**Mapping practical initiatives that facilitate the implementation of work-based learning**

**in the Republic of Rwanda’[[1]](#footnote-1)**

**‘Guidelines on the Implementation of Workplace Learning Policy in Rwanda’[[2]](#footnote-2)**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Initiative** | Guidelines on the Implementation of Workplace Learning Policy in Rwanda |
| **Initiative focus** | This initiative is aim at providing guidance on the formal requirements and expectations to implementors of Workplace Learning (WPL) as well as on the management of the WPL system |
| **Target group** | Public and private apprenticeship practitioners including NGOs and development partners designing and/or implementing WPL training.Students undergoing formal WPL |

**Introduction**

The Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) is a project implemented by the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) with the support of the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), the Kreditanstalt für Wiederaufbau (KFW), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), and the European Training Foundation (ETF). SIFA is co-funded by the Bundesministeriumfür wirtschaftliche Zusammenarbeit und Entwicklung (BMZ) and the European Union (EU). SIFA aims to promote the occupational prospects of young Africans through the support of innovative skills development programmes and in close cooperation with the private sector as an integral and key stakeholder in the creation of jobs. One of the key activities of SIFA is the creation and dissemination of knowledge on topics relating to employment-oriented skills development through exchange and dialogue formats. These take place through the African Skills Portal for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (ASPYEE) and through regional and continental event formats such as Africa Creates Jobs (ACJ). Learning offerings, knowledge products and tools shall support SIFA’s audience in facilitating skills development on the continent. SIFA’s audience includes political decision and policy makers, private sector associations and other entities, TVET practitioners and other stakeholders involved in skills development and youth employment. The final beneficiaries of the programme activities are African youth. The African Union’s (AU) Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Decade Plan of Action focuses strongly on enhancing the quality of apprenticeships and engaging with the private sector. SIFA supports the implementation of the action plan and, via its ASPYEE portal, disseminates knowledge on existing approaches towards implementing apprenticeships in Africa, including lessons learnt.

A comprehensive overview of the varying apprenticeship tools in the form of approaches, models, procedures, forms etc. that are used in the African countries and easily accessible is missing. Easily accessible apprenticeship supporting tools and guidelines shall enable governmental TVET authorities, skills development practitioners in the private sector, TVET colleges, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGO) and Development Partners (DP) to improve the design and implementation of apprenticeship programmes and initiatives.

It is against this background and guided by a research and mapping concept that SIFA has supported the identification of practical tools applied that has facilitated the advancement and implementation of apprenticeships in selected AU member states. This paper is part of a series of papers presenting and discussing apprenticeship-facilitating tools used within a diverse selection of apprenticeship programmes implemented in different AU member states. The papers' introductory TVET sections do not claim to be exhaustive. They serve solely to provide context for the sections presenting the apprenticeship programmes and tools. The tools do not necessarily represent the most advanced tools but rather robust examples that could be applied by apprenticeship projects at different stages of their advancement.

It is in this context that apprenticeship in Rwanda has been surveyed to identify practical apprenticeship facilitating initiatives and tools.

**TVET in Rwanda**

Following the successful compilation of primary and/or lower secondary education learners, or secondary education drop-outs, wishing to acquire vocational skill have three main options; entering formal Technical Vocational Education and Training (TVET), non-formal training, and informal/traditional skills training.[[3]](#footnote-3)

Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) deliver programmes at Rwanda Education Qualification Framework (REQF) levels 1 to 5, principally for primary school leavers and secondary school drop-outs, and in some cases, secondary school leavers and mature students, regardless of their level of education. The courses/programme cover both short-term courses (level 1) and one year programme at level 3+. Technical Secondary Schools (TSS) are upper secondary TVET schools offering training, up to level 5, for students entering from lower secondary schools who have completed the first nine years of basic education and for others who meet minimum entry requirements. [Rwanda Technical Vocational and Education Board (RTB](https://www.rtb.gov.rw/)) provides oversight for both private and public VTCs and TSSs offering recognised courses/programme for levels 1 to 5. Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centres (IPRC), post-secondary technical colleges, offer training to students graduating from upper secondary TVET institutions. IPRCs deliver two to three-year vocational programmes up to RTQF levels 6 and 7. [Rwanda Polytechnic (RP)](https://www.rp.ac.rw/) oversees the eight national IPRCs and their programmes.

Due to the limited reach of public TVET institutions (VTS, TSS and IPRCs), private providers dominate Rwandan TVET training provision with an estimated 90 per cent of all enrolments.[[4]](#footnote-4) This demonstrates a willingness to pay for skills training. Young people can join private sector institutions, including small and micro-training providers, that offer training that is not recognised by RTB or RP, meaning that private provision is an important sector for the delivery of non-formal TVET. This includes through provision of a spectrum of courses, which can vary from a few weeks to over one year. On average, practical training accounts for about 70 per cent of private training, with bespoke curriculum being developed by individual training institutions[[5]](#footnote-5). Private sector training is often intensive and is funded through learner fees and the sale of products produced through the training process[[6]](#footnote-6), it also includes a focus on identified skills gaps to access immediate employment opportunities, employment/livelihood skills training for vulnerable groups and/or entrepreneurship training.

There are also training programmes offered as part of NGO projects or Development Partners (DP) supported projects, for example; ‘Promoting Decent Work in Rwanda’s Informal Economy’ supported by the International Labour Organisation (ILO) which aimed at providing short term vocational training to 3,000 people in tailoring and construction sectors,[[7]](#footnote-7) or GIZ’s Eco-Emploi programme which supports training in a series of priority sectors (value chains).

It important to note that the combination of formal, informal, non-formal and DP led training can results in a TVET system that requires guidelines to promote more standardised and coordinated approaches. This priority has been identified by the Rwandan Government, through the [Ministry of Public Services and Labour (MIFOTRA)](https://www.mifotra.gov.rw/) who are leading on national TVET policies and supporting guidelines.

**Apprenticeships in Rwanda**

Apprenticeships are part of the overall TVET system, delivered through formal, non-formal, and informal models.[[8]](#footnote-8)

**Formal Apprenticeship**

Formal apprenticeships are part of Rwanda’s workplace learning[[9]](#footnote-9) (WPL) sector and are governed through the ['National Policy on Workplace Learning to Prepare Rwandan Youth for Employment (Workplace Learning Policy) 2015](https://rwandatrade.rw/media/2015%20MIFOTRA%20Workplace%20Learning%20Policy.pdf).[[10]](#footnote-10) Together with internships, apprenticeships are legally governed by the 'Law regulating labour in Rwanda'.[[11]](#footnote-11) In August 2021, the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) published ‘[Guidelines on the Implementation of Workplace Learning Policy in Rwanda’ (WPL Guidelines)](https://www.mifotra.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Mifotra/Publication/_POLICIES/Ministerial_guideline_on_WPL_Final_version_28072021.pdf) to promote the coordinated implementation of standardised quality WPL.[[12]](#footnote-12) **It is these guidelines that this report would like to introduce as an apprenticeship initiative.**

A significant number of Rwanda’s formal apprenticeship programmes have been or are being implemented by DP supported projects, such as:

* Promoting Market Oriented Skills Training and Employment Creation in the Great Lakes Region, (Promost, Swisscontact),
* Association pour la Promotion de l'Education et de la Formation à l'Etranger (APEFE),
* Chamber of Skilled Crafts Koblenz, Savings Banks Foundation for International Cooperation, BildungsWerk (BIWE),
* Enabel (the Belgian Development Agency).
* African Development Bank (AfDB) project; ‘Skills, Employability and Entrepreneurship Programme’[[13]](#footnote-13)
* USAID supported East Africa Energy Program
* Huguka Dukore Akazi Kanoze project
* Mastercard Foundation supported Hanaga Ahazaza
* GIZ implemented project on the Promotion of Economy and Employment Programme (Eco-Emploi)

On a national level, the National Employment Programme (NEP) offers different types of WPL, including apprenticeship schemes. [The Skills Development Fund (SDF)[[14]](#footnote-14)](https://www.rtb.gov.rw/mandate/projects) includes a focus on employer led apprenticeships, internships and short skills upgrading programmes. It is reported that the Hang Umurimo (Create Own Jobs) and Kuremera programmes, implemented by the Ministry of Trade and Industry and MIFOTRA respectively through apprenticeship schemes, have led to 17,000 people finding employment.[[15]](#footnote-15) Many of these apprenticeship initiatives are being delivered in cooperation with RTB and/or RP managed TVET institutions. This context demonstrates the multiple stakeholders involved in the delivery of Rwanda’s apprenticeship programmes including through initiatives being implemented through DP and national programmes. The result of WPL being delivered through different partners is that some programmes are conducted separately from the established TVET system and can be more focused on achieving project objectives than on facilitating the mainstreaming of apprenticeships. These, sometimes, disparate approaches have led to calls for a more standardised and collective approach to the delivery of WPL in Rwanda[[16]](#footnote-16).

**Informal apprenticeship**

Due to crossovers and the need for brevity, this report will combine non-formal and informal WPL. As a rule, non-formal and informal TVET provision in Rwanda applies more directly to work-based learning elements than formal TVET. Informal apprenticeships are the main mode of vocational skills acquisition in Rwanda, which is a reflection of limitations in the formal TVET system in terms of capacity, relevance to the labour market and inability to provide trainees with practical employable competencies. These challenges are particularly prevalent in recently established public TVET institutions. This limitations speak to the need for additional quality assurance structures and guidelines to promote the capacity of the TVET sector to meet trainees’ and industry demands.

There is a lack of available up-to-date information on Rwanda’s informal apprenticeships, however, findings from 2006 and 2007 presented in the article ‘Skills Development in the Informal Sector: Rwanda’[[17]](#footnote-17) suggest that one-fifth of workers in both the informal and formal sectors gained vocational skills through informal apprenticeships offered within the construction, commerce, manufacturing, services, tailoring, driving, bricklaying (masonry) sectors. Informal apprenticeships are practised more in urban than rural areas and are more common for youth with lower education completion. Learning is often based on emerging and unstructured assignments including; observing, side-by-side learning that becomes incrementally more difficult as the apprentices master different tasks. The length of the informal apprenticeship period varied considerably from a few weeks to up to four years. Apprenticeships are defined through written or oral agreements, 23 per cent of apprentices paid a training fee while others were compensated by the enterprise. This corresponds to the finding that nearly 70 per cent of the employers were willing to pay part of the cost for training their employees.[[18]](#footnote-18) Despite the capacity of informal apprenticeships to offer training to a large number of trainees directed at immediate skills needs, it is a model that comes with significant limitations. There are concerns about quality as the apprentices may not be able to develop competencies beyond those held by the master craftsman, who themselves has gained their skills through informal apprenticeship. It also limits the opportunities for trainees to develop wider knowledge which is increasingly important as jobs become more technologically driven and fluid. These quality issues will have a negative impact on business productivity and innovation, and trainees’ long term sustainable transition to employment. Informal apprenticeships can also be defined by an absence of agreed training programmes and contractual arrangements between the master craftsperson and the apprentice.

The multiple partners and often informal/non-formal delivery of apprenticeships in Rwanda also indicate the need for the introduction of standards and guidelines that help to regulate and coordinate WPL practices.

**Apprenticeship Initiative: ‘Guidelines on the implementation of workplace learning policy in Rwanda’**

**Introduction**

Rwanda’s Vision 2050 sets out an ambitious path to middle-income status by 2035. TVET’s key role in this vision has led to several sector and WPL policy initiatives, including; [National Policy on Workplace Learning to Prepare Rwandan Youth for Employment (Workplace Learning Policy) (2015](https://rwandatrade.rw/media/2015%20MIFOTRA%20Workplace%20Learning%20Policy.pdf)), the Revised National Employment Policy (2019) and National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy (2019 – 2024).The Workplace Learning Policy provides a definition for WPL in Rwanda: ‘*For the purpose of this policy the term workplace learning (WPL) denotes all professional or occupational training and learning that takes place in a real workplace (and not in a training or higher education institution) and that is intentional’[[19]](#footnote-19)*

In August 2021, the Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA), in collaboration with the Ministry of Education and GIZ, published [‘Guidelines on the Implementation of Workplace Learning Policy in Rwanda’](https://www.mifotra.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Mifotra/Publication/_POLICIES/Ministerial_guideline_on_WPL_Final_version_28072021.pdf) (WPL Guidelines)*,* which set out implementation guidelines for the Workplace Learning Policy in respect to Industrial Attachments, Internships and Dual Apprenticeships.[[20]](#footnote-20) They also provide general guidance of workplace practices (health and safety, inclusion etc.) and Industry Based Training (including Rapid Response Training) and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL): *‘The Workplace Learning guidelines outline the procedures that learners, training providers, employers, regulators, and partners must follow to ensure successful workplace learning implementation*.’

**Rationale for the initiative**

Skills are essential for the development of Rwanda and are lacking throughout the economy, among people working in the private sector and at public workplaces, as well as among new labour market entrants. There are major challenges resulting from an education and training systems in which learning is often theory-based. This manifests itself in a lack of alignment between learning outcomes and the needs of the labour market with TVET graduates lacking practical and core skills. The introduction of effective WPL, through apprenticeships, industrial attachments or internships) is seen a direct response to these challenges by allowing learners to gain practical work experience and relevant skills to improve their employment chances or to gather sufficient experience to start their own businesses.

MIFOTRA sets up the following vision for Rwanda’s WPL sector and supporting policy activities through the ‘National Policy on Workplace Learning to Prepare Rwandan Youth for Employment’ (2015). [[21]](#footnote-21) The policy emphasises that WPL has the potential to ensure that skills development for new labour market entrants responds to the needs of the labour market and assists in increasing the number of Rwandan youth finding employment and participating in the country’s development. The policy will nurture and facilitate the development of workplace learning systems in Rwanda that are owned and driven by employers/industry, and can adequately respond to the skills needs of the growing Rwandan economy and provide a pathway towards formal qualifications recognized on the Rwandan National Qualifications Framework. It is interesting to note this clear ambition to map and standardise WPL to wider NQF initiatives. The policy also identifies five broad policy objectives will be instrumental to achieving its overall vision:

* To develop a modern, recognized and sustainable apprenticeship system in partnership with companies in the formal and informal sectors.
* To improve systems and management of attachment and internship programs.
* To develop an institutional framework for the coordinated promotion, facilitation and implementation of workplace learning with strong private sector influence.
* To create sustainable incentive structures for companies.
* To create knowledge and public awareness about workplace learning.

The Guidelines that this report describe have been designed to support the realisation of this vision, mission and objectives for Rwanda’s WPL provision. Importantly, the policy also identified key stakeholders who should be included in the WPL policy implementation:

**Key stakeholders in the introduction of Rwanda’s National Policy of Workplace Learning**

**Name of leading institution:** Ministry of Public Service and Labour

**Institutions involved in this policy:**

* Private Sector Federation (PSF)
* Association pour la Promotion de l'Education et de la Formation à l'Etranger (APEFE RWANDA)
* ENABEL Belgian Development Agency
* The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ)
* Workforce Development Authority (WDA)
* Higher Education Council (HEC)
* Ministry of Education (MINEDUC)
* Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM)
* Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN)
* Integrated Polytechnic Regional Centres (IPRC)
* Technical and Vocational Education and Training Institutions (TVET)
* Rwanda Polytechnic (RP)

Source: National Policy on Workplace Learning to Prepare Rwandan Youth for Employment”, MIFOTRA 2015.

In summary the guidelines are an attempt to harmonise existing policies and standardise approaches across multiple stakeholders and delivery partners, towards a more coordinated and quality assured WPL model: ‘*Despite the existing policies and laws, there is no specific guidelines established before to guide the implementation of workplace learning in Rwanda.’*

**How does the tool work?**

The guidelines include a series of practical ‘checklists’ that can be applied to WPL, before, during and after work placements, it is interesting to note that these checklists are now being further developed into apprenticeship operational manuals under RTB. There are also guidelines on establishing eligibility/minimum criteria for employers, training providers (‘schools’), programmes and trainees. The guidelines also define standardised practices for qualifications, certification and accreditation, and capture approaches to WPL funding and associated communication activities. Finally, they reference specific guidelines for the different mediums of WPL, including the assigning of roles and responsibilities to identified public and private sector agencies/stakeholders.

The guidelines include a focus on strengthening and defining institutional roles and responsibilities, and promote models for collaborative partnerships across the public sector, the private sector, development partners and civil society organizations for effective and efficient coordination of Rwanda’s WPL system.

**Example checklist:**

**Safety and wellbeing of trainees at workplaces**

Employers have to ensure a conducive environment for trainees (both girls and boys) by avoiding unacceptable conduct but not limited to:

* Deliberate exposure of trainees to the discriminatory or sexual behaviour
* Inappropriate conversations and obscene language
* Suggestive remarks and actions, including showing of publications, electronic media or illustrations which are inappropriately suggestive
* Jokes and gestures of a discriminatory or sexual nature
* Inappropriate personal correspondence with trainees
* Unwarranted and/or inappropriate touching of trainees
* Gender Based Violence (GBV) at workplace
* Harassment and unlawful discrimination.

Source: Guidelines on the implementation of WPL policy in Rwanda (2021)

The guidelines looked to address key issues and challenges facing different mediums of WPL in Rwanda[[22]](#footnote-22):

* The institutionalisation of WPL is still a relatively new concept in Rwanda resulting in lack of coordinated impact, especially across multiple stakeholders and delivery models
* Lack of lack of clear roles and responsibilities for key players and stakeholders (private and public sector)
* Weak institutionalization of workplace learning interventions
* Non-harmonized incentives provided by various actors to companies participating in the implementation of workplace learning interventions
* Inadequate monitoring and evaluation of the workplace learning interventions;
* Limited involvement of the private sector in the implementation of workplace learning interventions
* Industrial attachment is constrained by the fixed school calendar and low participation of the private sector, requiring innovative approaches to timetabling on the job training opportunities.

To address these challenges the introduction of the WPL guidelines look to meet the following objectives:

* Establish a harmonized and well-coordinated WPL system
* Clearly set out the areas of responsibility of each of the key involved actors
* Create channels for institutional coordination and communication to support the WPL frameworks
* Foster international partnership to help strengthen the system
* Promote capacity building of personnel and institutions involved in the implementation of WPL
* Raise awareness about WPL to all key stakeholders

In achieving these objectives, MIFOTRA set out guidance principles linked to; accountability, ownership, inclusiveness, alignment and adaptive management. Importantly, the guidelines are also accompanied by organisational structures that support the implementation of WPL policy. The guidelines also include extensive annexes describing *‘Main institutional roles and responsibilities.’*

**Examples of assigned ‘main institutional roles and responsibilities’:**

**Development Partners**

* Providing financial and technical support for WPL interventions
* Participating in planning, monitoring and Evaluation of the WPL programs
* Providing quarterly and annual reports to MIFOTRA

**Chambers/Industry Associations**

* Leading the WPL placement process in companies
* Monitoring the WPL learning process in companies
* Participating in the Recognition of Prior Learning

Source: Guidelines on the implementation of WPL policy in Rwanda (2021)

**Organisational structure to implement WPL guidelines**

A Ministerial Steering Committee (MSC), chaired by MIFOTRA, will oversee the development and implementation of WPL:

‘*A holistic regulatory framework on WPL would provide a unique opportunity to foster integrated skills development and foster multiparty dialogue.’*

The committee, which meets twice a year, includes membership from relevant agencies: Rwanda Development Board (RDB), RTB, RP, University of Rwanda, Higher Education Council, National Examination and School Inspection Authority. Labour market partners are represented by the Private Sector Federation, Trade Unions and Sector Skills Councils. Civil society organisations are also represented as are DPs.

A WPL Technical Team, with representatives from the same organisations will meet semestrial and annually ahead of the MSC meetings.

The Technical Team is charged will planning and budgeting and following implementation of WPL initiatives and report to the MSC, including by: undertaking the planning and budgeting process of WPL interventions, following up on WPL implementation progress, reporting to MIFOTRA on potential issues hindering the implementation, preparing and reviewing consolidated reports on WPL and reviewing issues to be considered by the ministerial steering committee meeting.

[MIFOTRA Single Project Implementation Unit (SPIU)](https://www.mifotra.gov.rw/1/mifotra-spiu)[[23]](#footnote-23) will further serve as repository of knowledge on lessons of experience accumulated in the course of implementing and closing completed projects. The benefits to be derived from the established SPIUs include, among others:

* Realization of economies of scale and reduction of transaction costs
* Improved coordination and creation of synergy
* Efficiency and effectiveness in project implementation oversight through improved M&E
* Improved staff retention, leading to reduction in staff turnover and increase in institutional memory
* Increased knowledge and expertise as well as best practices in project management

**Pros and Cons**

**Pros**

* The guidelines show a national agency taking clear ownership and leadership of WPL policy and practice. Although the WPL guidelines borrows from international TVET concepts it has distinct Rwanda features.
* Provides a single point for the standardisation of WPL across different mediums and stakeholders. This will provide a platform from which operational agencies (RTB, RP) and DPs can base their WPL activities. This will promote a more coordinated and harmonised approach that will benefit all WPL partners and beneficiaries. It can also be viewed as direct response to Rwanda’s complicated WPL ecosystem.
* The guidelines provide an excellent example of how policy can be translated into practice. This process is now being further progressed through the development of operational manuals aligned with the guidelines.
* The introduction of a delivery infrastructure through the MSC, WPL technical team and MIFOTRA SPIU will support the implementation of the guidelines, and provide resource and forums for coordinated planning and monitoring.
* Conducted through a consultative and collaborative process will allow different stakeholders to feed into the development and implementation of the policy and its guidelines. Including through assigning clear roles and responsibilities.
* The guidelines look to establish good practice beyond the technical delivery of WPL, and include wider ‘support mechanisms’ such as communication activities through workplace learning campaigns; *‘MIFOTRA in collaboration with PSF will coordinate the efforts to create knowledge about costs and benefits of workplace learning for companies and the society at large, through systematic graduate tracking systems and employers’ surveys. Results of such research will be published and disseminated to increase the level of awareness and to assist further planning.’*
* The guidelines start to establish basic incentives and conditions for WPL, this will start to address some of the challenges associated with non-formal/informal delivery: ‘*An Intern or apprentice/student will be facilitated with a monthly stipend equivalent to fifty thousand Rwandan Francs (50,000 Rwf) which will be provided by WPL funding intervention’* The guidelines also reference working conditions, termination terms and health and safety, and trainee wellbeing. It is envisaged that this starting point can be further developed into more robust and enforceable WPL terms and conditions.
* The guidelines create a framework that can both guide and facilitate the implementation of quality WPL, this includes:
* Categorising different WPL mediums in a single guiding document and policy
* Agreeing on WPL roles and responsibilities and assigning leadership to the process;
* Seeking the engagement of all relevant stakeholders, especially employers;
* Applying an inclusive process with which all stakeholders can identify with and which provides all with the opportunity for active participation.

**Cons**

* It is not immediately clear from the policy document how the guidelines will be enforced, although it does reference existing relevant regulatory requirements. It is important that minimum standards have been established through the guidelines, but further clarification on consequences for non-compliance would help to secure their implementation. It is noted that excessive regulatory interventions could demotivate stakeholder engagement.
* The guidelines set out clear roles and responsibilities for the delivery for WPL, however, is there a risk that some stakeholders will need further development for them to fulfil their allocated roles. For example, will TVET and employer instructors have the capacity to develop, deliver, monitor and assess apprenticeship programmes, as allocated in the guidelines. However, the articulation of these roles will provide an excellent focus for additional capacity building activities.
* It would be valuable to have further information on how the implementation and impact of the guidelines will be monitored and measured. There doesn’t appear to be an associated ‘results framework’ that could be used to capture progress towards key outputs, outcomes and impact from the guidelines’ implementation. This can give the impression that the guidelines are still focused on establishing a policy framework for the delivery of WPL, by setting out minimum requirements, and roles and responsibilities, but needs further development to ensure the successful implementation of the policy.
* The benefits associated with the application of the guidelines can appear to be assumed, a stronger, and more evidence based, rationale for their introduction could provide a stronger foundation for their dissemination and uptake.

**Testimonials**

As part of this study, GOPA consultants met with MIFOTRA representatives, Director General of Labour Research and Employment Promotion, Mr Faustine Mwambari, and Head of Planning and M&E, Mr Abdallah Nzabandora, on 25.03.22 to discuss the rationale and impact of the guidelines.

The MIFOTRA representatives spoke about the importance of a coordinated approach that addressed shared challenges to different mediums of WPL. They emphasised, despite differences in delivery, the shared objective of trainee employability across all the WPL mediums and activities. This meant that there was clear value in the development of guidelines that cut across different WPL models but, where appropriate, kept a focus on specific approaches. This would ensure a more joined up and consistent application of WPL and help to embed a shared understanding of the criteria for quality WPL.

They also emphasised the value of the guidelines in linking WPL to wider education and training sector policy and reform initiatives, such as the NEP. This would help to more successfully embed WPL as an integral part of Rwanda’s education system and support the mapping of WPL outcomes and qualifications to national frameworks. The guidelines include innovative approaches to WPL planning, including the allocation of different levels’ (for example, level 4: Jan – Feb, level 5: March – May, levels 6/7: July – September etc.) work placements at different times of the school year. This will help to ensure the utilisation of available opportunities and support both training provider and employer planning, addressing some of the capacity challenges discussed in this report.

MIFOTRA referenced the multiple WPL delivery models and partners and the consequent need for more standardised approaches. This would allow for the mapping of programmes and ensure the applicability of international interventions to the mainstream Rwandan education context.

The MIFOTRA representatives spoke about the importance of not just establishing the guidelines but also monitoring their impact, in terms of supporting added value to the trainee outcomes, and measuring the uptake of the guidelines. They also emphasised that M&E would include an assessment of how the guidelines are being perceived and utilised by the private sector which will be key in their sustainable value. The importance of realising stakeholder benefits from WPL also drove the consultative and collaborative approach taken with the guidelines’ development. MIFOTRA also spoke about the importance of combining the introduction of guidelines with associated capacity building activities, for example, supporting TVET instructors to have the required industry knowledge and confidence to facilitate quality off the job training aligned with WPL. The importance of this associated development has also been observed through this report.

MIFOTRA also referenced the value of establishing joint planning committees and forums to oversee the introduction and implementation of the guidelines. This includes through identifying and addressing challenges and barriers to effective WPL policy and practices. Interestingly, they also referenced the value of forums on both national and more local levels, and how the guidelines had provided a framework for the collaborative dialogues that are crucial for effective WPL.

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1. Through this paper, the African Union abbreviation – Rwanda – will be used. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Disclaimer: This publication was produced with the financial support of the European Union and the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The views and opinions expressed herein are those of the authors or persons cited and do not necessarily reflect the official policy, view or position of AUDA-NEPAD, the European Union or the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. The terms used herein and the presentation of material therein do not imply any endorsement by AUDA-NPAD, the European Union or the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development. Information in this book is offered in the understanding that it does not contain legal, financial or other forms of professional advice. Although the author has made great efforts to ensure the accuracy of the content, errors and omissions may occur. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. For a more detailed presentation of the TVET system see ‘Promoting Investment In Skills and Competencies Acquisition by Trainers and Entrepreneurs In African Countries Rwanda Country Report’ at eth African Ministerial Conference of Inter-Country Quality Node on Technical And Vocational Skills Development (Icqn / Tvsd) Sep. 2015 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. The Rwandan education system described and compared with the Dutch system’ <https://studylib.net/doc/18559878/education-system-rwanda> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. ‘The Rwandan education system described and compared with the Dutch system’ <https://studylib.net/doc/18559878/education-system-rwanda> [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. Ibid [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. ‘ILO rolls out training for informal sector workers’ by Glory Iribagiza, The New Times, October 19, 2019. [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. No distinction is made between informal and traditional apprenticeship. For a distinction between traditional and informal apprenticeship see 'Upgrading informal apprenticeship. A resource guide for Africa’, the International Labour Organization, 2012. p.10. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
9. Rwandan TVET sector stakeholders use the expression ‘workplace learning’ (WPL) to describe work-based learning models, this report will use the local WPL term. [↑](#footnote-ref-9)
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12. Guidelines on the implementation of WPL policy in Rwanda (2021) <https://www.mifotra.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Mifotra/Publication/_POLICIES/Ministerial_guideline_on_WPL_Final_version_28072021.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-12)
13. Skills, Employability and Entrepreneurship Programme, Appraisal Report, March 2013. African Development Bank. [https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Rwanda%20-%20Skills%20Employability%20and%20Entrepreneurship%20Programme%20(SEEP)%20-%20Appraisal%20Report.pdf](https://www.afdb.org/fileadmin/uploads/afdb/Documents/Project-and-Operations/Rwanda%20-%20Skills%20Employability%20and%20Entrepreneurship%20Programme%20%28SEEP%29%20-%20Appraisal%20Report.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-13)
14. SDF is a part of the Priority Skills for Growth programme (PSG) and has been initiated through a partnership agreement between the Government of Rwanda and the World Bank. An SDF component has been part of other World Bank supported programmes since 2012. [↑](#footnote-ref-14)
15. Joint Flagship Programme Document. Youth And Women Employment. Government of Rwanda & One United Nations – Rwanda 2014. P. 16. [file:///C:/Users/pouls/AppData/Local/Temp/UNDP\_RW\_%20Youth%20and%20Women\_prodoc%20Employment%20Programme-2.pdf](file:///C%3A/Users/pouls/AppData/Local/Temp/UNDP_RW_%20Youth%20and%20Women_prodoc%20Employment%20Programme-2.pdf) [↑](#footnote-ref-15)
16. National Policy on Workplace Learning to Prepare Rwandan Youth for Employment”, MIFOTRA 2015. [↑](#footnote-ref-16)
17. ‘Skills Development in the Informal Sector: Rwanda’ Authors/Editors: Arvil V. Adams, Sara Johansson da Silva, Setareh Razmara. World Bank 2013, July 2013, <https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/epdf/10.1596/9780821399682_CH08> The finding is based on information from surveys undertaken by the National Institute of Statistics of Rwanda. It should be noted that the situation has changed since 2006/7 but likely not significantly. Because of the lack of relevant recent information, we find that the general findings are still relevant. [↑](#footnote-ref-17)
18. ‘Skills Development in the Informal Sector: Rwanda’ Authors/Editors: Arvil V. Adams, Sara Johansson da Silva, Setareh Razmara. World Bank 2013, July 2013, <https://elibrary.worldbank.org/doi/epdf/10.1596/9780821399682_CH08> [↑](#footnote-ref-18)
19. National Policy on Workplace Learning to Prepare Rwandan Youth for Employment (Workplace Learning Policy) (2015), [↑](#footnote-ref-19)
20. Guidelines on the implementation of WPL policy in Rwanda (2021) <https://www.mifotra.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Mifotra/Publication/_POLICIES/Ministerial_guideline_on_WPL_Final_version_28072021.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-20)
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22. Guidelines on the implementation of WPL policy in Rwanda (2021) <https://www.mifotra.gov.rw/fileadmin/user_upload/Mifotra/Publication/_POLICIES/Ministerial_guideline_on_WPL_Final_version_28072021.pdf> [↑](#footnote-ref-22)
23. The established MIFOTRA SPIU is responsible for designing and implementing all planned projects in the Ministry of Public Service and Labour and plays host to all project management phases (initiation, planning, execution, monitoring, control and closing). MIFOTRA SPIU has currently two (2) projects: (1) The Integrated Personnel and Payroll Information System (IPPIS), and (2) Workplace Learning Policy. [↑](#footnote-ref-23)