SIFA - Skills Initiative for Africa
A programme of AUC and AUDA-NEPAD

Growing Skills through Partnerships:
Guidelines for the private sector using the SIFA Private Sector Engagement approach

1. Purpose

These Guidelines are for individuals, groups or enterprises in the private sector who want to get involved in skills development and technical and vocational education and training (TVET).

WHY?

The labour market often requires skills that education and training pipelines struggle to supply. By becoming involved in skills development, employers in the private sector can strengthen the skills pool and access various untapped resources (such as unemployed youth).

Employers will benefit by integrating their skills needs into skills development programmes and TVET delivery, leading to improved quality of training and addressing skills shortages. Potential learners will benefit from increased training opportunities and improved employability. Society as a whole benefits from better productivity leading to economic growth.

HOW?

There are a number of areas in which private sector players have vital roles to play in skills development. Broadly, these include:
- Participation in policy-making and oversight, including data gathering to inform systemic decisions regarding TVET, and reform of qualifications frameworks
- Participation in training delivery, including the shaping of curricula, standards and assessment practices
- Provision of financing
- Provision of sites for work-integrated learning and practical training or assessment
- Ensuring that innovations and new technologies inform training delivery systems to keep training programme content and methodologies current

The 'how' also relates to ways of being involved, through partnerships and collaborations at different levels.

How can these Guidelines help?

These Guidelines suggest first steps for establishing productive relationships and collaborative interventions with other stakeholders in skills development. We outline possible options for different types of private sector players working at different levels. We also direct you to more detailed resources and tools, including 'good practice' case study examples, which can help you to identify opportunities, and plan and implement collaborations and partnerships.

The content of these guidelines is drawn from SIFA's Private Sector Engagement (PSE) work across several regions on the African continent.

2 . Private Sector Engagement by SIFA

What is SIFA?

- SIFA is an initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) supported by the German Government and the European Union (EU) to strengthen occupational prospects of young people in Africa.
- SIFA finances and provides technical support to skills development projects in several African countries.
- SIFA projects contribute to employment-oriented skills development for young people.
- SIFA's focus is on TVET systems (strategy, legislation, delivery and structures); equitable access; promotion of employment; and cooperation and collaboration with the private sector involved in these areas.

Find out more

SIFA's Private Sector Engagement (PSE) programme focuses on facilitating and promoting private sector involvement in skills development initiatives across the African continent. SIFA shares it outputs and information on its work through various knowledge management processes. The main dissemination platform is the African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (ASPYEE) on the website https://nepad.org/skillsportalforyouth.
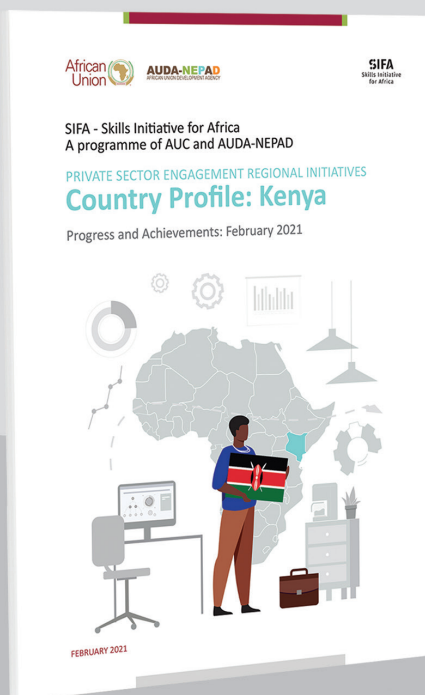
Here is an example of one of SIFA's PSE Country Profiles.
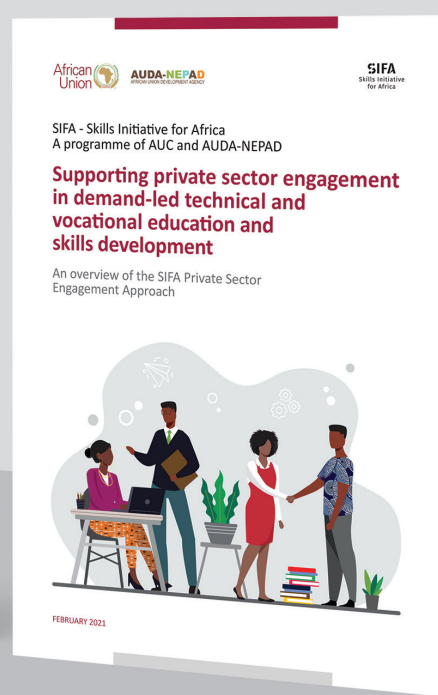
This brochure provides details on SIFA's PSE strategy and framework.

3. Who collaborates in skills development?

A wide range of private sector enterprises may be involved in skills development. As a private sector player, you may want to partner with some of the following:

- Other private sector players in the same or similar industries or economic sectors who share your interests and concerns.
- Those working in development, such as international agencies, non-profits or community based organisations working with (for example) unemployed youth or marginalized communities.
- Funders and donors, both local and international.
- Public sector partners, including local, regional and national ministries and government departments, as well as publicly funded training delivery agencies such as TVET colleges or other types of public training centres.

An illustrative list of private sector stakeholders in skills development

- Organised employer & business bodies
- Professional associations, and sector associations
- Corporates with internal training departments
- Large workplaces & SMMEs offering Work Integrated Learning (WIL)
- Foundations and development partners supporting skills development
- Private/for profit TVET institutions or skills development organisations
- NPOs, NGOs & CBOs offering skills development courses
- Entities offering job placement or entrepreneurial support

4. Partnerships: levels and entities

A useful starting point for your private sector engagement is to think about the different levels – national, sectoral or regional, or operational levels – at which engagement can happen, and where your initiatives could fit in. The SIFA Private Sector Engagement Framework describes levels of engagement as follows:

MACRO LEVEL

Public policy engagement

The private sector needs to take an active role in the overall policy environment that affects economic growth. This includes policies for skills development as well trade and industry legislation, and related education, public finance and social policies. These form an integrated whole in making sure that skills supply meets labour market demand, and that policies will support the economic development of aspirant youth in both the formal and informal sectors. The role of the private sector is to communicate its needs and give input into policy development.

Key policy drivers for an enabling environment for private sector engagement include the formalization of industry advisory and decision-making arrangements, bargaining councils, and the use of levies and funding incentives.

Possible partners for the private sector include government departments, national business and industry umbrella bodies, public-private consultative forums and business, labour and civil society structures.

The macro level also includes African regional initiatives across the continent such as those led by continental apex bodies and international forums.

Examples of continental and regional bodies
- Business Africa
- Pan-African Chamber of Commerce and Industry
- AfroChampions Initiative
- COMESA Business Council (19 countries/3 regions)
- East Africa Business Council
- Africa Business Roundtable (West Africa)
- Southern Africa Business Forum

Country examples
- Cameroon: Employers Union of Cameroon (GICAM)
- Kenya: Federation of Kenya Employers (FKE)

Individual country profiles on the ASPYEE website provide further examples and details.

Stakeholder engagement

This engagement is targeted at specific stakeholders for strategy development in a country region, or for a particular economic sector. This includes identification of skills supply and demands in relation to value chains and locale or other contextual factors. It also includes other strategic elements such as systems reforms and qualifications and career pathways in different economic and occupational sectors.

Possible partners might include industry bodies, trade associations, professional bodies and local trade associations. Important stakeholders include entities that oversee qualifications, certification, occupational standards and accreditation of occupational and technical professionals and workers. You can also partner with community organisations to understand and address the skills development needs of SMMEs, the informal sector and unemployed youth.

Country examples
- South Africa: The different Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)
- Uganda: Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU)

Individual country profiles on the ASPYEE website provide further examples and details.

Country examples
Typically, engagement at this level will be carried out through specific programmes with skills development providers, both public and private. The public sector may get involved through local municipalities or other government-sponsored or funder-led initiatives which draw on private sector involvement.

Individual country profiles on the ASPYEE website provide further examples and details.

Local sector and workforce planning

At the micro level the private sector will be concerned with individual business workforce planning in terms of current and future needs, to ensure increased productivity and growth. The private sector will be looking at improving supply quality of prospective employees, as well as any in-house training interventions either for employees or in-house trainers and facilitators. You may also be looking for sources of interns or potential trainees to bring into your business.

Potential partners will therefore include TVET training providers, and other entities involved in upskilling and recruitment activities. Other individual businesses or small groups of similar businesses within a geographic location or industry may also be interested in collaborating on specific projects. Community organisations as well as local municipalities should also be engaged to identify potential labour pools from informal sector and unemployed youth – there may be opportunities for funded partnerships in this context.

5. Partnerships: areas of intervention for the private sector

This section gives you an overview of skills development areas for private sector involvement, and the types of partnerships or collaborative projects in which private sector associations or individual businesses and employers could be involved. These high level descriptions suggest a number of ways for engaging in skills development. You will find specific case studies and good practice examples in all these areas, from different countries, on the ASPYEE website.

The Country Profiles give examples of specific private sector partnerships in different countries, and the case studies show how partnerships and cooperative undertakings unfold in real life contexts.

'Collaboration and partnerships can drive, support and enhance desired features of successful education interventions, such as:

- Systems change
- Sustainable change
- Impact
- Scale and replication
- Spreading of practice
- Innovation
- Increased return on investment.'

King, M, 2019. *Collaboration in Education Interventions: Learning from Practice.*
Paper submitted to NASCEE Conference.

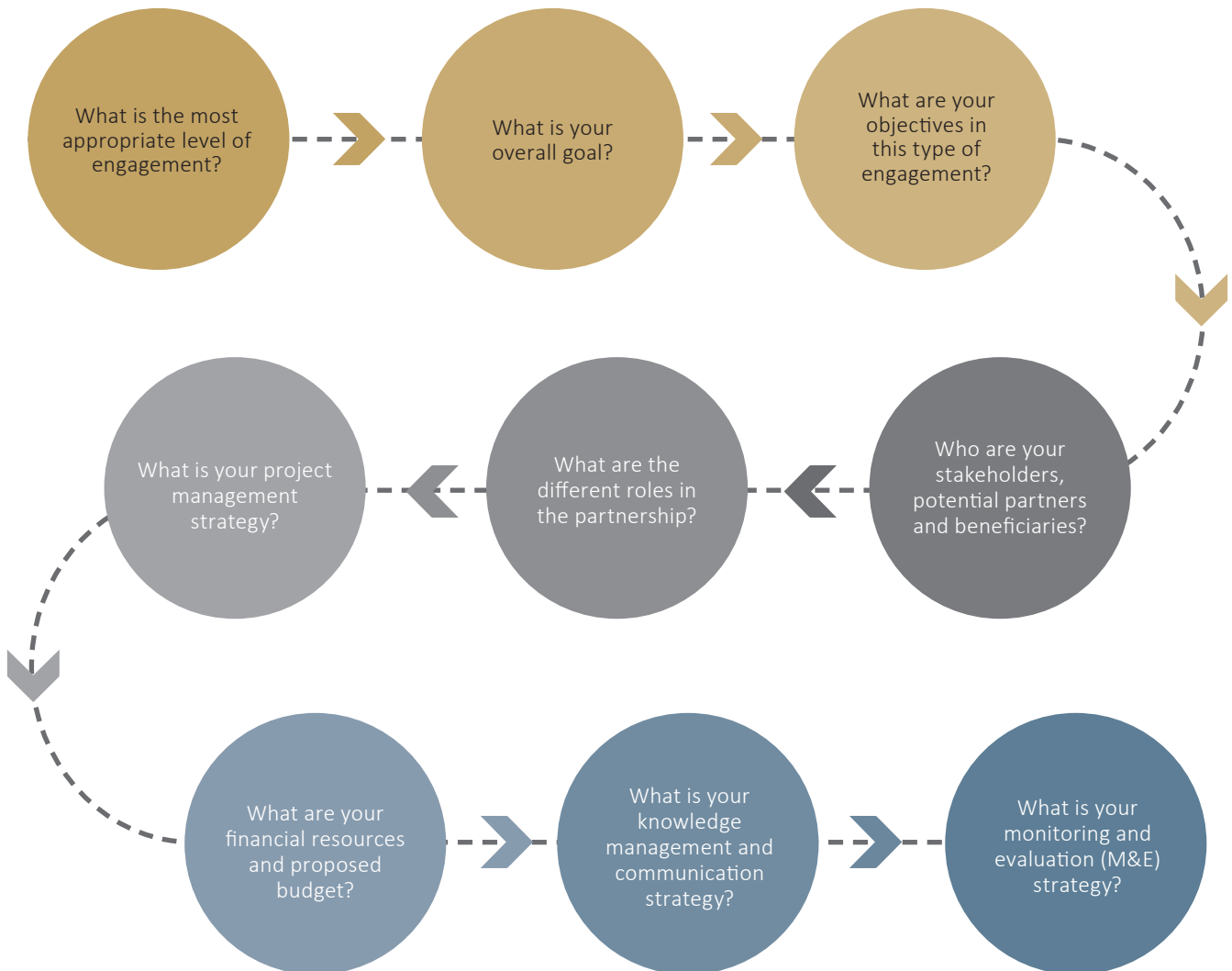| Areas for skills development interventions		Illustrative examples of private sector roles
Broad-based education, training and work readiness skills development approaches	Skills needs identification and matching	Provide data from company workplace skills plans; help to develop profiling and matching instruments
	Labour market skills demand monitoring	Contribute to research in specific economic sectors; contribute to labour information tracking systems
	Leadership development / behavioural coaching for work-based orientation	Develop and shape instructional design and content for various work-based programmes linked to leadership, management, team work and more
	Facilitation of short term placements (e.g. internships, learnerships, apprenticeships)	Offer students and job seekers short term opportunities to gain work experience for a number of purposes (finalization of qualifications, licence to practice, professional development, increased employability and more)
	Provision of Work Based Learning Experience (WBLE), also known as Work Integrated Learning (WIL)	Work with TVET providers to structure WBLE so that TVET students can get the practical experience components of their vocational or occupational qualifications
	Facilitation of long term placements and permanent employment	Work with recruitment agencies and funded bursary schemes to hire and nurture new employees from marginalized groups
	Involvement in standards setting and occupational assessments and licensing	Work with occupational and technical standards-setting bodies in your sector, in order to inform TVET curricula; work with assessment and moderating bodies by providing work-based contexts for practical assessments

Areas for skills development interventions		Illustrative examples of private sector roles
Capacity building of TVET institutions or training providers	Updating or re-skilling TVET college lecturers and TVET trainers	Give TVET educators/ trainers opportunities for back-to-work and in-service exposure so that they can be updated with new knowledge and processes; set up ongoing mentoring relationships between your staff and educators
	Curriculum re-design	Give input into programme development linked to technical or occupational curricula; provide source materials and other resources for learning programmes; share innovations or new techniques in your industry with training providers (where feasible)
	Infrastructure support	Use CSI funds or other business resources for improving infrastructure, equipment, supplies and more; co-create or co-run practical work training sites in the context of your industry (e.g. building sites; small-scale agricultural plots; workshops …)
	TVET leadership support	Sit on local TVET College Boards and provide active support to TVET principals

Areas for skills development interventions		Illustrative examples of private sector roles
Youth employment and entrepreneurship acceleration partnerships	Capacity building projects for unemployed youth	Work with local NGOs, municipalities or other agencies who work with unemployed youth to design skills programmes and provide work-based learning opportunities; offer training bursaries to targeted groups (e.g. youth, women)
	Provision of incubator services	Partner with organisations or training centres developing incubation models to create self-employment opportunities; offer mentorship to young entrepreneurs
	Inclusion of youth-led SMMEs into the local economy ecosystem	Set up ways of making sure that small local businesses are included in those local supply chains and procurement plans that are relevant to your business

Areas for skills development interventions		Illustrative examples of private sector roles
Skills development events or campaigns	Career guidance or Job Fairs	Partner with TVET colleges or other training providers to host symposia or webinars on career opportunities; partner to run Job Fairs, either at TVET colleges as exhibitors, or as Industry Open Days on your own premises to attract job applicants
	Participation and information exchange in workshops or other forums	Take part in multi-stakeholder forums relevant to your industry or sector; set up and manage communities of practice for sharing of knowledge and information, and for professional development in your sector
	Competitions and awareness campaigns	Run competitions that will attract people to your sector, and help you identify untapped resources (e.g. app development; new products); take part in any awareness campaigns that highlight the importance of your sector

6. Planning for engagement

As a private sector player you want to engage more intentionally in skills development. Here is an overview of the steps you need to follow.

What is the most appropriate level of engagement? → What is your overall goal? → What are your objectives in this type of engagement? → Who are your stakeholders, potential partners and beneficiaries? → What are the different roles in the partnership? → What is your project management strategy? → What are your financial resources and proposed budget? → What is your knowledge management and communication strategy? → What is your monitoring and evaluation (M&E) strategy?

Remember that the idea of 'collaboration' operates on a number of different levels, ranging from informal cooperation on a set of activities to formal, tightly structured partnerships with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. In the next section we refer you to a number of practical resources that will help you unpack these steps for your context.

7. Next Steps

Use SIFA PSE as a resource

Foundational information on SIFA PSE and how it can help is given in the Private Sector Engagement pack examples noted in Section 1.

For further information, email **Sabine Klaus**, Deputy Programme Manager at **sabine.klaus@giz.de**.
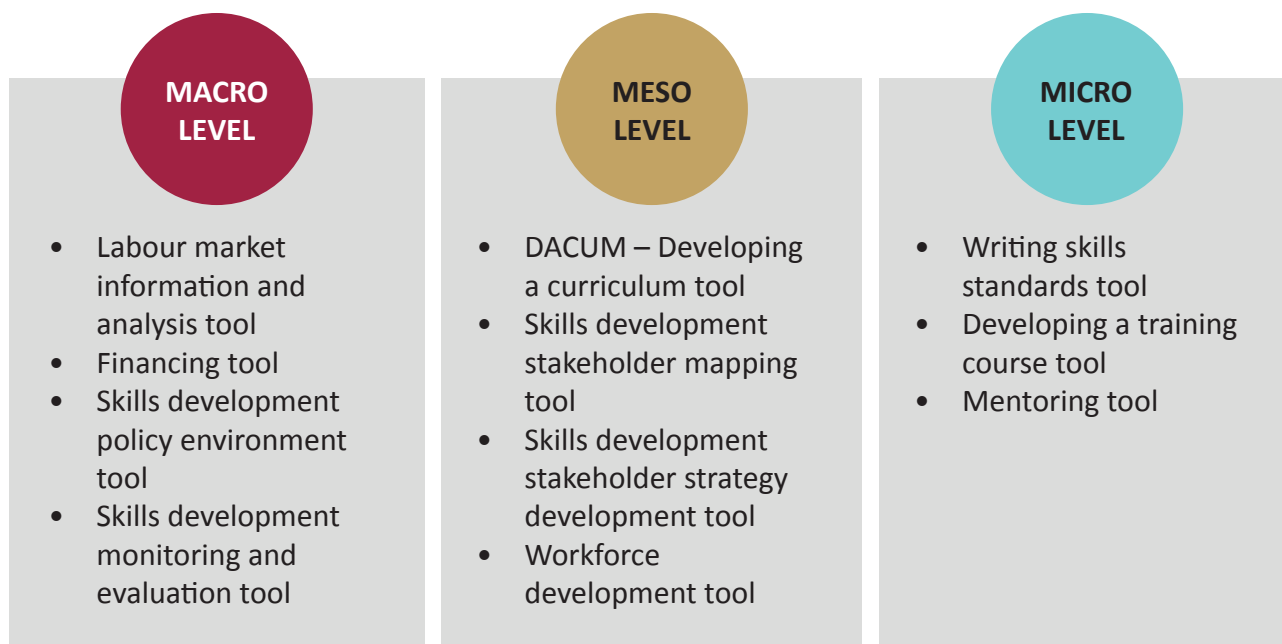

Consult other resources

The ASPYEE website hosts a number of useful information sources which can guide private sector engagement in skills development. Examples are:

- *Good Practice* examples and case studies on skills development interventions in different countries
- *State of TVET Report* for different countries
- Useful knowledge products from other GIZ programmes. Two examples are (i) *Policy Brief: Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) for Skills Development'*, developed for the Agricultural TVET context; and (ii) '*Increased Public and Private Financing for Agricultural Technical and Vocational Education and Training* (ATVET).

- For running Job Fairs, SIFA has developed a useful set of resources, including *The Ultimate Guide to Job Fairs: A Handbook for HR Managers*. This is aimed at companies that want to run an on-site Job Fair on their own premises, possibly in partnership with one or more TVET colleges or other entities. Support materials include a number of useful templates. In addition, a second guide *Taking your Job Fair Virtual* provides guidelines for online events.

Examples of other useful resources are:

• *Best Practices Guidelines and Toolkit on Engaging the Private Sector in Skills Development* (United Nations Development Programme and Istanbul International Centre for Private Sector in Development, 2017). This publication discusses lessons learned from reviewing practice and literature on industry involvement in skills development. It can be used as a foundational resource in that it includes a number of detailed tools which can be adapted and used for engaging at macro, meso and micro levels.

The Toolkit includes the following tools:

MACRO LEVEL	MESO LEVEL	MICRO LEVEL
• Labour market information and analysis tool • Financing tool • Skills development policy environment tool • Skills development monitoring and evaluation tool	• DACUM – Developing a curriculum tool • Skills development stakeholder mapping tool • Skills development stakeholder strategy development tool • Workforce development tool	• Writing skills standards tool • Developing a training course tool • Mentoring tool

This document is an Open Education Resource, and can be found online through a title search, or on the Statistical, Economic and Social Research and Training Centre for Islamic Countries (SESRIC) at https://www.sesric.org/.

- *Scaling Demand-driven Training Programmes: A Framework* (Making Cents International and the Rockefeller Foundation, 2017). This is supported by *The Work-Fit Toolkit* (Copyright © 2017 Making Cents International). You can get a free downloadable copy of the Toolkit by going to online to https://workfitcampus.org.za/.

The Toolkit provides tools and resources in the following areas:

Understanding labour market information

Partnering with employers and others

Screening, assessing and profiling

Developing soft skills

Mentoring youth

Implementing work-based learning

Monitoring and evaluation demand-driven training programmes

Resources and references (South African context)

- There are a number of websites which repay exploration for information on tools and resources for skills development initiatives. Some examples are:
  - The International Labour Organisation (ILO)
  - The World Bank and other international development agencies
  - BRIDGE Innovation in Learning – under Post-school Access Communities of Practice, you will find various reports and presentations on skills development initiatives.

Glossary of Abbreviations and Acronyms

ACJ	Africa Creates Jobs
ASPYEE	African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (ASPYEE)
ATJ	Africa Talks Jobs
AU	African Union
AUC	African Union Commission
AUDA-NEPAD	African Union Development Agency – New Partnership for Africa's Development
BA	Business Africa
BMZ	Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development
CBOs	Community Based Organisations
CESA	Continental Education Strategy for Africa
GIZ	Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH
KfW	Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau
NGOs	Non-governmental Organisations
NPOs	Non-profit Organisations or Not for Profit Organisations
PSE	Private Sector Engagement
SIFA	Skills Initiative for Africa
SMME	Small, medium or micro enterprise
TVET	Technical and Vocational Training
WIL	Work Integrated Learning

Appendix

SIFA's Private Sector Engagement Framework

The Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) is a programme under the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) with support from the German Government and the European Union. Its aim is to strengthen the TVET and skills development ecosystems in the five African Union regional clusters. Cooperation with the private sector is one element of this work. SIFA supports private sector initiatives on skills development in a number of ways, guided by its Private Sector Engagement Framework.

This Framework is based on principles of cooperation, collaboration and the sharing of information and practices. Activities are carried out at three levels: macro, meso and micro levels.

There is a focus on three levels:

MACRO:
Public policy engagement (government departments, business, labour and civil society structures)

MESO:
Stakeholder engagement (industry and trade associations, professional bodies, informal sector and youth associations, NPOs)

MICRO:
Local sector and workforce planning (local associations, individual businesses, community organisations, NPOs)

SIFA's Private Sector Engagement Framework

Workstream	Activity Examples	Resource Examples
Regional Coordination `MACRO`	• Appoint regional coordinators with common Terms of Reference and Action Plans • Identify regional conduits through which coordinators work • Develop a common language and set of resources for PSE across regions and countries	• PS category mapping templates • Partnership templates • Action Plan templates • Guidelines for providing technical assistance • Facilitation guidelines (e.g. for enabling partnerships of supporting events)

Workstream	Activity Examples

Facilitation & Technical Assistance
 	
`MACRO`
`MESO`
`MICRO`
	• Influence policy for employment-oriented skills development through evidence-based good practices
	• Harness technical advice from TVET experts to develop strategies and technical guidelines
	• Foster the continental voice of the private sector in AU Ministerial and other high level forums
	• Coordinate different skills initiatives on national, regional and continental level
	• Facilitate partnerships between the private sector and the education sector (mainly the TVET sector)
	• Work with the ILO to develop a skills development supply & demand modelling tool
	• Work with the AUC to establish an African Continental Qualification Framework
	• Scale up good practice approaches
	• Facilitate continental knowledge exchange and dissemination through dialogue platforms and other events
	• Convene and facilitate communities of practice (CoPs)

Workstream	Activity Examples	Product Examples

Knowledge Management through ASPYEE Portal
 	
`MACRO`
`MESO`
	• Gather knowledge & research with private sector partners and agencies such as ILO
	• Develop knowledge products
	• Distil, share and disseminate information
		• Regional and national stakeholder mapping
		• Country profiles of PS engagement & partnerships
		• Country profiles of TVET & skills development legislation & structures
		• Macroeconomic studies
		• Sub-sector deep dives
		• Event reports
		• Good practice examples and case studies
		• Guidelines and resources

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