

SIFA
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for Africa

TC
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The Ultimate Guide to Job Fairs:
A Handbook for TVET Managers in Africa

ORGANISING, HOSTING & EVALUATING SUCCESSFUL JOB FAIRS

INSPIRING PARTNERSHIPS FOR ECONOMIC GROWTH



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Acronyms

COVID-19	Corona Virus and Disease 2019
CV	Curriculum Vitae
EPK	Electronic Press Kit
GIZ	Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit
MS	Microsoft (Teams)
PA	Public Address
SIFA	Skills Initiative For Africa
SMS	Short Message Service
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
WBLE	Work-based Learning Experiences







SECTION 1:
About Job Fairs

What is a TVET Job Fair?

Connections, empowerment, growth and partnerships- these are the themes that run through Job Fairs, for the benefit of attendees, hosts and sponsors alike. A TVET Job Fair is an event where demand meets supply: information on labour market opportunities and information

about the available workforce is exchanged. Also commonly referred to as a Career Day, Job Expo, Career Fair or Career Expo, Job Fairs are usually a single-day event held once to several times a year and typically take place at TVET premises with booths for employers.

Job seekers and TVET students seeking Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE) attend Job Fairs to find out about relevant openings and career pathways. For employers Job Fairs are recruitment opportunities. TVET Colleges or skills training providers get to share information about their own programmes, and find out about developments in their fields.

PHYSICAL JOB FAIRS

In TVET Colleges, Job Fairs are commonly used for Work-Based Learning Experiences (WBLE) and entry-level job recruitment. Job seekers and TVET students use this opportunity to get an overview of what it is like to work for a company or in a sector that interests them. Often sponsored by career centres, Job Fairs provide a convenient location for students to meet employers face-to-face for first interviews. This is also an opportunity for companies to meet with students and talk to them about their expectations and answer any questions they may have.

VIRTUAL JOB FAIRS

Virtual Job Fairs have the same goals as on-site events- to provide job seekers, learners, training providers and employers opportunities to interact. Online interaction typically uses digital conferencing platforms like Zoom, Google Meets or MS Teams. A Virtual Job Fair includes many communication channels such as video, live chats and downloadable material to make it more helpful for both the recruiter and the job seeker.



For more information about how to plan, organise and implement a successful Virtual Job Fair, take a look at the "Taking Your Job Fair Virtual" handbook.

A note on the audience for this handbook

Job Fairs or Career Expos come in many shapes and sizes, and vary greatly in scope. A Job Fair may happen at a local level, serving a targeted group of students and the local business community; at a regional level, where more than one training provider and a broader range of business or industry might be involved; or at a national level. At regional or national level, the Job Fair will typically be convened by a government department dealing with Trade and Industry, or hosted by a large public sector employer or parastatal organisation in a sector. These fairs may

also cover many different industry sector opportunities. At these levels it is likely that a service provider will be appointed and paid to manage the event on behalf of the main sponsor.

While some of the content and many of the resources provided here may be usefully adapted for any level of application or type of organiser, this Handbook is written mainly for the institution-based manager working at the local level, in a specific TVET College.

Why you should host a Job Fair

Hosting a Job Fair is a large undertaking. It requires event planning, stakeholder invitations, and interactions with students. The entire planning process can feel overwhelming at

times. While you may sometimes wonder if all the work is worth it to your TVET College and its students, the benefits of hosting a fair far outweighs all the stress.



Hosting a Job Fair at your TVET College provides your students access to a large number of employers and recruiters.

The Job Fair supports the primary goal of the TVET College, which is to prepare students to become functional workers in a skilled trade. TVET Colleges facilitate access to employers who have WBLE, internship and permanent positions to fill. Hosting a Job Fair gives you the ability to invite as many employers as your venue can handle. You can scale the Job Fair based on your students' and employers' needs (see **Step 2 Conducting a Needs Assessment**). Students will get the opportunity to meet a wide variety of employers from multiple industries.



Hosting a Job Fair promotes your TVET College as a source of good candidates to employers, thereby increasing your reputation and ranking.

You have a stake in the Job Fair as well, as it allows you to showcase your institution as a high quality training provider for a future workforce. When you host employers and recruiters at your Job Fair, you get the opportunity to give them an overview of your programmes and college.



Hosting Job Fairs give employers access to high-quality job candidates.

The main reason recruiters attend fairs is to meet highly qualified students that can fill the positions they have open. When you host a Job Fair, you are offering them this opportunity. The more students who attend, the more potential employees the recruiters get to meet.



Hosting a Job Fair helps to educate students on how to conduct their job search and educates them on college resources

Besides giving employers and students a chance to meet, a Job Fair offers a chance to host workshops and lectures on all aspects of hunting and securing a job. You can ask employers to be part of panel discussions on WBLE and on topics related to particular industries or job types (**See *Level Up and Crush It: A Job Seeker's Guide to Job Fairs***).

Your TVET Colleges have a department solely devoted to assisting students with their job searches. Surprisingly, many students don't know much about these resources and often don't use them to the fullest extent. You can set up a table at the fair to connect with students who want to learn what resources are available to them.

We need to keep in mind that TVET Colleges across Africa operate in many different contexts, both social and geographic. Colleges may be under-resourced or well resourced and serve rural, peri-urban or urban communities and contexts. You may need to adapt some of the suggestions made in this Handbook to fit your own context.

An efficient, well-planned Job Fair will definitely benefit your TVET College and your students. It increases your brand visibility, credibility and goodwill. This may lead to endorsements, sponsorships and funding.

It increases enrollment and throughput, and attracts potential trainers and other TVET staff. It provides value to the recruiters that attend. All you need to do is follow the steps outlined in the guide, adapt these to your context if needed, and successfully plan, execute and evaluate your Job Fair.

Who you should invite to your Job Fair



PAST AND CURRENT STUDENTS AND JOBSEEKERS

Job Seekers/Students attend Job Fairs to:

- Explore WBLE, internships and career opportunities
- Network through meeting prospective employers
- Practice professional decorum, while showcasing their personality
- Experience their first venture into the professional world
- Be introduced to the future World of Work that aligns to their career aspirations, and understand what particular occupations might involve
- Enjoy a space where they can safely make mistakes and recover. Writing a CV, small talk with employers, and preparing for interviews are new skills for most students. Mistakes can be embarrassing but learning that they can start fresh at the next recruiting table takes away some of the sting



The short-term outcome of preparing a CV, selling themselves to recruiters, and negotiating salaries and benefits for a solid entry-level position is undoubtedly positive. Once students are in “the real world,” they will not have easy access to career services like they do at TVET Colleges, so the skills graduates and students in WBLE learn now are skills they will use for the rest of their professional lives. The successful navigation of a Job Fair is a valuable life skill.

EMPLOYERS

Employers attend Job Fairs to:

- Personally meet and identify a larger number of potential candidates in one day in one location
- Enjoy a more efficient and cost-effective recruitment method
- Meet and interact with 'non-traditional' candidates and prospective high-quality candidates yet to complete their studies
- Gain access to job candidates who have hands-on experience through work-based learning
- Promote their businesses, products and service offerings
- Achieve brand awareness and higher visibility through advertising collateral such as banners, business cards, posters, and in-person interactions
- Network with other companies, and key community players, creating sound, mutually beneficial partnerships



COMMUNITY MEMBERS

Potential invitees here are:

- Media Publications: To produce news content about the Job Fair
- Municipalities: To network, create strategic partnerships and uncover investment opportunities
- Social enterprises: To create strategic partnerships
- High Schools:
 - To see what jobs are out there for their students
 - To create strategic partnerships
 - To gain more information about the World of Work to improve Career Guidance Curriculum
- Parents: To become better informed about TVET offerings and potential career paths for their children
- Community organisations: To become better informed about TVET and industry opportunities for their beneficiary groups, such as unemployed youth





OTHER TVET COLLEGES

Other TVET Colleges attend Job Fairs to:

- Identify potential partners for collaboration
- Learn from other TVET Colleges
- Network with their peers



POTENTIAL PARTNERS FOR YOUR TVET COLLEGE

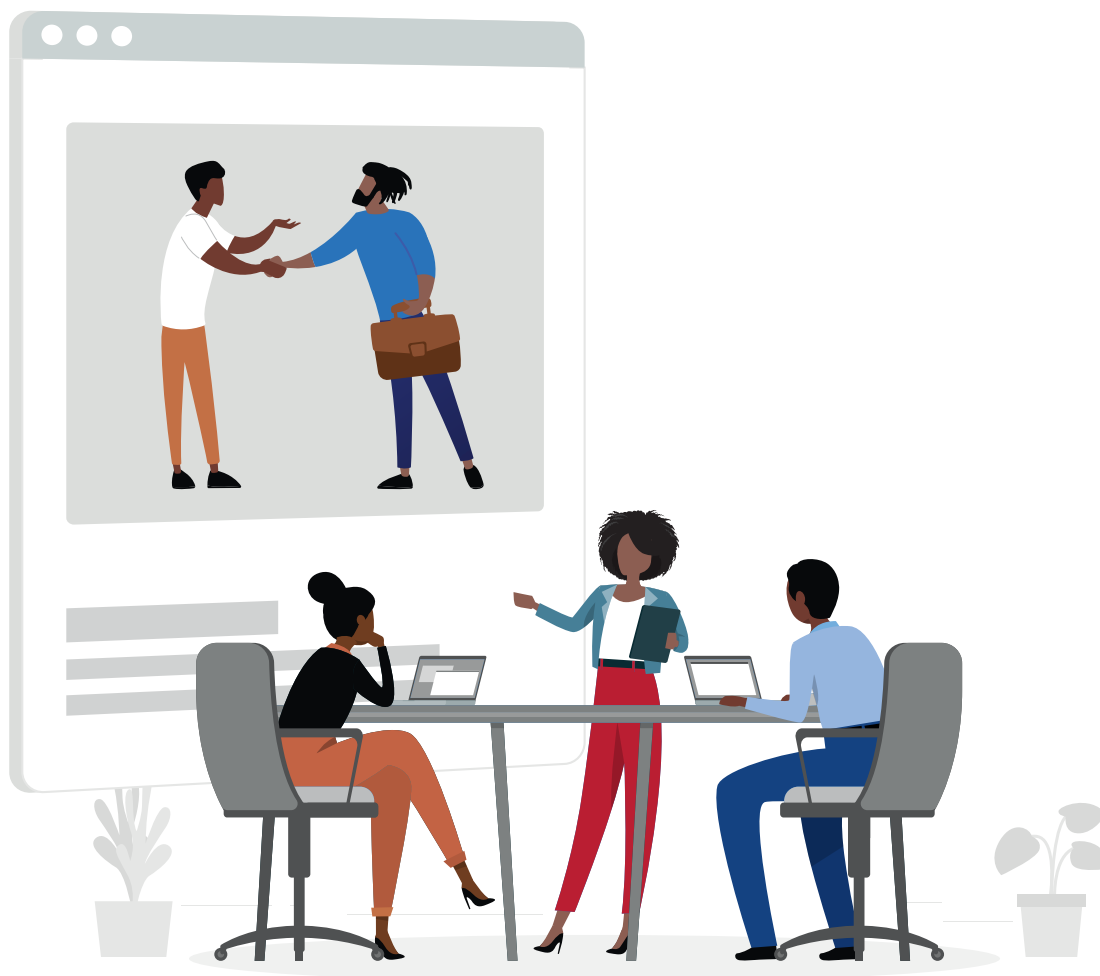
Apart from the relevant employers or other participants invited to attend for the general reasons listed above, you want to identify potential partners for future collaborations. You may also want to host and run your Job Fair through an intentional partnership. This is discussed on the next page.

Creating sustainable partnerships for Job Fairs with impact

OVERVIEW OF PARTNERSHIP POSSIBILITIES IN SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

As a TVET College you are the institutional arm of the formal technical vocational education and training sector, and have an essential role

to play in the skills development landscape as a whole. But you cannot do it alone. Your potential partners include:



Government: from national levels down to local levels, including education and training departments and departments of trade, industry and commerce. Both public and private TVET Colleges as education and training institutions operate within a policy and legislative framework governing TVET systems, including funding

and qualifications frameworks. Partnerships between the college sector and government can range from high level involvement in policy development, to specific state-supported projects that might roll out at district or municipal levels.



The private sector: from large corporations to small, medium and micro enterprises, as well as business umbrella associations. For business and industry requirements to be effectively integrated into skills development in general, and institutional delivery by TVETs in particular, private sector engagement is vital. Private sector employers need to have confidence that the system pipeline gives job applicants relevant and current skills, and is responsive to scarce skills needs as well as changes in sectors that affect the curriculum. They also need to know that

certificates and qualifications represent the real competences required in the workplace.

Partnerships might take the form of:

- bursary schemes
- infrastructure development
- the development of integrated training programmes (including curriculum input, WBLEs and apprenticeships)
- programme-based interventions and many other options, and
- of course, Job Fairs



The non-profit (NPO) sector: including NGOs, community-based organisations and volunteer organisations. Many NPOs deliver a range of different support programmes (including technical training) in the informal sector, and often develop partnerships which draw on TVET Colleges' human and physical resources, and on TVET students. Such partnerships can also provide a context in which college students can carry out practical work.



Funders in the development sector: including international and local funders, and philanthropic donors. Major funders (including GIZ/ SIFA) frequently support collaborative partnerships in skills development work which include a role for TVETs.



The community you serve: local communities can be drawn on for programmes related to local informal sector economic activities, or entrepreneurial training.

Partnerships enable you to fulfil your responsibilities to your students and trainees by providing them with the training and qualifications they need in order to become employable.

PARTNERING FOR JOB FAIRS

The partnership examples given above happen at a number of levels and for a wide range of reasons. But what do you need to know about partnerships in the context of Job Fairs? The rest of this section gives you a high level view of how a partnership to run a Job Fair might work.

Inviting people to a Job Fair and setting up a partnership to run your Job Fair are two very different things. Partnerships should be linked to some degree of formal agreements and should have clear objectives. An essential principle for your Job Fair partnership is to see it as a foundation for a continuing and mutually beneficial partnership beyond the Event Day itself. It serves as the opening of the door to a number of future collaborative activities. Here are two examples:

An agricultural college holds a Job Fair in partnership with the main commercial agricultural enterprise in the surrounding area, which deals with crop production. The private sector partner is invited to showcase new production techniques and technology, and share information on job opportunities in the area. After the Job Fair, the college formalises the partnership through joint design of an updated internship programme. In addition, the enterprise and the college together design small scale 'learning farms' to allow for the integration of some of the practical experience requirements into the curriculum.



A large public TVET College is mandated to design and offer a training programme in entrepreneurship. In order to feed into its own curriculum development process, it hosts an 'Entrepreneurship Fair' day. For the event it partners with an umbrella body for entrepreneurs, and a local NGO running a community entrepreneurship skills development programme for unemployed youth. The college uses the showcases and inputs from the day to inform its instructional design model. Subsequently this partnership evolves into a consortium which sets up an entrepreneurship incubation model to pilot sector-specific entrepreneurship short courses, and an overall TVET training curriculum.

A Job Fair partnership which is aimed at both a successful Event Day and future benefits will have the following features:

- **A lead partner:** in the context of this Handbook we are assuming that this is you, the TVET College. The lead partner is usually the host and overall project manager for the Job Fair. Other entities are invited by the lead partners.
- **A clear set of objectives for the partnership** itself as well as for the Job Fair event. A vital condition for successful partnerships is a shared understanding of the benefits and purpose of collaboration. Without common aims and expectations, the partnership may fail. It is therefore important to jointly formulate the overall project aim and collaboration goals. Here are a few questions to help you start thinking about your partnership objectives, in order to discuss and refine them with your partners.
 - Why do I want to partner with this entity? How does their core business relate to the overall goals of my Job Fair? What will they bring to the partnership that we need, and why do we need this?
 - Why will this entity want to partner with us? What can we offer them as an inducement to collaborative effort for the Job Fair and beyond?
 - How short term or long term should these objectives be? Should we build in a reflection process to review and adapt these objectives during and after the Job Fair?
 - How can we build in principles of collaboration such as trust, openness, accountability and regular reflection and feedback?
- **Clearly stated agreements on roles and responsibilities** within the partnership, including any financial arrangements. These should be captured in a Memorandum of Understanding. These agreements may be divided according to specific tasks for the Job Fair event itself, and later decisions on further areas for collaboration. Examples of further partnership opportunities include areas such as the following:
 - WBLE and other work-based experiences for students in order to fulfil qualification requirements
 - Apprenticeships and internships
 - Curriculum inputs and updates, especially around areas of innovation
 - Opportunities for your institution's human resources to go back into the workplace in order to be updated and upskilled on current work processes
 - Tracking the progress of successful applicants from the Job Fair
 - and more.
- **A clearly defined set of communication protocols** which all agree to follow. Partnerships often break down because of lack of communication, and frustrations around this. Communication protocols also include process arrangements for planning and review meetings (e.g. meeting schedules, online platforms or in-person venues) and ways of managing information relating to the Job Fair and any follow up activities.

Effective collaboration doesn't just happen by itself simply because a partnership is set up. A collaborative mindset needs to be nurtured, and everyone in the partnership needs to recognise that it requires a lot of time and effort. However, partnerships can certainly result in major benefits, and are in fact essential if your TVET College is to be seen as a relevant and high quality institution. Partnerships will greatly enrich not only your Job Fair event, but also your institution's support for your own human resources and your main beneficiaries, the students.

Section 3 of this Guide deals with some of the other practical activities relating to formal partnerships in the context of the **Ten Steps** for organising your Job Fair.

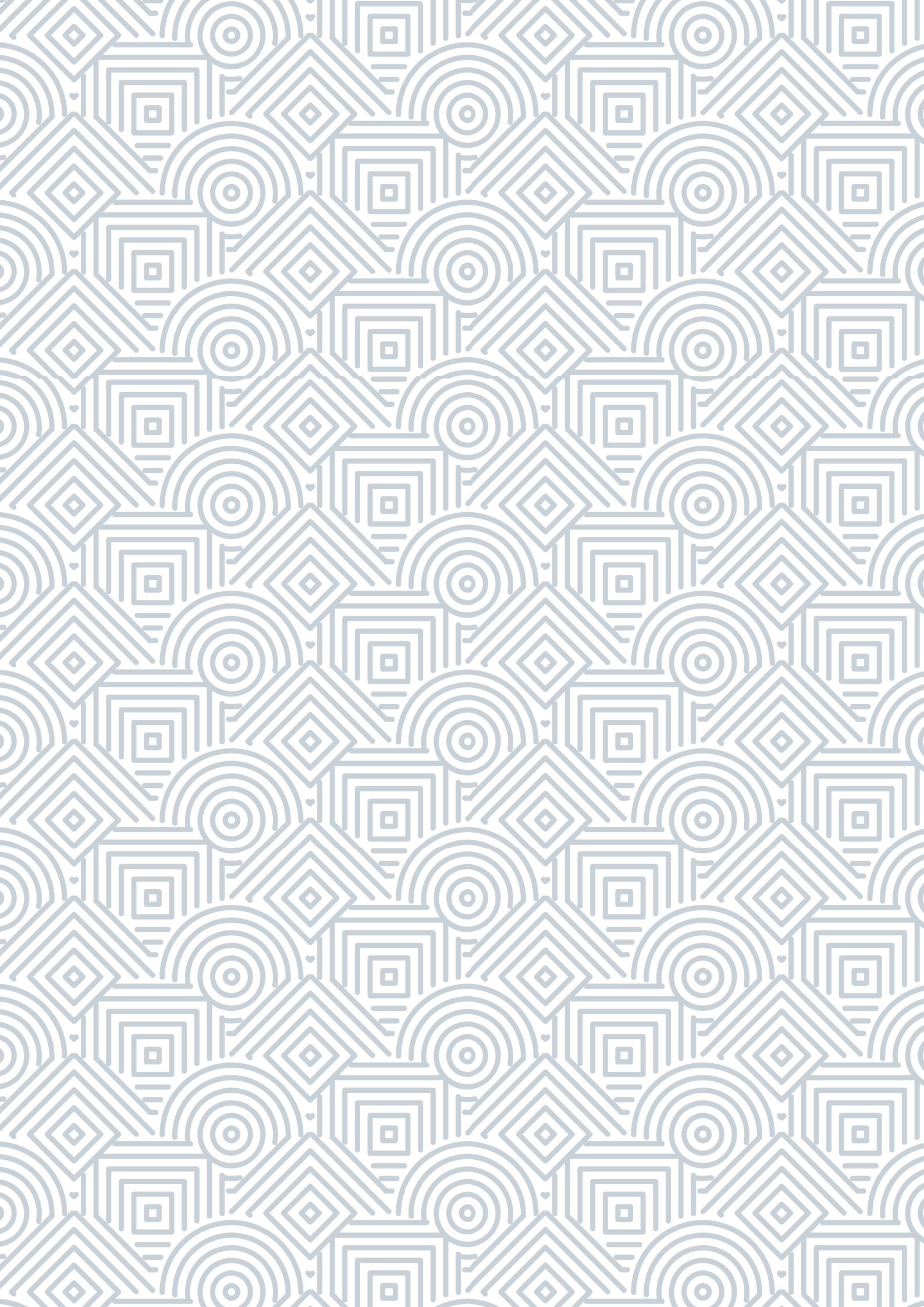
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

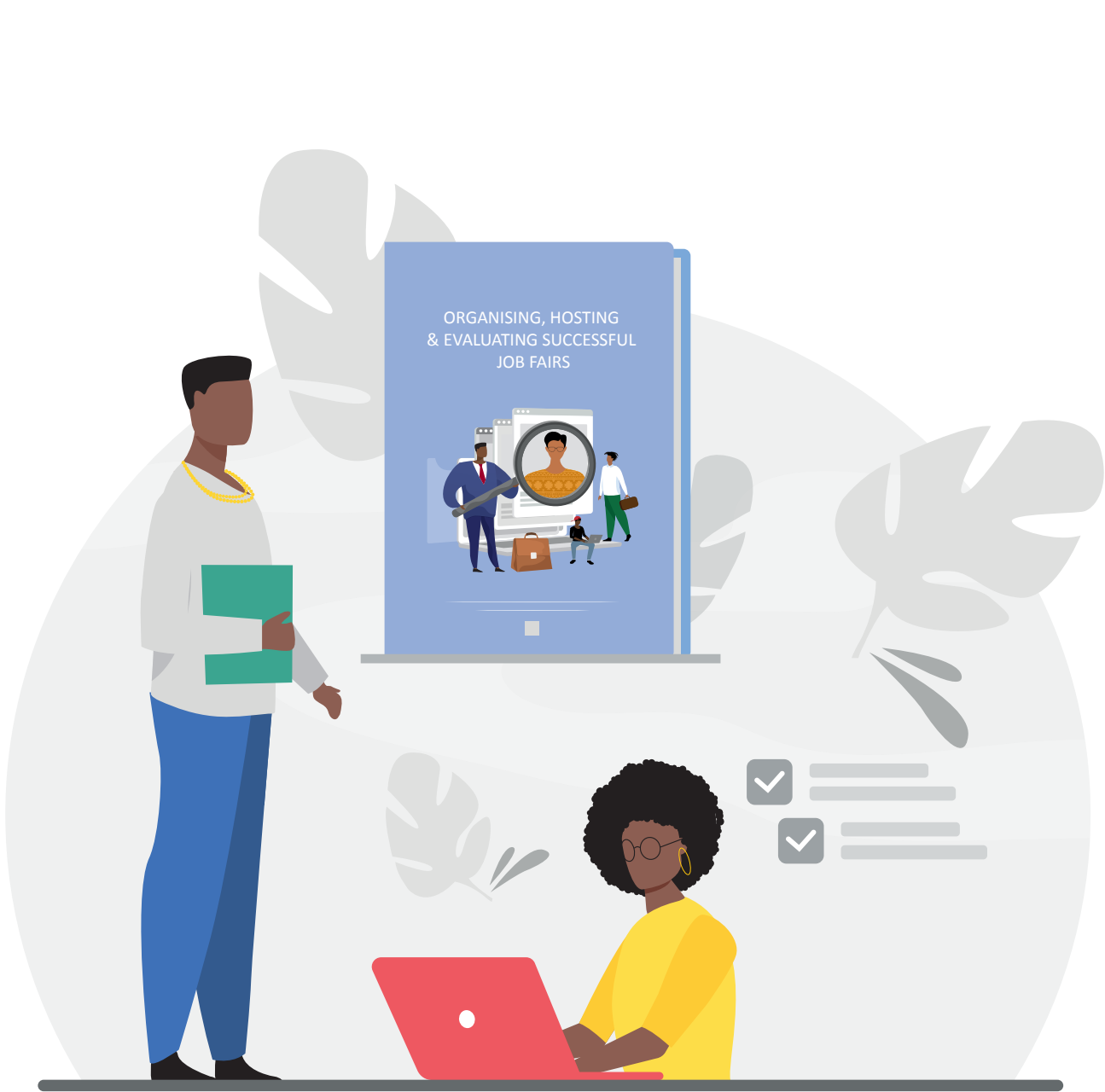
Even if you decide not to run the Job Fair in a formal partnership, the Job Fair planning and implementation process itself allows you to start building relationships which you can grow after the Job Fair. Reaching out to the Corporate Social Investment (CSI) arms for sponsorship or speakers starts the process of opening doors. Municipalities and local business associations will have an interest in skills development which can be stimulated through the Job Fair, and followed up in order to shape different collaboration opportunities afterwards.



Useful Tools:

1. Resource: Stakeholder Mapping
2. Template: Hit-List of Employers
3. Resource: Survey Guide for employers
4. Resource: Survey Guide for students







SECTION 2:
About this Handbook

Who is this handbook for?

This Handbook has been developed for TVET Managers and the Job Fair Team who want to organise, host and evaluate a successful Job Fair either on site or online.

HANDBOOK OBJECTIVES

This Handbook is aligned with the core ethos and objectives of SIFA, in relation to **Strengthening the occupational prospects of young people in Africa**. A successful Job Fair opens many doors to TVET students, and can generate further interventions in support of skills development.

Organising a successful Job Fair requires attention to detail, creativity and strategic planning. The 'Ten Steps' in Section 3 set out guidelines for all the activities you need to undertake. The Templates and Resources which come with this Handbook are aimed at making life easier by optimising planning processes, and illustrating good practice. There is also a supporting guide that TVET Managers can share with job seekers to help them prepare for the Job Fair.



Pro-Tip:

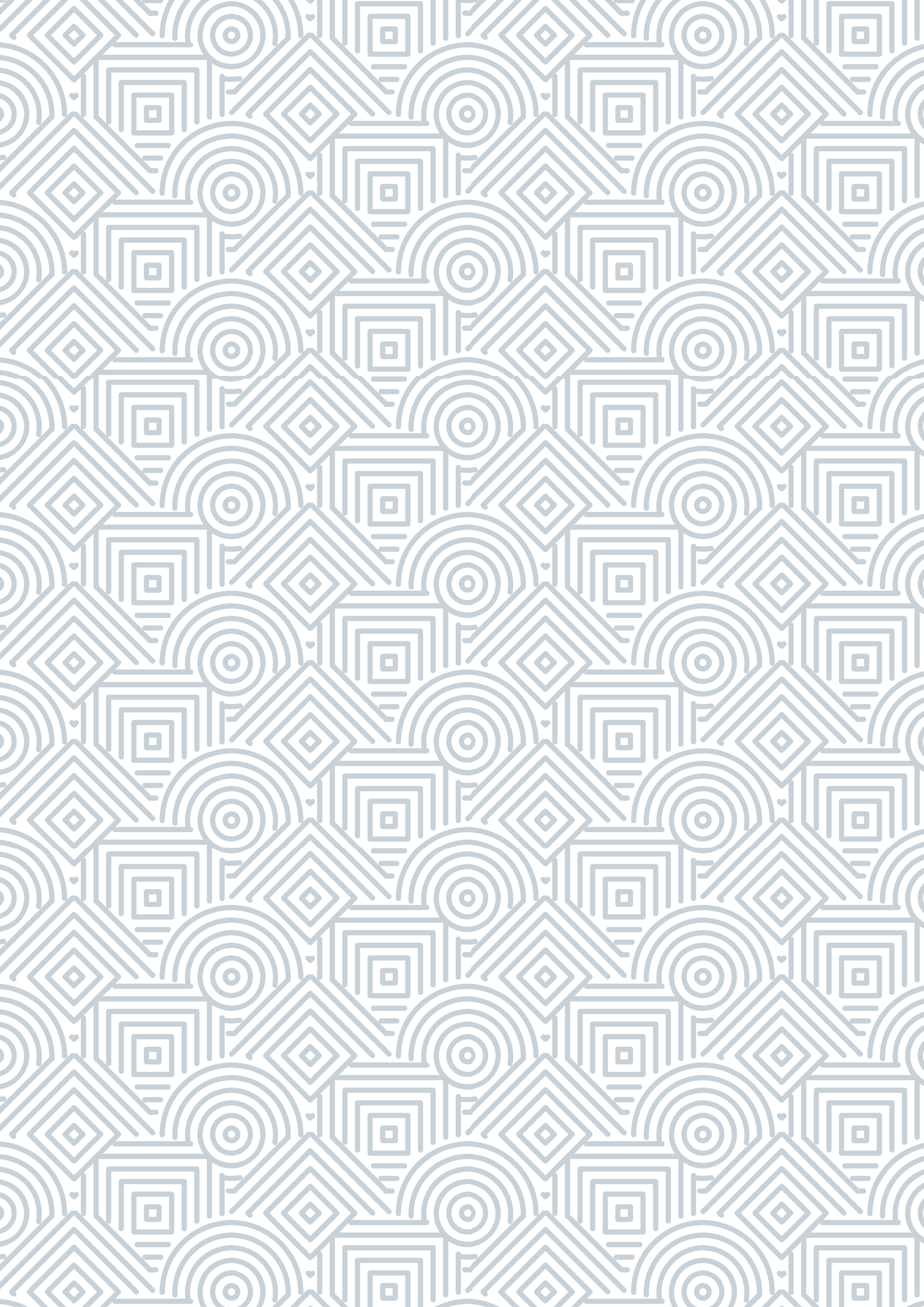
As the TVET Manager or Job Fair Team Leader you should start thinking about your Job Fair and its many moving parts at least six months in advance. First, study this guide. Begin your active planning four months in advance. Avoid by all means working under pressure, as this may result in the hosting of a disorganised, chaotic event and a professionally and emotionally stressful experience for you and your team.

The key objectives of the Handbook are:

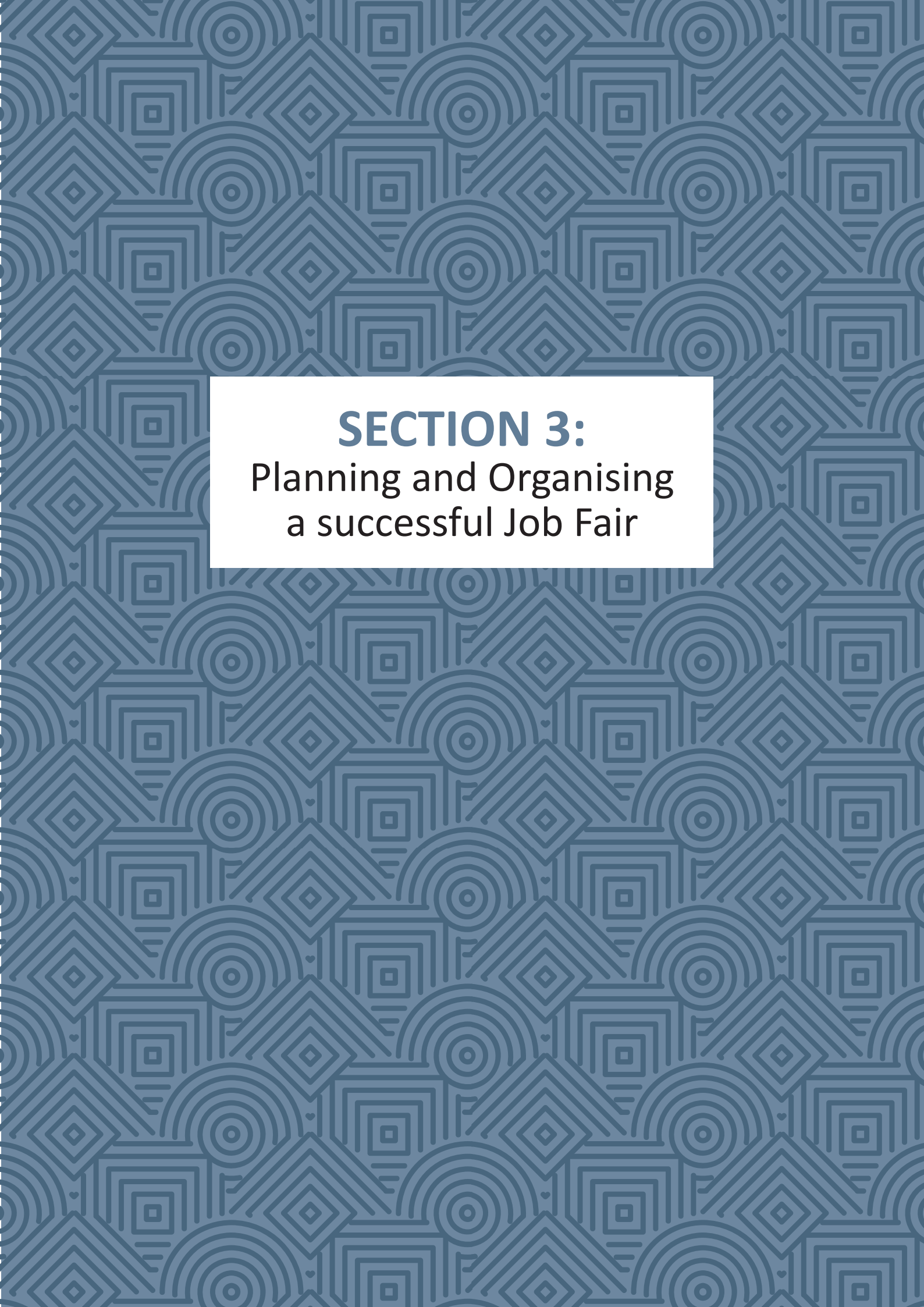
1. To summarise what TVET Managers need to know to host a successful Job Fair
2. To detail the activities needed at each step of planning, hosting and evaluating your Job Fair
3. To offer guidance on creating and retaining sustainable partnerships



As we said in Section 1, the Handbook content and supporting resources can also be adapted and used by third party organisers of multi-stakeholder Job Fairs.







SECTION 3:
Planning and Organising
a successful Job Fair

Introduction

Your Job Fair is a relatively big event with many moving parts, requiring a strong and dedicated planning group and volunteers to assist with setup, registration and participants on the day. There are many steps that go into organising a successful Job Fair, with most of the effort going into planning the event.

Different Job Fairs may take a different focus, depending on the needs and the core business

of your TVET College. You may decide to have a Job Fair focusing on a single area, run by a particular faculty or department (e.g. engineering or hospitality); or you may decide to address more than one vocational area. Job Fairs for different types of vocational training will look very different. This should be your first consideration taken directly after your Needs Assessment.

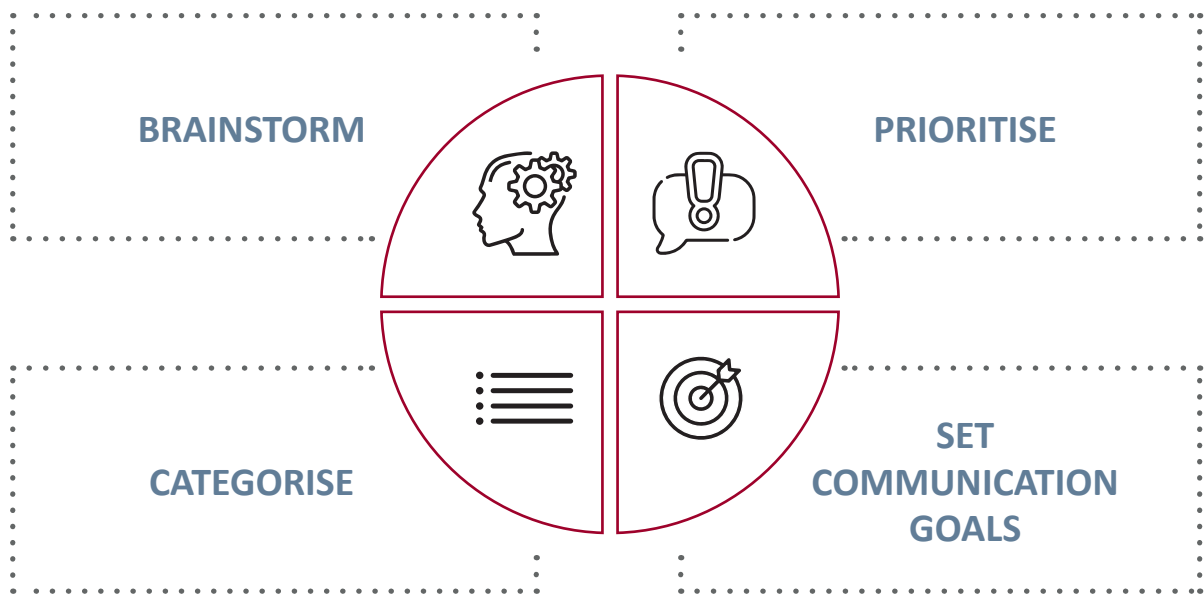
The 10 Steps: Key Activities

The following steps give guidelines on organising and hosting your Job Fair:





STEP 1 *Conducting research*



Creating a stakeholder map

Stakeholder mapping is a way of visually organising all of the people and organisations who have an interest in your Job Fair. This allows you to easily see who can influence your Job Fair and how each organisation or person is related to the other.

Doing stakeholder mapping early on will help you identify the right people to involve, prevent miscommunication, ensure all groups are aligned on the objectives and set expectations about the outcomes and results of your Job Fair. The mapping process will also help illustrate the profile and needs of the attending employers as well as the goals of potential job seekers attending the fair. Your stakeholder map will also help you decide if you want to run your Job Fair in a formal partnership with another entity. But you also need to remember that even if you are running the Job Fair on your own, you can begin developing relationships and informal partnerships with your stakeholders. You can build on these for a number of partnership activities after your Job Fair.

Your project has internal and external stakeholders, and drawing a clear line between the two will help you set the right priorities and find an approach for your specific situation.

Internal Stakeholders

These are people on your team who are participating in organising your Job Fair. Their level of engagement may vary, but they all have an influence because they're part of your organisation. Depending on how your TVET College is structured, your internal stakeholders might include the TVET Principal, Heads of Department/s, Head of Finance, Head of Communications and your lead administrator etc.

External Stakeholders

External stakeholders will include past and current students, job seekers, employers, your municipality, the media etc.

Why you should have a stakeholder map

1. Find out who has the most influence
2. Focus on those who benefit most
3. See where resources are most plentiful
4. Have a game plan

Use your Stakeholder Mapping Template to:

1. Brainstorm
2. Categorise
3. Prioritise
4. Set communication goals

Creating your Hit List for employers and sponsors

Once you have created your stakeholder map, an employer or sponsor search may feel daunting; but if you approach it methodically, managing it doesn't have to be overwhelming. A Hit List can help you manage your searches.

You can create this hit list in the **Hit List of Employers Template** to help you keep track of who you have approached, where you are in the pitch process, and what follow-up is needed and when. It can be managed either by an individual or a group. It is a good idea to reach out to the decision-makers directly. Instead of emailing the company in general, try to contact the HR director and hiring managers. The Hit List provides you with space to fill out their direct contact information. Also, don't be afraid to use connections to make the contacts you need.

Sending out your surveys

Once you have your Hit List it means you know "who" you want to participate in your Job Fair. This survey will help you clarify the "why".

Survey for Employers

Use the Survey Guide for Employers to create a survey to collect information from employers about their open job vacancies and available WBLE opportunities. Further information can be collected from regional Chambers of Commerce, municipal directorates for economic development, or a sector-specific business association.

The survey will allow you to ascertain:

1. How labour market information flows - are employers having difficulty filling vacancies?
2. Why? Will the Job Fair improve the flow of information between employers and potential employees?
3. Which industries have the most vacancies and which industries are saturated?
4. Which industries and specific companies have WBLE opportunities and what are their minimum requirements?
5. What is the most appropriate and relevant theme for your Job Fair?



Survey for Students

Use the **Survey Guide for Students** to create a survey to collect information from them regarding their desired or preferred jobs and WBLE placements.

The survey will allow you to ascertain:

1. Which careers and which industries the students are most attracted to
 2. Which companies students would prefer to work for
 3. Which format the students would prefer for the fair - virtual or physical
 4. Student level of interest and knowledge of Job Fairs
 5. Student preparedness, which will help inform the planning of your preparatory workshop
- You can also conduct additional desktop research and interviews with relevant government departments, trade and industry associations and any other relevant sources of information.

Document the information you have gathered to create your own Needs Assessment Report.



Pro-Tip:

Google forms are a free online tool that are widely used to create surveys easily and quickly since they allow you to plan events, ask questions and collect diverse types of information in a simple and efficient way. Google forms allow you to include different types of questions, such as short answers, paragraphs, multiple selection, verification boxes, pull-down, linear scale, grid of several options and more.



Useful Tools:

1. Resource: Stakeholder Mapping
2. Template: Hit-List of Employers
3. Resource: Survey Guide for employers
4. Resource: Survey Guide for students



STEP 2 *Conducting a needs assessment*

Document and analyse your findings from Step 1 before taking any action. The information you have gathered and captured in your Needs Assessment Report will help you finalise your full Needs Assessment, which will allow you to:

Assess and evaluate the needs, expectations and core areas of interest for your most influential stakeholders, i.e. job seekers, students and employers

For example, if the survey responses from final year students indicate most are interested in working in Electronics this should guide your choice in theme, employers/recruiters to invite as well as your guest speakers.

Determine the logistical needs of the event

Start assessing the event's needs by asking and answering the 'W' questions:

What:

What type of Job Fair are you going to plan? Is it sector-specific or is it multi-disciplinary? Is it an indoor or an outdoor event? Physical or Virtual? What's the size of your event?

Why:

Why are you holding the Job Fair, i.e. what are your objectives?

Where: Where is your Job Fair going to be held, i.e. the actual location, such as on fields or in the hall?

When:

What is the timeframe for the Job Fair? Do you need a specific date or time of the year in relation to the college calendar or is it more flexible?

Who:

Who are your potential attendees, and what are their needs?

All of these questions will help you shape the format of your event. For example, if your event is a Physical Job Fair for manufacturing and technology final year students, your event needs will include resources such as high-speed Wi-Fi, and specific equipment, tools and projection options. Your goal is to extract all the needs by identifying the specifics of the event.

Find out the unemployment rate in your region/municipality as well as current and future employment opportunities for your job seekers and students

1. Cite the unemployment rate as a justification for the Job Fair. This can be added to proposals for funding/sponsorship.
2. Use the vital information on employment and WBLE opportunities to help determine who to invite, how to theme your event, and to start thinking about how you will share this information with students and job seekers through the Job Fair.

Analyse your capabilities

You need to understand your scope of options, from the size of your budget to the availability of your human resources. For instance, if you do not have enough space for your event at the venue, you may want to consider relocating the venue or reducing the number of attendees. Be very clear about the resources required by

the Job Fair. Then you will know to what extent you can cover everything you need, where you may have to do a little compromising or cutting back, or where you can look for sponsorships or partnerships.

Decide on formal partnerships

It is at this point that you can make a clear decision on whether you want to run the event on your own and then follow up partnership opportunities, or whether you want to run the Job Fair event as a partnership, as discussed

in Section 1. If you do go this route, make sure you have a clear understanding of the profile of your proposed partner/s. Your first and most important action will be to have a founding partnership meeting, where you jointly formulate your collaboration principles, the partnership goals and share your mutual expectations for the Job Fair event. After this you will draw your partners into your planning and brainstorming sessions as required (see the Pro-Tips below), and in line with the partnership roles and responsibilities you have decided on.



Pro-Tip:

Conduct a feasibility analysis. The feasibility of an event might not have been considered at all, because it seemed 'such a good idea'. It is important to ascertain if your Job Fair is worth all the effort. Have a brainstorming session where you throw various ideas in and toss them around to 'see which is best'. It's also always advisable to sit down and double check all the needs you've already listed.



Useful Tools:

1. Hit-list of employers
2. Template: Budget

Pro-Tip:

Review your goals and desired outcomes. By doing this you can identify your event's needs. For example, if your intention is to foster deeper partnerships with employers to increase WBLE programmes, then you may need to plan a college department to employer matchmaking dynamic. Eventually, your list of needs will increase

and you'll need to handle a broader range of actions. If your goal is to deliver unique experiences, you'll have to introduce a series of event needs related to the social programme for the attendees. Although the "W" questions are important for the initial step, by setting up the goals, you'll end up refining the needs assessment procedure.



STEP 3 *Creating a theme*

Theming is vital for the concept design and delivery of a successful Job Fair. The theme sets the tone for the entire experience and drives all planning decisions. If, for example, your theme is “Practical Skills for the Digital Age”, this will be the first impression people will have of your event.

A meaningful concept behind your event helps to direct your planning, keeps your messaging on track, drives audience engagement and delivers on your objectives. Choosing a Job Fair theme that is fresh, appealing and on brand is a creative and research driven process.

Try formulating your theme in the form of a question, a statement, a challenge or an idea. Select a theme that can be interpreted loosely, is relatively abstract and open to interpretation. A good Job Fair theme can be carried throughout every touch point of the event, including visual design elements, topics, and merchandise, and it can give direction to your guest speakers. It should be aligned with your TVET College’s core business and be consistent with your brand image.

Here are some simple steps to help you choose a theme that will bring your next Job Fair to life and create a lasting impression.

Define the Job Fair goals and purpose

Establish the intent of your Job Fair and the overall message. Determine what the “takeaway” from the Job Fair should be – what do you want your attendees to remember after they leave? A clear message and intent is key to developing an effective theme for your Job Fair.

Ensure your theme is relevant to your target audience

By now you will have a clear sense of who is attending and why. What do you know about your target audience – How old are they? What is their cultural background and customs? For example, a Job Fair focusing on the culinary industry will have a theme very different to one focusing on the automotive industry. Your theme relates to who you want to attract to your event and what message you are communicating. Then the challenge is finding a creative way to tell that message in a way that will resonate with them. Your theme should be intelligent, inclusive and appealing to attract a high audience attendance rate.

Consider your budget and the event parameters

Where is the Job Fair being held? What is the duration of the event? How many attendees are you expecting? The theme for a local one-day Job Fair can be slightly more specific and targeted as opposed to a longer, three-day Fair.

Review the theme’s requirements in line with your budget

An elaborate theme that requires lots of touch points to be effectively communicated may not be in your budget scope.

Review your theme in relation to your TVET College’ values, branding and purpose

• TVET College values

Understand what your TVET College stands for and choose a Job Fair theme that reflects those values. Some examples are Student Success and Completion, Excellence, Collaboration, Diversity, Life-Long Learning, Integrity, and Technological Advancement.

- **Branding**
Can you draw any concepts or associations from your brand's logo, colours or general branding creative and shapes?
- **Your Vision or Purpose**
A Job Fair theme that incorporates your overarching mission is a great way to reinforce your positioning and help build brand advocacy.

Look to industry trends, topical news or popular culture

Take inspiration from external sources to facilitate brainstorming and to gather ideas. A theme like "Practical Skills for the Digital Age" should complement your industry or college and keep your theme consistent with your image.

Keep it simple

Remember less is more! Keeping the theme simple and to-the-point also prevents miscommunication of the overall message of the event. Think 'Opportunity Knocks, 'Commitment to Excellence' or 'Building for the Future'.

Integrate the theme into every touch point before, during and after your event

A good Job Fair theme should be inherent in every aspect of your event – from the speakers and their topics, to the event design and audio visual, the food, breakout sessions and activities.

A simple theme, clearly communicated, aligned with your brand and with the purpose of your Job Fair will inform prospective attendees and reinforce your message. A theme unifies objectives and provides focus for the event, as well as setting the tone for presentations, speaker content, activations, etc.

Incorporate the theme onto your invitations, programmes, brochures and electronic marketing, name tags, signs and event-related gifts or memorabilia

Your theme should identify the Job Fair and its attendees clearly and specifically. Order giveaway items with the theme and logo on them, such as t-shirts or other memorabilia to really impress and add value for guests.

Get ideas from the experts

Deciding on a Job Fair theme can be one of the hardest decisions TVET Managers and the Job Fair Team may face. That's where communications experts can help (budget permitting). Collaborate with experts to uncover a brilliant theme that perfectly ties your brand and message into an engaging experience.



Pro-Tip:

Always put your guest first. Think about how your theme will enhance the guest experience throughout the event, including (for example) programme scheduling, eating, and entertainment.



Useful Tools:

1. Template: Budget Planner



STEP 4 *Creating and using a budget*

One of the first steps for every Job Fair planner is preparing a budget and predicting as accurately as possible if the Job Fair results in a profit, loss or break-even. Drawing up a budget is crucial during the planning phase of your Job Fair and should happen before your cost benefit analysis. Your budget will give you a detailed forecast of what will be happening financially at your Job Fair. It helps control your expenses and revenue, and is an indicator for measuring the success of your Job Fair. Although a well-planned budget takes time to create and manage, it can mean the difference between success or failure. Once you've developed your budget, you'll have to track and review it regularly to ensure you stay within the allocated resources. Ongoing updating of your Job Fair **Budget Planner** will help you know exactly where you are in the process.

If you are in a formal partnership for the Job Fair, some of your expenses may be shared between partners. If you manage to secure sponsorship, this is considered revenue that can be used to cover some of your costs.

Determine what financial success means to you and how it relates to your Job Fair Budget

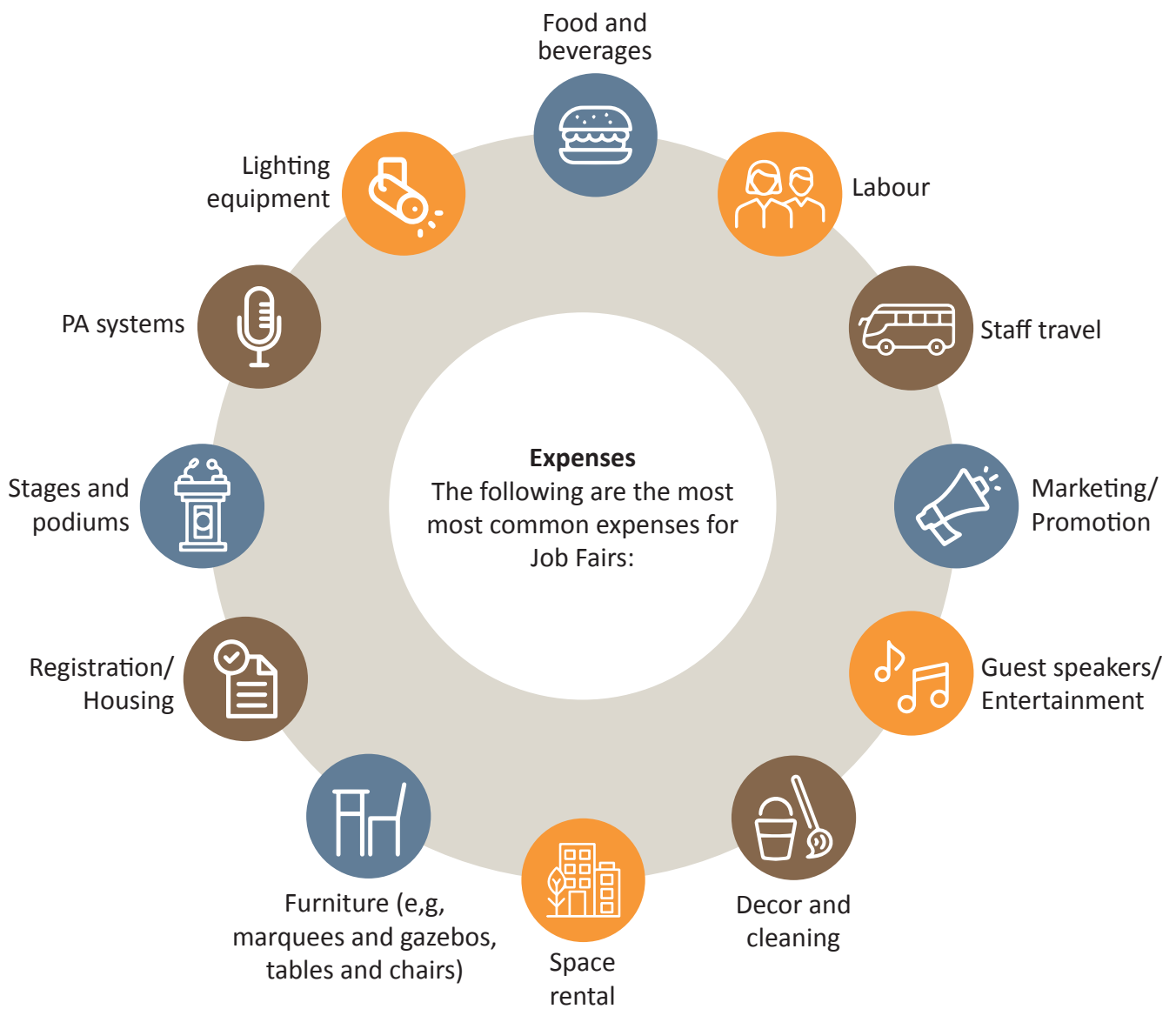
For instance, you may have an available budget and want to keep to it or even underspend. To achieve this, you need to list all the possible expense and revenue possibilities related to the fair. Always keep your cash flow in mind. Bear in mind that determining what financial success means for your event depends on your objectives.

Before planning your budget any further, you need to understand your needs. Your Job Fair budget is really a forecast, or projection, of all expenses and revenues that your Job Fair will generate. While you won't be able to forecast all of these from the beginning, and some might even change over time, you still need to plan for the most common expenses and revenues.

Job Fair Budget: Quick Steps to planning yours!

When event budgeting, it's paramount to identify which items represent expenses, and which are revenue sources that can cover costs. In addition, you need to distinguish between fixed and variable costs to forecast a budget for your next Job Fair effectively.

One of the key challenges for planners is to ensure that you carefully manage expenses and revenues to achieve the financial goals established by your college and accurately measure your Job Fair success.



Pro-Tip:

Note that event technology can be incorporated into all of these common expenses. For example, an event tech app can help with allowing event planners to push notifications about keynote speakers and registration.



Spend money on the right things

Your Job Fair is about the attendee experience, so you have to ensure that where you spend your money adds value to your target audience. Attendees don't care if you pay a fortune for coffee. They do, however, care about a great overall experience, and food and beverage is a large component of attendee satisfaction. It is recommended that you spend 55% of your budget on food and beverage, audiovisual, and speaker/entertainment in total, because these items have a direct impact on the overall attendee experience.

Fixed and variable costs

It's crucial to differentiate between fixed and variable expenses or costs. Fixed costs are costs that do not change based on the number of

attendees. These costs are calculated as a total amount. Variable costs are costs that change based on the number of attendees. These costs are calculated on a per-person basis.

Sources of revenue

To cover expenses, different revenue avenues can be leveraged. For example, advertising revenues, concession, exhibit or exposition booth rental fees, management fees, registration, and sponsorship fees would be considered sources of revenue. This is by no means a complete list, especially for sponsorship revenue.

Use the **Budget Planner** to draft your Job Fair Budget.



Pro-Tip:

- Always save ALL invoices and receipts to back up your Job Fair Budget.
- An essential line item in your budget should be a contingency fund; it's always better to plan for additional unforeseen expenses so you're prepared for the unexpected during your Job Fair. Think about what could trigger additional costs and develop a plan to address these.
- Arrange a meeting with your accounting or financial officer to review the format of your budget.
- As demands for your Job Fair might change, it's also a good idea to confirm in advance who has the authority to spend beyond the approved budget.
- It's important to track your budget throughout both the planning and implementation stages of your Job Fair.
- Transferring all of your financial systems to a cloud-based system will enable you to manage your financial operations anywhere and anytime.

Calculate cash flow for your Job Fair

Job Fair expenses usually occur before the first revenues are generated; for example, you usually have to put down a deposit when booking venues before you sell your first ticket. In short, you need to be able to pay your bills while you await payments.

Use the **Cash Flow Calculator** to calculate your cash flow, add up all your revenues and subtract the uncollected accounts receivables (money owed to you for services/work performed). This is your cash on hand before expenses. If you then subtract all of your accounts payable

(money you owe for services/work provided to you) from that number, you will have your cash on hand. If the number is positive, you have a positive cash flow.

Cash Flow Calculation

All Revenues – Uncollected Accounts Receivable
= Cash on Hand Before Expenses

Cash on Hand Before Expenses – Accounts Payable = Cash on Hand

Starting cash is the amount of money you have readily available at the start of any given period.



Useful Tools:

1. Budget
2. Cash Flow Calculator





STEP 5 *Conducting a cost benefit analysis*

Subsequently, a cost-benefit analysis needs to be done to evaluate if the Job Fair will produce the necessary results and generate sufficient interest from both employers and job seekers. The cost benefit analysis will offer unique and valuable insight when:

1. Developing benchmarks for comparing each of your annual Job Fairs
2. Deciding whether or not to host a Job Fair
3. Measuring social benefits of the Job Fair
4. Quantifying effects on stakeholders and participants

There is no “standard” format for performing a cost benefit analysis, but there are certain core elements:

1. Establish a framework to outline the parameters of the analysis
2. Identify costs and benefits so they can be categorised by type, and intent
3. Calculate costs and benefits
4. Analyse results and make an informed, final recommendation

Establish a framework

Once your event is clearly outlined, you’ll need to build out a situational overview to examine the existing state of affairs. This will include background, performance of past Job Fairs, any opportunities they have brought to the table, and their projected performance in the future. Also make sure to factor in an objective look at any risks involved in maintaining the status quo moving forward.

Now decide how you will approach cost benefits. Which cost benefits should be included in your analysis? Include the basics, but also do a bit of thinking outside the box to come up with any unforeseen costs that could impact you in both the short and long term.

Identify and categorise costs and benefits

Now that your framework is in place, it's time to sort your costs and benefits into buckets by type. The primary categories that costs and benefits fall into are direct/indirect, tangible/intangible, and real:

- Direct costs are often associated with production of a cost object (product, service, customer, project, or activity)
- Indirect costs are usually fixed in nature, and may come from overhead of a department or cost center
- Tangible costs are easy to measure and quantify, and are usually related to an identifiable source or asset, like payroll, rent, and purchasing tools
- Intangible costs are difficult to identify and measure, like shifts in satisfaction
- Real costs are expenses associated with producing the Job Fair, such as labor costs and raw materials

Now that you've developed the categories into which you'll sort your costs and benefits, it's time to start crunching numbers. Use the Cost Benefit Analysis Tool to calculate costs and benefits and present recommendations.



Pro-Tip:

Always evaluate your Job Fair against the priorities of other projects in your TVET College that are awaiting approval and funding. As the Team Leader do not try and complete this step on your own. You need to consult your Head of Finance/ Accounts and the relevant faculty department heads.



Useful Tools:

1. Resource: Cost Benefit Analysis Tool
2. Template: Event Planner
3. Template: Event Checklist
4. Template: Budget Planner



STEP 6 *Setting up the Job Fair Team*

The structure of the team should reflect the basic functions required for organising, implementing and evaluating the Job Fair. Use your human resources to the best of their abilities with the lowest cost possible. If you are in a formal partnership, your agreements on roles and responsibilities will shape the Job Fair Team.

TVET Manager/ Team leader

You are responsible for overseeing all aspects of the Job Fair: planning, leading, organising, coordinating and controlling and ensuring successful implementation. You also need to keep the idea of relationship management with all your external stakeholders front of mind, and make sure your team does too. Any relationships built up through the planning and implementation process can be actioned after the fair to achieve various goals. In addition, you will need to approve all applications and outbound requests by the Job fair Team, particularly those with financial implications, before and during the organisation of the fair.

Promotions and Advertising Coordinator

This person is responsible for the Job Fair promotion, including public relations and the development of themed branding and promotional collateral aimed at attracting qualified job seekers, students and employers. The promotions and advertising coordinator is also responsible for ensuring that other influential stakeholders (such as media houses,

relevant people in government departments, municipal officials, trade and industry decision makers etc.) are included in marketing and invitations. You should only outsource the management of this function if there is no competent staff member, and if you have the budget. Any marketing and branding agency used should work closely with the Team Leader.

Employers' Coordinator

This person is responsible for inviting and committing employers (exhibitors) to the Job Fair, providing guidelines for employer participation and ensuring that their needs are met before, during and after the Job Fair. The guidelines for exhibitors and key speakers will be developed with the team as a whole, in line with all other aspects of the Job Fair. This is a key relationship management role.

Administration and Logistics Officer

The admin and logistics officer is responsible for preparing all legal forms and applications related to the Job Fair organisation. In addition, the officer will be responsible for procuring the venue, arranging transport, providing equipment, supplies, and services before, during and after the Job Fair. This person may need a financial assistant to process all administrative and financial forms and applications, handle communications, and assist the team leader and other team members when necessary.

Recruiting volunteers

Some team roles can be undertaken by volunteers. Here is a useful step-by-step guide to recruiting volunteers:

The background work required before you recruit

Before recruiting volunteers consider the following questions.

- What is the function of volunteers and what tasks are volunteers suited to?
- What skills and experience would you like the volunteers to possess?
- How will you go about finding volunteers?
- What will the selection process involve?
- If volunteers are successfully recruited, how will you ensure their commitment?
- Do you have volunteer management systems and policies? What are they?

Get the word out

Advertising for new volunteers requires you to:

- Prepare a case for support- your message to potential volunteers
- Choose channels for recruitment
- Be persistent and patient

Case for support - your message to potential volunteers

The case for support should explain in reader-friendly language:

- What you do and how your existence benefits your enrolled students and the community at large
- The range of volunteer opportunities
- The difference a volunteer can make to your Job Fair, your TVET College, your students (their peers), your employers' and community attendees' experience
- What the volunteer can gain from working on the Job Fair
- How prospective volunteers can find out more

Methods of volunteer recruitment

There are a lot of ways to advertise for volunteers and your job is made easier by the mere fact that as a TVET College you have a pool of students at your disposal to recruit from. Below are useful tips on attracting volunteers:

- You could make it compulsory for first year students to volunteer for at least one event at your TVET College
- Word of mouth referrals
- Written and verbal announcements
- Flyer, Brochure and other printed media including campus or community press
- Campus or community radio ads
- Online- on your own website, on social media and via volunteer recruitment websites
- Email circulation
- Via SMS or WhatsApp

Always include a clear call to action, and your contact number and email address so potential volunteers can get in touch easily.

Volunteer applications

Use this **Volunteer Application Form** to help ensure that recruitment of volunteers takes account of equal opportunities and diversity policy. Where appropriate, ensure that different languages or inclusive images are used. You also need to be conscious about accessibility for people with disabilities.

Volunteer interviews

Remember, these people are offering a gift of time, not seeking paid employment. Interviews should not be too intense or overly formal. Make sure the volunteer role is understood, and give time for the applicant to raise any questions or concerns. It's also important that you're ready to explain any requirements that need to be met before appointment and the support that will be available.

Volunteer appointment

Applicants with the necessary attributes and actual or potential skills for the volunteer role will then be contacted to attend an induction process.

The first Job Fair Team meeting

The first team meeting is crucial to establish an effective team, and to clarify roles and responsibilities. Topics that will need to be addressed and put into an agenda include:

Depending on the nature and size of the event, and of the Job Fair Team, your first meeting may not be able to cover all these topics. For example, the Job Fair theme and the development of the event programme will require a separate brainstorm. In a formal partnership, the Job Fair Team will need to cover the same items.

The Job Fair objective(s)

- Team member roles, responsibilities and tasks
- Potential dates, taking into account factors such as the weather, holidays, or conflicting events
- Potential venues, such as the main auditorium hall, sports fields or outside venues
- Logistical issues, such as venue requirements (e.g. lighting, sound, decor), floor layout, permits and insurance, supplies, assets and equipment required, and all services needed
- Project timelines
- Job Fair Theme and programme development (including speakers, entertainment etc.)
- Promotion and marketing
- Overall communication strategy and target audiences, including invitation process and database
- Potential exhibitors
- Potential vendors for products or services at the event
- Potential sponsors
- Relationship management
- Risks



Pro-Tip:

Allocate and distribute specific activities across the team wisely. Delegate tasks to your team proportionately, so that everyone can do their job without feeling overwhelmed or, on the contrary, bored.



Useful Tools:

1. Template: Volunteer Agreement
2. Template: Volunteer Application Form
3. Template: To-Do List



STEP 7 *Preparing for your Job Fair*

Event Checklist and Contingency Measures

Where do you start your event planning checklist? Lay a solid foundation for your event. Before selecting colour schemes and ordering flowers, you have to tackle the basics. From signing contracts to negotiating a block of rooms, everything needs to be written on your checklist, no matter how large or small.

The key is to first take care of any tasks that can be completed in advance to allow more time in your schedule for those to-do items that occur closer to the event date. The Checklist should have tasks, deadlines, responsible persons, and progress. The plan has to be prepared jointly and agreed with the Job Fair Team.



Pro-Tip:

No matter how much effort you put into the planning, there are always some incidents ready to wreck the big day for you. They could be as small as the malfunction of one microphone and as big as a natural calamity. It is important to have contingency measures

in place to direct every activity in your checklist in the case of any major or minor trouble. This plan not only works as a predictor of emergencies but will also make sure you are able to cope with them.



Here are some example items for your checklist:

Table 1: Job Fair Preparation Checklist

Activity	Description
A few months before	
Select a venue Create a budget Decide on a theme Define your audience Decide on a date and time Research venues Research catering Recruit a Job Fair Team Develop your Job Fair programme Manage relationships Set up formal partnership agreements, if running the Job Fair in a partnership	<p>These activities have been outlined in Step 1-6 of this Handbook and should be implemented at least 90 days before the event.</p>
A few weeks before	
Booths	<p>Finalise the placement and locations of booths and tables and send it to all employers who have confirmed their participation. Use your Booth Map Guide to help you visualise where and how your booths will be placed.</p>
Site Visit	<p>Visit the venue in advance to determine the exact number of informative signs needed for the locations.</p>
Stakeholder Briefings	<p>Send an instruction email to the speakers, exhibitors and any other employers who confirmed their participation so they can prepare for the Job Fair. Briefing notes for speakers need to be prepared, covering themes, expectations and the programme. Exhibitors' notes cover elements such as a map of the booths to indicate their location and preparations for gathering key data using forms.</p> <p>Use the Level Up and Crush it: A Job Seekers Guide to Job Fairs handbook to prepare your Job Seeker and students attendees.</p> <p>Make sure the volunteers know what to do (e.g., greet jobseekers and employers and provide directions; circulate around the room to assist attendees with questions).</p> <p>Prepare name tags for Job Fair event staff, volunteers, speakers and exhibitors.</p>
Media	<p>Secure a photographer and videographer and provide them with a media plan.</p>

A few days before	
Site Design	<p>Post vacancy announcements at accessible locations and arrange these so that participants can quickly locate the type of jobs they are seeking.</p> <p>Invite all employers to visit the Job Fair venue a day in advance for the final preparation of their booths. Allow for last-minute cancellations.</p>
Printing of Forms	<p>Check that all the forms you need in print or online format are ready. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event programme and brochures • Name tags • Evaluation Forms for Employers and Job Students • Sign in forms for volunteers • Registration forms for attendees • Booth map • Event checklist • Speaker checklist
Throughout	
	<p>Provide regular updates on remaining tasks and activities to be followed up by your team members.</p> <p>Discuss problems, delays and constraints and find solutions.</p> <p>Monitor and revise the Job Fair To Do List on an ongoing basis (daily).</p> <p>Identify and monitor potential problem areas and risks, and devise ways to anticipate, avoid or mitigate these to minimize their impact.</p> <p>Respond to questions on Facebook promptly (within 24 hours).</p>
After	
Monitoring and evaluation	<p>Conduct an evaluation of your Job Fair against your objectives. Some of the evaluation activities (such as collecting feedback) may take place during the Job Fair. It's important to prepare for the process.</p>

For a full breakdown of all the activities you can expect to implement when planning your Job Fair, please use your **Checklist(s)**.



Pro-Tip:

Outsourcing. You will not be able to do everything in house. Many of the services or goods that you may need to hire for your Job Fair are set out in Vendor Agreements. These include: Graphic Design of promotional material; Booths with movable partitions to allow a flexible geometry in building stands; Carpet; Furniture and accessories according to basic booth-shell scheme; Lighting; Entrance doors; Place for registration of visitors; Corner for CV writing (for jobseekers); Electricity sockets in the stands; Coffee bar and restaurant installations; Technicians and porters for setting up stands; Direction signs; Cleaning services; Wi-Fi connections (e.g. 4G internet provider, etc.).



Useful Tools:

1. Resource: Booth map Guide
2. Template: Event Checklist
3. Template: Vendor Agreement





STEP 8 *Promoting your Job Fair*

Promoting your Job Fair and raising interest for participation is vital to its success. Reaching your target audience can be done either directly or through stakeholders. Your promotional campaign should start 30 days before the event and should be based on the overall goals of the Job Fair.

Here are some steps to creating a successful promotional campaign.

Develop event branding

From the event name and theme to the event website design (or the announcement on the college website) through to the on-site look and feel – your event’s branding sets the tone for your event. When people think of your event, you want a strong personality to shine. Additionally, a strong event brand provides a vision and helps to steer the direction of your

event. Attendees expect consistent experiences when experiencing a Job Fair virtually, in person, or by phone.

If you don’t have qualified staff who can write copy and produce graphics and visuals, we recommend you engage a copywriter to develop the Job Fair message and hire a marketing and design company that works in close cooperation with the Job Fair Team.

An event brand should reflect your TVET College’s brand, but it should also have a brand of its own consistent with your theme. Additionally, think about how your brand will come across online and in real life. Lastly, consider how you will weave your event brand into the individual elements of your event, including intangible experiences like food service for esteemed guests.

ALL your branding should incorporate:

- **Your event name.** Your event’s name is the first thing all stakeholders will see, so you want it to reflect your vision for the event.
- **Your theme.** Your event name alone can’t tell the whole story. Your theme will create that golden thread that will tie your Job Fair together.
- **Logo, colors, typography.** There should be consistency across all marketing touchpoints. On-site decor, email signatures, signage, social media visual assets, t-shirts and so much more. While every touchpoint doesn’t need to be hyper-branded, individual elements should come together to support the story you are telling.

With these branding elements solidified, you should use them across all platforms. The branding should be included on your event announcement on your college website, social media, emails, tickets and registration, and your event app. (Tip: create a competition for your students to develop the app.)

Develop your electronic press kit

An effective electronic press kit (EPK) is designed to help members of the media develop stories related to your Job Fair. Your press kit should contain all of the content a reporter, producer, or blogger might need to tell your brand story within their coverage area. Your digital press kit can be created in a variety of acceptable formats, from a PowerPoint deck to a PDF file. However, a dedicated press tab on your website is best, because it creates a one-stop shop for all your event information.

The Electronic Press Kit includes:

1. TVET College background
2. Management/Staff Bios
3. A selection of important press releases about the Job Fair
4. Job Fair Fact Sheet(s)
5. Case Studies/ Testimonials from job seekers/recruiters/employers
6. Noteworthy press coverage
7. Industry awards and accolades
8. Digital artwork

Use the Press Release Template

Design and production of promotional collateral

Once you have developed your brand, it is time to work on your printed and digital materials.

The following are typical marketing assets for promoting a Job Fair:

- Banners for the internal premises
- Street banners and posters
- Signs, stickers and badges for employers, volunteers, and staff
- Digital:
 - Social media banners (Facebook page/ twitter/email etc)
 - WhatsApp Poster
 - Digital Adverts (Facebook/LinkedIn)

Some design tips:

- Content should be readable from a distance
- Create some contrast with your colour choice
- Use a big image
- Don't forget the "Call to Action"

Promoting your Job Fair on social media

If you're planning an event, promoting it on social media is one of the most effective ways to generate buzz. The power of social media is amplified when you put specific strategies to work on each platform.

Below, you'll learn about the benefits of various social media platforms and numerous ways to promote your event, whether it's physical or virtual:

- Choose a great hashtag
- Create an event page
- Create compelling content
- Partner with student and community influencers
- Invest in the right tools

Choosing the right social media platform

Each social media platform has a unique set of benefits and often attracts certain demographics. Taking your stakeholders into account, here are social media platforms you can use for different groups:



Social college platforms e.g. intranet



Facebook



Twitter



LinkedIn



Instagram



WhatsApp



Facebook

If you're unsure about promoting an event on social media, Facebook is a solid beginner's choice. Facebook lets you:

- **Share event updates** using a Facebook Business Profile
- **Communicate with followers** via comments and messenger
- **Create detailed event pages** to allow your stakeholders to interact
- **Target your audience** using paid ad tools
- **Mention and tag** other TVET Colleges, your local schools, other colleges, universities, career centres, community and campus influencers



Instagram

Instagram is a visually driven platform that is a force for connecting with potential attendees of your event. Instagram makes it easy to:

- **Post eye-catching content.** Tip: post on your feed. Include captivating photos/videos, write a good caption, and include trending, relevant hashtags.
 - **Create short-lived content.** Link them to your Job Fair website or landing page.
 - **Engage with followers** by responding to comments and chatting over direct messages.
 - **Link to your Job Fair website, or event page on the college website.** Provide a link to direct traffic from the app to your event page.
 - **Mention and tag** other TVET Colleges, your local schools, other colleges, universities, career centres, community and campus influencers
 - **Target your stakeholders** using paid ads that target your desired demographics.
-



LinkedIn

LinkedIn is best for hosting an industry-specific, business-related event. It provides:

- **Content marketing capabilities.** Highlight content like blog posts, case studies, and videos.
 - **Opportunities to network.** Link with targeted professionals, network with similar colleges, recruiters, businesses in your area, online media publications influencers and leverage endorsements. Interact with other professionals in the comments or direct messaging feature.
 - **Event management.** For corporate events, including Job Fairs, LinkedIn hosts an event management tool to streamline the promotion process.
-



Twitter

This fast-paced platform thrives on short conversations between users. Successfully promote your event on Twitter by:

- Using relevant and trending **hashtags** to attract traffic
 - **Engaging Twitter users** in their groups and be part of the “in-crowd”
 - **Posting promotional content** through event announcements in JPEG or PNG and videos
-



WhatsApp

Many African citizens communicate via WhatsApp. Do this:

- Create mobile friendly **event posters**
- **Develop content** that will make your audience want to share in groups
- Post on team members’ **statuses** and profiles, including volunteers, and share and link **via Facebook stories**
- Create an **event profile** where you communicate to all stakeholders
- **Create a group** to communicate internally

ADDITIONAL MARKETING TOOLS

Email marketing

Everyday and after each event use your database to promote your event and the companies attending your Career Fair. You can also promote open positions, locations, times and much more.

SMS

Not only should you reach out to your target market through multiple media outlets, you should also reach out to them on their phones. Take the time to message every applicant via SMS to remind them of date times, to bring their CVs and to dress professionally.

Broadcast and print media

Create media partnerships with college campuses and community radio and TV stations, or send your press release to commercial broadcasters; stations to receive unpaid airplay through live interviews.

TVET College Boards

Target ALL local schools and colleges and other TVET Colleges for your Job Fair through popular websites, school newspapers and career centres.



Useful Tools:

1. **Resource:** Booth Map Guide
2. **Template:** Press release template
3. **Template:** Vendor Agreement
4. **Level-Up and Crush It:** A Jobseeker's Guide to Job Fairs
5. **Template:** Event Checklist
6. **Template:** Event Planner
7. **Template:** To-Do List
8. **Template:** Budget Planner
9. **Template:** Social Media Content Plan & Scheduling
10. **Template:** Event Speaker checklist
11. **Template:** Event Marketing time-line
12. **Template:** COVID-19 Event Checklist
13. **Legal Requirements:** Ambulance services, Job Fair Clearance
14. **Photographers & Videographers Content Guide**



STEP 9 *Implementing your Job Fair*

The Event Day

It might seem obvious, but as you plan your event it's crucial to keep one thing in mind: the Event Day experience. There are a few key areas that we recommend focusing on: location, content and collaboration. These Event Day tips will help you curate the best possible experience for your attendees.

Make sure the event sticks to the schedule. As Team leader, you need to be in an area where you can manage the programme events, and where you are readily accessible to VIPs and to your staff/volunteers in case they have questions. If there is a problem, stay calm and don't draw attention to the issue. Remember, most guests do not have a blueprint of the event and will most likely not have any idea that a problem presented itself.



Pro-Tip:

Be at the event venue at least two hours before it starts. This includes your volunteers, technical team, Job Fair core team and recruiters managing the booths. Complete a full dry run, sound check and tech check the day before the event.

Some of these activities will help to ensure the event is running smoothly:

- ✓ Note “no-shows” by saving the unclaimed name badges
- ✓ Note “walk-ins” for tabulation
- ✓ Assign a greeter and assist any guest who may have a physical disability
- ✓ Greet the local media and provide them with press packs and food
- ✓ Make visits to each booth to welcome exhibitors and give them visibility; check if all exhibitors are in their assigned stands- if not, mitigate the risk of having an empty stand by calling the employer and/or its substitution
- ✓ Check that the photographer and videographer have arrived
- ✓ Ensure catering services are running smoothly
- ✓ Make sure the following forms are easily accessible and completed: **evaluation form for students and employers, volunteer sign in form** and **attendee registration form**
- ✓ Confirm that all permits (when applicable) are displayed and easily seen
- ✓ Monitor lines and make sure the flow of the room is adequate
- ✓ Check on volunteers to make sure there are no problems
- ✓ Ensure that the registration desks are in place and well equipped
- ✓ Ensure that the information desk and vacancy announcements are visible
- ✓ Check if signs for Toilets and Exits are placed appropriately
- ✓ Make sure you have a thorough cleaning schedule, particularly for toilets
- ✓ Check the Wi-Fi connection
- ✓ Ensure that the PA and lighting system are working- do a sound check

For a more extensive list of recommended activities to make your Job Fair a success please use your **Checklist(s)**.



Useful Tools:

1. Template: Volunteer Sign-in Form
2. Template: To-Do List
3. Template: Bathroom Cleaning Roster



STEP 10 *Carrying out Monitoring and Evaluation and follow-up*

Your Job Fair may be over, but don't relax yet; there is still a lot of work to be done before you can consider your event complete. Tie up loose ends, complete the paperwork and compile and store all this information for future reference. Has your event register been updated? Does it reflect "no-shows"? Have you paid all your outstanding invoices? Have you reconciled your accounts? Did you debrief with staff and volunteers that attended your event?

As highlighted throughout this Handbook, the core purpose of the Job Fair is to support effective skills development for employability and economic growth. This support takes the form of integrating the skills pipeline: it connects the college with employers able to assist with WBLE opportunities; it connects employers needing competent and qualified staff; and it connects qualified students and job seekers needing jobs. Follow up with the employers to receive information on WBLE and internship

Analyse the financial performance of your Job Fair

Once your Job Fair is over, you need to close the loop and add up all expenses and revenues. This is not only important to show your stakeholders (and partners if you are in a partnership), but also for you to learn from your experiences and improve your next Job Fair by analysing your financial performance. Go back to the success measures and benchmarks that you set up before the event to determine if you were successful.

placements; follow up regarding jobs obtained and ask for detailed feedback on their overall experience. Use the **Evaluation Form for employers** to accumulate this data.



Say "Thank You!"

Thank your core team, volunteers and all other staff that helped bring your Job Fair to reality. Neglecting to thank volunteers, vendors and important contact people sends the wrong message about you and your event- you aren't organised, you didn't give value to the event and you don't appreciate their help. Thank-you messages or letters need to be warm, sincere and quickly sent within 48 hours of the event. Personalise your communications. A personalised thank you creates relationships of growth, trust, and positive affirmation for you and your TVET College.

Complete the paperwork

Take the time to update your attendee list and note the guests that did not attend. An accurate list of attendees will help to build a relevant database, and is vital to evaluating the event.

Process the Evaluation Forms to get feedback from your attendees (especially employers) on the overall experience, and their interest in participating in future events. Summarise and compare the results from Job Seeker and Employer Evaluation forms.

Pay any invoices that may be outstanding. Deposit any revenue immediately. Complete a **Job Fair Report** and share with all relevant stakeholders not more than a week after your event. Your report should account for all expenses and revenues. This statement will confirm at a glance how much you paid and to whom and your final total expense or revenue.

Also when completing final paperwork take the time to fill-out venue or customer service surveys. Be honest and fair in your rankings so the venue has the opportunity to correct any errors that were made or give recognition to staff that went above and beyond expected service.

Store all files, pictures, promotional materials and documents for the next Job Fair. Examples are budgets, forms, letters, lists, memos, signs, posters, templates, press releases, advertising & promotion materials, planning and meeting notes, schedules, timelines, reports, evaluations, supplies, equipment, etc.

Debrief

Debrief with your team members and volunteers, and take note of their comments and suggestions for improving future Job Fairs. In addition, immediate feedback from attendees is a wonderful tool to measure success. Openly discussing the Job Fair with key stakeholders that attended will reaffirm what worked, what did not work and how to improve the event. A debriefing meeting should be scheduled within three to seven days after the Job Fair and should be facilitated by a neutral party that can record comments and lead the discussion in a conversational, unobtrusive manner. Use the **Debriefing Procedures** as a guide.

For more feedback you can also conduct follow-up interviews telephonically or virtually using communications platforms such as Zoom, Google Meets or MS Teams, not more than one month after the Job Fair.



Pro-Tip:

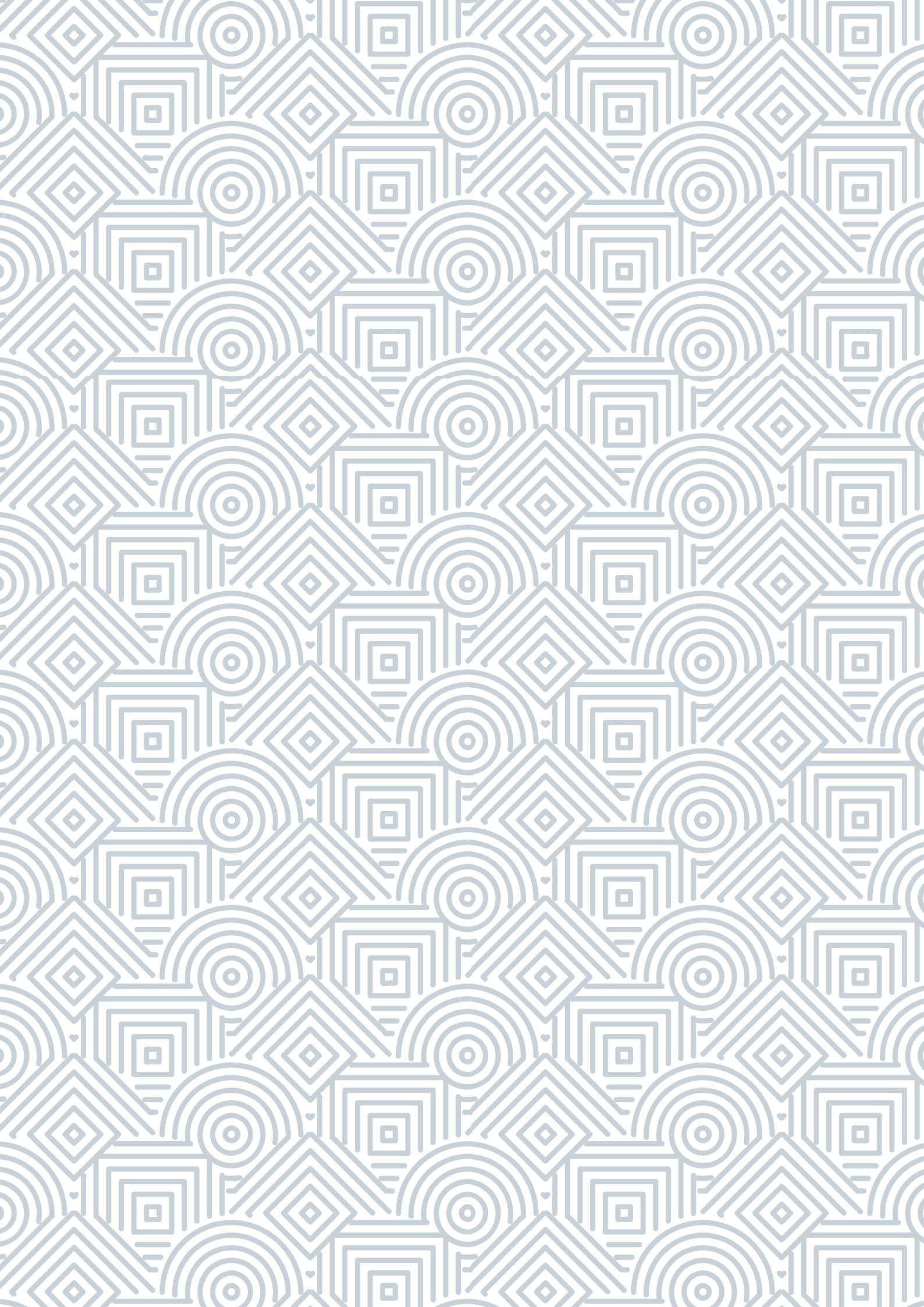
In the context of a formal Job Fair partnership, a post-event meeting is crucial to discuss the Job Fair outcomes in relation to further partnership activities. These could include areas such as curriculum input (including design of WBLE, internships and mentoring programmes); TVET staff development with industry experts; linking into other related skills development

programmes in the area; and funding, equipment or infrastructure development opportunities. If there was no formal partnership set up for the Job Fair, the TVET College should consider how to leverage some of the relationships built through the event for some of these future collaborations.



Useful Tools:

1. Evaluation forms for job seekers
2. Evaluation forms for employers
3. Job Fair Report
4. Debriefing Procedures
5. Self-Evaluation Form



Published by:

Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA)

An initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD)

Implemented by:

African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD), Johannesburg, South Africa, www.nepad.org

Contact: Unami Mpofu, Email: UnamiM@nepad.org

Supported by:

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH

[International Labour Organization](#) [European Training Foundation](#)

Co-funded by:

Federal Ministry for Economic Development and Cooperation (BMZ)

[The European Union](#)

Concept:

[Cheryl James \(SIFA\)](#) & [Concept Afrika](#)

Design:

[Data Innovators](#)

Disclaimer:

This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Its contents are the sole responsibility of GIZ and do not necessarily reflect the views of the EU or the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development.

This project is co-funded by the European Union
and the Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development



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