

## Why the launch of SIFA window 1 is timely

### Message from Principal Secretary, State Department for Vocational and Technical Training

The launch of the 'Call for Proposals on Large Skills Development Investment Projects - SIFA Window 1' in Kenya is an important occasion for the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) fraternity.

The Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) seeks to strengthen occupational prospects of young people in Africa. It is an initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC) with financing by the German Government through KfW – the German Development Bank.

SIFA has established a financing facility for skills development, implemented by the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD). The project is designed to coherently enhance skills development in Africa by upskilling and/or disseminating local best practices.

Kenya is a beneficiary, and the Government appreciates financial assistance from development partners and the private sector to uplift the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET).

A quality and relevant TVET system is critical for national economic growth as well as holding a strategic position in effective implementation of the "Big Four" Agenda.

Therefore, the Ministry is implementing TVET reforms and engaging in frequent campaigns to attract potential learners by ensuring that training in TVET is relevant and of high quality.

Towards this, the Government created and empowered special agencies. They are the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Authority (TVETA), which is mandated to regulate and standardise



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training in the country through monitoring and evaluation, licensing, registration and accreditation of programmes, institutions and trainers; TVET Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council (CDACC) to address matters of syllabus, examination, assessment and competence certification; and the Kenya National Qualification Authority (KNQA) to establish a framework for defining the various levels of qualifications and competencies, and set admission requirements for all qualifications.

In order to establish a strong and vibrant TVET system, the Ministry of Education is implementing several reforms through National Dialogue on TVET. These include implementing a Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) Curriculum to allow for flexibility and responsiveness to the changing needs of the labour market, establishing linkages and partnerships with productive sector; and building capacity of the entire TVET governance system to enhance efficiency and effectiveness.

To improve access and equity, every constituency is earmarked to have a technical

training institute (TTI). Currently, 129 technical and vocational centres (TVCs) and four special needs TVCs are operational. The remaining 72 constituencies are earmarked for establishment of TVCs. In addition, there are 850 youth polytechnics and 11 national polytechnics that are operational.

Other reforms include transfer of trainers from TSC to the Public Service Commission (PSC) for effective and efficient management; implementation of the Technical Trainer's Scheme of Service; enhanced government capitation; and allocation of HELB loans to TVET trainees.

The Ministry has currently embarked on promoting TVET trainee placement through Kenya Universities and Colleges Placement Services (KUCCPS) to 150,000 students who completed KCSE examinations and were not placed in universities. These students are placed in vocational and technical training institutes to ensure every young Kenyan is competent and sufficiently skilled.

I am happy to note that the Ministry has completed establishing the unit cost of training in TVET programmes. The purpose is to lower the cost of training in TVET institutions to a maximum of Ksh56,240 annually per trainee.

The Government is providing a direct capitation of Ksh30,000 per trainee, while the remaining Ksh26,240 can be settled through application for HELB loan.

Finally, may I take this opportunity to thank the German Government through the AUDA-NEPAD, the productive sector and other social welfare communities for continually partnering with the Ministry of Education in philanthropic activities, especially those geared towards supporting the ongoing TVET reforms. We are ready to embrace all those who are in support of improving TVET.

development concerns of many African governments is the problem of youth unemployment and underemployment. Without job-related skills, young people and adults cannot benefit from employment opportunities that offer a decent income. To address this, African countries are supporting the youth to acquire employable skills through TVET programmes. It is within this framework that the African Union Commission (AUC) has developed a continental strategy to revitalise TVET in the continent.

The strategy is grounded on an approach based on skills for creating jobs through promotion of TVET programmes.

SIFA is an avenue for the implementation of this strategy. It promotes occupational prospects of young Africans through innovative skills development programmes and a close cooperation with the private sector as integral key stakeholders in the creation of jobs.

Therefore, as we strive to revitalise Kenya's TVET system with support of SIFA, focus should be on the following:

- Ensuring that TVET remains relevant and of high quality.
- Producing quality graduates who are competent and relevant to the modern market demands.
- Making technical education an attractive avenue for higher education.
- Promoting research in our TVET institutions in pace with emerging technologies.
- Encouraging and promoting TVET institutions-industry linkages and collaborations.



Dr. Meshack C. Opwora, PhD

It is for this reason that the government is heavily investing in TVET to ensure that the country produces a critical mass of artisans, technicians and technologists who will see the transformation of this country into a middle-income industrialising economy as envisaged in Vision 2030.

This is in line with the current Government 'Big Four' development agenda of ensuring the country is food secure, provides affordable decent housing, attains universal health coverage and supports the manufacturing sector to produce jobs and reduce poverty and unemployment.

The Government is committed to establish a pool of high-quality TVET institutions in Kenya with greater links to industry and aligned to labour markets. This is with a view to improve the skills profile, employability and entrepreneurship of especially youth and women, and closing the skills gap across the country.

One of the major socio-economic

## Germany firmly committed to the implementation of SIFA

### Message from Mrs. Annett Günther, German Ambassador to Kenya



In recent years, many African countries have shown above-average economic growths. To sustain this trend, well-educated workers will be a core prerequisite.

Fortunately for Africa, it has a great potential of young workers. Every year, more than 20 million people finish school and start to look for a job. But the growing level of youth unemployment also becomes a fundamental challenge to many countries. In fact, 60 percent of all unemployed people in Africa are under the age of 25.

Hence, both developments – the growing number of unemployed young people and the need to grow African economies for well-trained work force – must be matched in a sensible way.

The African Union (AU) and the German Government have therefore identified the improvement of youth education – particularly Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) – as a key concern at a continental level.

Despite their individual motivation, young peoples' skills too often do not meet the needs of a modern labour market. Here, the involvement of the private sector is essential to ensure that the emerging workforce meets the employers' needs. In turn, the private sector may contribute in technical and financial terms to an education that meets its demand.

So, how can African countries set the stage for a fruitful cooperation between public and private partners? And how can young people gain confidence that a formalised vocational education is a good investment into their individual development?

The Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA), launched today in Nairobi, specifically wants to address these challenges. It was initiated by the African Union Development Agency with support from the German Government.

The initiative's objective is to increase social and economic perspectives for young women and men in Africa. It follows a competitive, innovative and private sector oriented approach by which public and private institutions propose their projects to a special funding facility. The winning proposals receive grant funding.

Furthermore, an online platform ([www.nepad.org/skillsportalforayouth](http://www.nepad.org/skillsportalforayouth)) serves as a knowledge repository to share and replicate promising approaches in skills development throughout the continent.

There are a number of positive examples. South Africa, for instance, has already put in place a comprehensive set of policies and gained broad experiences in TVET. And we should also congratulate Kenya on being selected as a pilot country alongside South Africa, Tunisia, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ghana, Ethiopia and Togo.

Germany is firmly committed to the implementation of SIFA and has made available €65 million for the financing facility and its projects, as well as €9 million for technical assistance.

Here in Kenya, a good example for enhancing TVET is the German bottling company, Kronen, with its training programme in Thika. The curriculum development was supported by funds from the German Government.

The company takes on board around 10 apprentices every year and trains them in their own laboratories. After two years, some of them continue to work for Kronen in the region. Others make their fortune with different companies. So far, every graduate has been able to obtain employment.

Within our bilateral development cooperation, we want to build on such examples. This is why TVET and youth employment, besides agriculture, are going to be our focus areas over the next years.

German funding shall help to upgrade three existing technical institutes in Nairobi, Kiambu and Thika. We are also working together with more than 20 companies in the area – Kenyan, German and international – which have declared their willingness to take on board apprentices.

Furthermore, the Kenyan and German governments are holding talks on the foundation of a joint Institute for Applied Sciences. Once established, it will provide another opportunity to young people from the region to study technical courses according to German curricula and to connect their studies with practical research in companies.

All these initiatives correspond with the main objective of SIFA – to bring the public and the private sector together for the benefit of African youths. So, let me encourage everyone reading this text to also apply for funding from the Skills Initiative Facility for their own, new, innovative TVET Project.



# Got a fresh TVET idea? We are ready to support you

Message from Dr. Klaus Liebig, Director, KfW Office Nairobi



As a winner, you will be granted up to €3 million for infrastructure, equipment and other needs of your training facility.

Africa is currently facing a continental challenge of a growing level of youth unemployment.

The average age in the continent is 19 years. About 41 of the population is under 15 years old. Soon, these groups try to find a job. At the same time, industries need well-educated workers for sustained growth.

The African Union and Germany have therefore intensified cooperation in the field of education and employment by establishing the Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA). Germany has made available €74 million for the project, complemented by funds from the member states of the African Union.

Within this initiative, the African Union Development Agency (AUDA-NEPAD) and KfW have set up a Financing Facility that honours improved, innovative TVET approaches across the continent with grant funding. The facility is implemented by AUDA-NEPAD, with KfW providing the funding.

We would like to take this occasion to thank AUDA-NEPAD for excellent cooperation in this project.

We are particularly proud to be a major cooperation partner in this eventful period, where the African Union has

officially confirmed the establishment of the AUDA as the African Union Commission (AUC) implementing agency.

Today, AUDA-NEPAD and the Government of Kenya open the second call for proposals under this facility. Grants will be provided on a competitive basis for the best approaches.

So, please, feel encouraged to apply if your company or agency wants to implement a TVET project that:

1. Combines the knowhow from employers and training institutes, from the public and from the private sector;
2. Harnesses local know-how as well as international best practices by cooperating with local and with international actors;
3. Strengthens your sustainable business model;
4. Creates more and better employment perspectives, particularly for women and youths;

It is worth the effort. As a winner, you will be granted up to €3 million for infrastructure, equipment and other needs of your training facility.

Congratulations to Kenya for having been selected as one of the eight pilot countries for the Skills Initiative.



# SIFA launches facility to boost skills development and youth employment

Skills Initiative for Africa (SIFA) is an initiative of the African Union Commission (AUC) and the African Union Development Agency- NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD). It is supported by the German Government to strengthen occupational prospects for the benefit of young people in Africa.

Under SIFA, KfW supports a Financing Facility for Skills Development to provide funding on a competitive basis, for the implementation of innovative and sustainable skills development initiatives.

The second pillar of SIFA is a technical assistance programme supported by GIZ to strengthen private sector engagement.

SIFA aims to foster the employment of and entrepreneurship among youth, women and vulnerable groups, including refugees, migrants and internally displaced persons, the disadvantaged and the disabled.

The SIFA Financing Facility for Skills Development addresses the common challenges in skills development in Africa by upscaling and/or disseminating local best practices and supporting innovative and sustainable approaches.

In Kenya, the SIFA Financing Facility is launching a call for proposals under Funding Window I for large skills development investment projects proposed by Kenyan technical and vocational training entities in partnership with private sector companies. The Grant amount per project under this Funding Window is up to €3 million.

The technical assistance programme works hand in hand with the finance facility to collate and disseminate good examples of African skills development projects. These are available on the AUDA-NEPAD's platform – African Youth



Platform for Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship (ASPYEE) (<https://www.nepad.org/skillsportalforayouth>).

To help strengthen skills matching, SIFA targets engagement of the private sector to exchange lessons learned through national and continental dialogue. In particular, the AfricaCreatesJob conference platform is held annually to disseminate experiences and generate policy direction to transform the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sector to better meet job demands.

### Situation in Kenya

The Government of Kenya recognises TVET as one of the subsectors of education and training with great potential to transform the growth of all the sectors of the economy. The TVET sub-sector plays a key role as a producer and supplier of all the technical and vocational skills that are needed in economic development.

Therefore, the government is heavily investing in TVET to ensure that the country produces a critical mass of artisans, technicians and technologists who will see the transformation of this country into middle-income industrialising economy as envisaged in Vision 2030.

The Government has embarked on ambitious reforms in TVET. These include increasing access to TVET institutions, provision of modern training equipment, curriculum review and capacity building of trainers to ensure quality and relevance of training.

In addition, the government has set up oversight and regulatory agencies. They include TVET Authority (TVETA) to accredit institutions and assure quality in TVET, and TVET Curriculum Development, Assessment and Certification Council (CDACC) to be in-charge of development and reform of TVET curriculum from supply to demand driven Competency Based Education and

Training (CBET), and the Kenya National Qualifications Authority (KNQA) to develop and implement the Kenya National Qualification Framework.

### Challenges

With high unemployment rates in Kenya, TVET faces many challenges. They include unmatched needs between industry and courses offered; rapid changes in technology, rendering acquired skills irrelevant; and the limited ability of TVETs to make capital-intensive purchases to meet market needs, due to the high costs of investments in technology.

It is important for TVET institutions to continuously partner with private sector initiatives and the government to make TVET relevant. This is by supporting the alignment of curriculum skills with the labour market; supporting systematic professional development of TVET trainers; offering more apprenticeship/internship

programmes and scholarships; acquiring modern tools and equipment; and sharing success stories of TVET to inculcate a positive mind-set among parents, the community and other stakeholders, regarding vocational education.

The SIFA Financing Facility has come at an appropriate time to support TVET institutions and the private sector implement employment-oriented skills development initiatives and contribute to the attainment of the Big Four Agenda through provision of well-trained human resource.

### TVET in Africa

Africa and global agencies such as UNESCO, have all recognised TVET as a powerful avenue for equipping young people with employment and entrepreneurship skills.

The African Union Commission has developed a Continental TVET Strategy that provides a comprehensive framework for achieving this objective. The AU Agenda 2063 also calls for a paradigm shift towards transformative education and training systems that develop the knowledge, skills, research, innovation and creativity needed to secure the future of young people and Africa as a whole.

Africa's youth population is growing rapidly and is expected to reach over 830 million by 2050. It is important, therefore, that African countries strengthen their skills development and grow their economies to absorb this growing number of job seekers or create the enabling environment for young people to become entrepreneurs and job creators.

For more information, visit the website [SkillsAfrica.org](https://www.skillsafrica.org).