higher Education for comparability and alignment remains a challenge.

B. The strategy

78. There is a need to harmonise the accreditation processes between the HEC and the MQA. More synergistic collaboration is required between the MQA and the QAA in order to enhance the quality assurance framework and better integrate TVET and HE. A harmonised self-assessment system is the cornerstone of this strategy.

C. Methodological implementation

79. There will be a shift from a Quality Assurance model based on processes to one that is more focused on learning outcomes and individual ownership. The self-assessment models for quality assurance of institutions need to be reinforced through capacity building at the level of training centres and MQA.

80. A National Coherent Credit System based on quality indicators and in line with the NQF needs to be established by regulators of E&T. Through this system, relevant tools will be developed to contribute to a solid educational structure targeting both academic and vocational education and training, such as a set of guidelines with a common understanding of the QA process.

81. A uniform credit point system will facilitate the permeability of qualifications and hence mobility of people.

D. Likely outcomes

82. The introduction of a quality grading system for training centres (for example from Level 1), i.e. an initial compliance needs to be achievable to potentially raise their level. The transition then needs to be managed to higher levels (2 and 3) through audits. This will assist in increasing the level of courses offered by training centres and increase the permeability of qualifications to HE. The implementation of this strategy will also address the following:

    - The overlap between HEC and MQA systems for course accreditation.
    - The need to move from a process-oriented Quality Assurance model in Mauritius to one that is more focused on learning outcomes and individual ownership.
    - Strengthening Quality Assurance for all courses offered by private or public providers.
    - The need for a National Coherent Credit Systems (based on quality indicators).
    - Theme-based audits conducted at RTIs.
    - Help local systems to link with ECTS5[1] and ECVET6[2].

[1] The ECTS is a learner-centred system for credit accumulation and transfer based on the transparency of learning outcomes and learning processes. It aims at facilitating planning, delivery, evaluation, recognition and validation of qualifications and units of learning as well as student mobility. The ECTS is widely used in formal higher education and can be applied to other lifelong learning activities.

[2] The ECVET is a technical framework for transfer, recognition and, where appropriate, accumulation of individual learning outcomes to achieve a qualification. ECVET tools and methodology comprise the description of qualifications in units of learning outcomes with associated points, a transfer and accumulation process and complementary documents such as learning agreements and transcripts of records.

4.3.3 Strategy 9: Introduce a credit point system to improve articulation between the TVET and HE sectors within the NQF

A. The issue

83. There is a lack of permeability of qualifications, particularly from vocational to HE, because of the lack of transparency in respective QA systems.

84. The present system is not flexible enough to enable learners to move within and across education, training and employment. As their careers unfold, people are not able to adapt their learning pathway to suit their interests and abilities.

85. The lack of a coherent credit system limits the possibilities for local E&T providers to establish linkages, bi or multilateral agreements with foreign institutions to foster exchanges for the sharing of knowledge and skills.

B. The strategy

86. This shift in the preference of people to opt for HE rather than TVET qualification is leading to a skills gap at level 6 of the NQF. There is therefore a need to come up with a system that would facilitate articulation between higher education and TVET for the enhanced mobility of individuals between these two realms.

C. Methodological implementation

87. The MQA and HEC, together with the MoETEST, will work out a set of guidelines in line with the quality assurance frameworks to build a common framework for the credit point system.

D. Likely outcomes

88. The likely outcomes of the strategy are:

- Better articulation between TVET and HE for enhanced mobility of students within and across types of qualifications and across borders;
- Promotion of lifelong learning among individuals and enterprises;
- Exchange and sharing of resources with foreign institutions, like ECTS and ECVET, for the conversion of qualifications using credits;
- More transparency in E&T systems; and
- Valorisation of TVET and trades.

4.3.4 Strategy 10: Improve financial support for relevant training

A. The issue

89. An increasing challenge in training systems is that enterprises are undertraining their staff in (high) technical skills. The consequent shortages of well-trained, skilled workers in the formal sector may hamper productivity growth, competitiveness and economic development.

90. Despite investment in the training of employees through the Levy grant system (LGS) and the Sectoral Skills Development Scheme, skills mismatch is a perpetual and persistent issue in specific sectors and across specific occupational groups at enterprise level.

91. The system is inadequately structured to ensure that relevant training is being purposefully, systematically and sustainably delivered.

B. The strategy

92. The development of occupational standards for which funding needs to be allocated underpins the operationalisation of this strategy.

C. Methodological implementation

93. The existing levy grant system could be reviewed to reflect the requirements of the enterprises and ensure that high-quality training is meeting the needs of industry and employers, both in existing and emerging sectors.

D. Likely outcomes

94. The likely outcomes are:

- Funding will be better aligned with the skills needs of enterprises, which may include new requirements to improve the quality of online and workplace-based training.
- Training will meet society's skills requirements.

Implementation of the NSDS

5. Implementation of the NSDS

95. Effective implementation of skills policies at national level depends on a governance structure that enhances policy coherence and provides strong coordination mechanisms for implementation across the three pillars of developing, activating and using skills.

96. An Action plan has been prepared comprising 65 actions for the operationalisation of the strategies by several stakeholders. The key actions together constitute a strong and coherent platform for new policy development and better implementation of existing skills policies. Achieving them will require the integrated and concerted action of ministries, education and training institutions, industry associations and other stakeholders.

97. A clear understanding of how to effectively implement this strategy is of essence. For this reason, capacity building is a common feature to all the strategies.

98. A centrally coordinated Strategy Implementation Committee (SIC), chaired by the parent Ministry, will oversee the implementation of the strategies under the NSDS. Its membership will comprise stakeholders from the public and private sectors [including Ministry of Labour, Human Resource Development and Training (MLHRDT), Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education, Science and Technology (MoETEST), Ministry of Industrial Development, SMES and Cooperatives (MoIDSC), Business Mauritius, Mauritius Institute of Education (MIE), Mauritius Institute of Education (MITD), Mauritius Qualifications Authority (MQA), SME Mauritius, Economic Development Board (EDB) and the HRDC, among others]. The SIC in collaboration with various stakeholders will drive the implementation of the Strategy.

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