

State of **SKILLS**



International
Labour
Organization

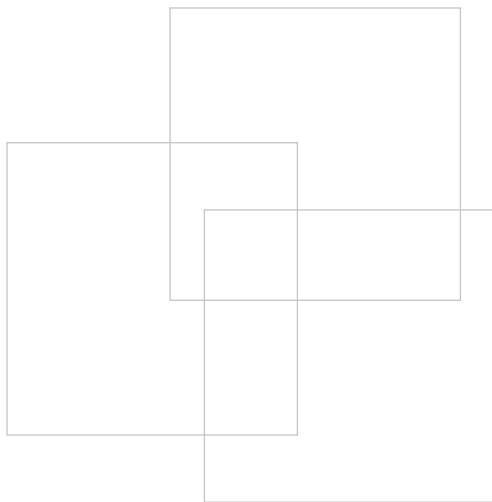
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1919-2019



Burkina Faso

State of

SKILLS



Burkina Faso

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The socio-economic context

A landlocked Sahelian country in the loop of the Niger River, Burkina Faso is one of the poorest countries in the world, ranking 183rd on the UNDP Human Development Index. The creation of decent jobs in response to population growth is at the core of its development objectives, which requires sustained efforts in the areas of education and vocational training.

Burkina Faso is in the initial stages of its demographic transition.

In twenty years, the population has almost doubled to reach about 20 million in 2018. Children under the age of 14 account for 45 per cent of the population, setting the country the challenge of providing basic education to these new generations without neglecting the training needs of young people in secondary and tertiary education.

Nearly 40 per cent of the population live below the absolute poverty line.

Urbanization is increasing at a rate of 5 per cent p.a., driven by the lack of prospects for young people in rural areas, where subsistence farming is still largely dominant. In this difficult economic and social context, emigration is a sought-after option, with more than one million Burkinabe nationals settled in Côte d'Ivoire in 2017 (89% of expatriates) and 60,500 in Ghana (4%) (UNDESA, 2017).

After slowing down sharply in 2015, economic growth has resumed at an annual rate of 5 to 7 per cent.

The services sector dominates Burkina Faso's economic activity structurally, contributing 49.1 per cent on average to GDP during the 2012-2016 period, followed by the primary sector (30.9%) and the secondary sector (20.0%). More recently, growth has been driven mainly by agriculture, especially cereals (27% growth in 2018) and cotton, as well as by the mining and services sectors. Rich in natural resources, Burkina Faso depends on good relations with its immediate neighbours to be able to participate in world trade. Production levels are also highly weather-dependent.

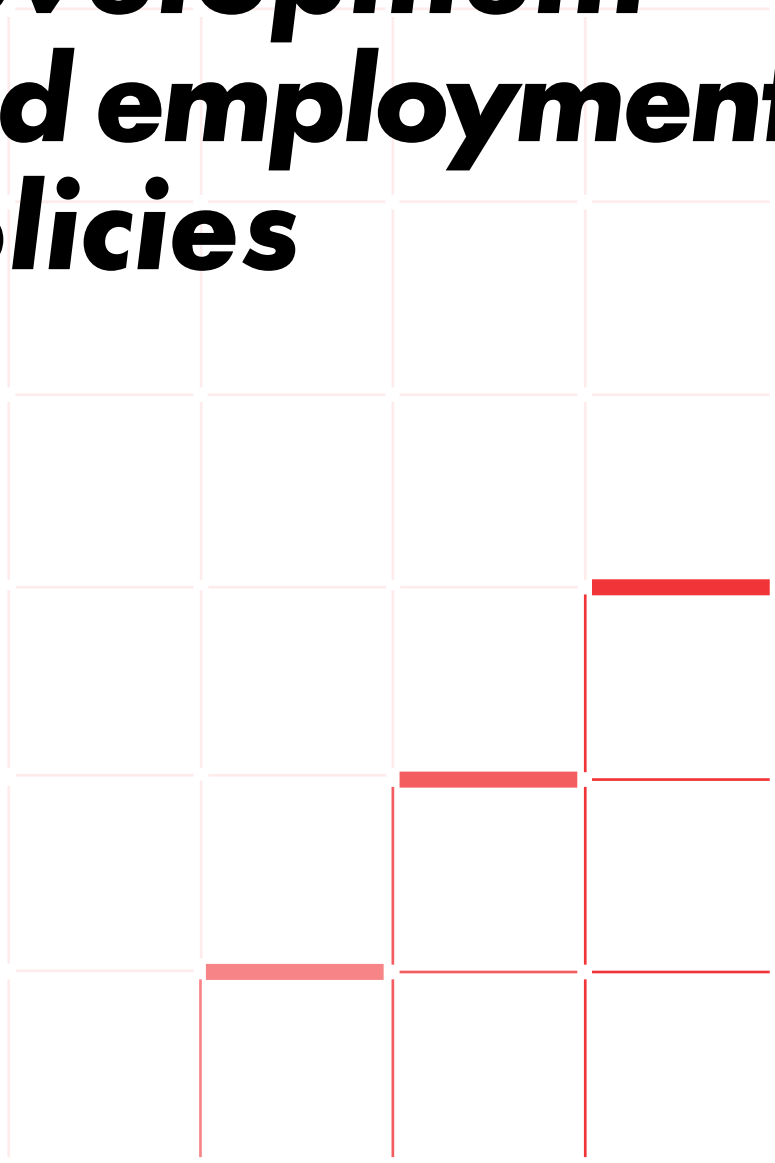
The obstacles faced on entry to the labour market are a major concern for the country.

The unemployment rate of only 4 per cent (11.6% in urban areas, 1.6% in rural areas) conceals the very insecure conditions faced by most working people. More than nine out of ten jobs are informal in nature, and 23.7 per cent of those in employment work fewer than 40 hours/week but want to work more (PEFOP, 2016). The unemployment rate of 23.4 per cent for people with tertiary education, compared to 1.8 per cent for those without qualifications, indicates the lack of decent job opportunities and the mismatch between supply and demand for qualifications in the labour market (ENESI, 2015). The labour force participation rate for women is low, at only 54.6 per cent in 2014 (compared to 73.7% for men). About 80 per cent of the workforce is employed in agriculture, which contributes only 20 per cent to GDP (World Bank, 2018).

The education level of the working-age population is very low.

75.3 per cent of people in the 15-65 age group have never attended school (INSD, 2014). As a result, the literacy rate for those over 15 was only 41.22 per cent in 2018 (32.69% for women). The considerable efforts made to provide universal access to primary education are, however, beginning to bear fruit, and the literacy rate among 15-24 year olds has increased to 58.29 per cent. In addition, the gross enrolment rate in secondary education is around 40 per cent, equal for young people of both sexes. Only 9.31 per cent of students in secondary education are enrolled in technical and vocational education (UIS, 2018).

Development and employment policies



The 2016-2020 National Economic and Social Development Plan (PNDES) is the main guiding instrument for the socio-economic development policy of Burkina Faso. Anchored in a partnership between the State, the private sector and civil society, the Plan focuses on accelerating the development of human capital, and aims to create at least 50,000 decent jobs annually.

In order to achieve this objective, the PNDES defines policy priorities in five key strategic sectors: the agro-sylvopastoral sector, the crafts and industrial sector, trade and service industries, infrastructure and natural resources. However, employment policies remain largely based on the National Employment Policy (PNE) adopted in 2008, which places vocational training at the core of government policies to improve the employability of young people, enhance economic performance and promote job creation.



*“Education, instruction,
training, employment,
(...) are social
and cultural rights
recognized by the
Constitution.”*





– Constitution of the Republic of Burkina Faso

Article 18

The skills system in Burkina Faso

The national policy on technical and vocational education and training (TVET) adopted in September 2008 aligns with the PNE by focusing on developing the vocational skills of young people and adults in order to improve their access to the job market. In 2009, this policy resulted in embedding vocational training through apprenticeships in technical and vocational training establishments, followed by the formulation of a Strategy for the Expansion of Vocational Training (SGPF) adopted in 2014. The Strategy was activated through the Programme to support the sectoral policy for Technical and Vocational Education (PAPS/TVET), which was evaluated in 2016/2017. As the national TVET policy had not sufficiently bridged the gap between the training on offer and job market requirements, it was replaced with the 2017-2030 Sectoral Plan for Education and Training (PSEF), which aims to “develop and adapt TVET to the needs of the economy” and to “strengthen management and supervision governance in order to transform resources into results”.

In Burkina Faso, the management of TVET involves multiple parties. The legal foundation for TVET is the 2007 Law on Education. Since 2011, the direction and management of TVET have been assigned to the Ministry of Youth, Training and Job Market Access (MJFIP), which became the Ministry of Youth and Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship (MJPEJ) in March 2019. Part of technical and vocational education is, however, supervised by the Ministry of National Education and Literacy (MENA). In addition, various ministries maintain their own training institutions, for example in agriculture or crafts. The MJPEJ works through a number of public structures, such as the National Employment Agency (ANPE), the National Employment and Vocational Training Observatory (ONEF) and the Support Fund for Vocational Training and Apprenticeship (FAFPA).



TVET reforms clearly indicate a commitment to strengthening the principles of partnership and social dialogue on the issues of training and employment. The National Education Council brings together public and private stakeholders, civil society and parents' associations. Its mandate is to contribute by providing advice on the development and implementation of educational policies at both national and regional levels. Employers' and workers' organizations participate in TVET governance through the National Certification Commission (CNC), which is responsible for the recognition of vocational qualifications gained by graduates from training centres. Finally, the FAFPA has a tripartite management committee. In practice, however, the FAFPA seems to focus on administrative matters due to its administrative dependence on MJPEJ, the ministry to which it reports, and on the State's control of funding (Walther, 2014). On the whole, the lack of resources and skills in employers' and workers' organizations is one of the main obstacles to the implementation of a genuine partnership within the current structures (IIEP/Pôle de Dakar, 2017).

The low level of public funds spent on TVET is only partially offset by the support given by technical and financial partners (TFPs). Technical and vocational training (formal and non-formal) receives only 3.9 per cent of the State's current education expenditure. According to a 2014 study, more than 46 per cent of the funding for TVET support programmes and projects comes from international donors. A third source of funds is the training tax (TPA) paid by employers, being 4 per cent of their payroll. These sources of revenue help fund the FAFPA, established in 2003 to promote continuing training and apprenticeship projects organized when requested by businesses, professional associations, trade unions, training providers or trainees. In 2017, nearly 14,500 people accessed FAFPA services (ONEF, 2018). However, FAFPA reach is limited by the fact that it receives only a fraction of the training tax revenue (5.3% on average over 2005-2011), most of which is absorbed into the State budget for other policies. As a result, all levels of the TVET system suffer from a lack of financial resources (IIEP/Pôle de Dakar, 2017).

Skills anticipation

The main public institution tasked with skills identification and anticipation is the National Employment and Vocational Training Observatory (ONEF), which reports to the MJPEJ at the institutional level. To work around the lack of technical and financial resources, ONEF carries out many projects with the National Institute of Statistics and with TFPs.

For example, in 2017/2018 ONEF conducted a survey of niche markets offering job opportunities in the Centre-East region with the support of the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the Belgian Development Cooperation (2018), as well as a study on job market access across 2010-2015 for holders of vocational credentials from MJPEJ vocational training centres, with the support of the PAPS-TVET. Structures and capabilities for monitoring and anticipating skills requirements remain, however, quite inadequate to bridge the gap between the employment world and the world of training.



Skills development



(© ILO)

The skills development system in Burkina Faso comprises several branches, which do not exactly match the fields of expertise of the various ministries involved in TVET (Kehl et al., 2018):

- Technical and vocational secondary education, provided in technical and vocational secondary schools and institutions;
- Higher technical and vocational education, provided in universities, high-level establishments and higher education institutions;
- Vocational training provided in specialized private and public schools and centres, including those set up by technical ministries to meet their own staffing requirements;
- Vocational training of a non-formal nature, provided in vocational training centres, public and private apprenticeship centres and providers of non-formal basic education;
- Continuing training of employed workers for promotion, reassignment and productivity improvement.

Traditional apprenticeships organized by micro-businesses in the informal sector should also be included here.

About 200 TVET institutions report to the MENA and 260 to the MJPEJ. In both cases, more than 85 per cent are private establishments. Despite the continuing construction of new schools, their geographical distribution remains very uneven, and classes are usually overcrowded (National Assembly of Burkina Faso, 2017).

In terms of intake capacity, the tertiary section is the largest one. It accounted for 53 per cent of intake capacity in 2016-2017. The remaining 47 per cent was split between the industrial sector (19%), construction (17%) and the agro-sylvopastoral sector (11%) (MJFIP, 2017).

Vocational education provided in secondary schools remains strongly focused on theory, with few opportunities for students to get to know the business world. However, the concept of dual apprenticeship, which combines school-based tuition with workplace learning, has already driven several projects, including some with Austrian, German and Swiss cooperation. The country has, therefore, a certain amount of experience, and stakeholders, such as the National Federation of Craftsmen of Burkina Faso (FENA-BF) and the Association of Construction Workers (AO-BTP), are well aware of this option. So far, however, implementation has been hampered by several obstacles, the most significant of which is the ongoing issue of establishing strong partnerships between training centres and businesses. Providers tend to arrange most of the learning in training centres and workshops.

Tripartite dialogue and the involvement of the private sector in skills development are priorities for the reforms initiated in 2008. A strategy for the development of a public-private partnership (PPP) was prepared in 2012, which led to the adoption of PPP legislation in 2013 and its implementing decree issued in 2014. Although in the past this partnership was considered ineffective, it seems to be taking shape nowadays, with a formal charter signed by representatives of the State, employers, trade unions and civil society in 2018 and the establishment of the Training and Apprenticeship Support Programme (PAFPA). Scheduled to take place over 2018-2022, the PAFPA is, according to TVET professionals, a unique PPP initiative in vocational training in Sub-Saharan Africa with private sector involvement through the National Organization of Burkinabe Employers (CNPB) as part of its management.

In addition, some organizations, such as the National Federation of Craftsmen of Burkina Faso (FENA-BF) and the Association of Construction Workers (AO-BTP), have supported government projects (e.g. PEJDC) by placing trainees with businesses for apprenticeships and internships, and continue to be involved in vocational training in the crafts sector.

Skills recognition and quality assurance

Each ministry is responsible for the development and quality assurance of training programmes provided in its training structures.

The MENA develops curricula and standards for the certifications awarded by technical and vocational secondary schools, such as the Certificate of Vocational Competence (CAP), the Certificate of Vocational Training (BEP), the Vocational High School Certificate and Technical High School Certificates.

The MJPEJ's General Department for Vocational Training (DGFP) is responsible for training systems design and should, in this capacity, develop, with the training and trade-related communities, all the standards, curricula, pedagogical and teaching materials necessary to implement vocational training tasks. However, an assessment of PAPS-TVET showed that the objectives related to the development of new standards or the update of existing ones were not achieved. Tuition provided in training institutions is therefore often based on obsolete standards or on curricula developed locally without the approval of the MJPEJ (Kehl, 2018).

The National Certification Commission (CNC) was established in 2008 and reformed in 2017 to develop and manage the certifications issued by the MJPEJ. It comprises 44 members, with 21 representatives for the public sector and 23 for the private sector. Through its Technical Accreditation Committees (CTH), the Commission manages the national certification framework. As an executive body, the CNC Permanent Secretariat organizes annual vocational skills examinations. The work of the Commission is partly hampered by a lack of financial resources and by structures and processes which provide few incentives to the private sector to get involved in credential development and certification (IIEP/Pôle de Dakar).

The national certification framework covers five credentials: the Basic Qualification Certificate (CQB), the Certificate of Professional Qualification (CQP), the Vocational Qualification Certificate (BQP), the Technical Vocational Certificate (BPT) and the Specialized Technician Vocational Certificate (BPTS). The CQP, BQP and BPT are operational. Certification currently covers 11 occupations for the CQP, 12 for the BQP and 10 for the BPT.

There is no official CNC evaluation for occupations not yet covered by standards. The credentials awarded in these occupations are simply statements of success in examinations held internally by the training institutions.

As to quality control of the training system, the Standing Committee for the Examination of Applications for approval for private non-formal vocational training in Burkina Faso (CPEDA) was set up to review applications to open private non-formal vocational training centres. This mechanism allows the government to control the quality of the training provided in private centres. More than half the training centres listed in 2016/2017, i.e. 69 per cent, did not have an official recognition document (creation approval, authorization to open or creation decision and decree) (MJFIP, 2017).

As for the recognition of prior learning (RPL)¹, a system has been developed with the General Department for Vocational Training (DGFP) and the Platform of Expertise in Vocational Training (PEFOP) for occupations in agronomy (farming stream) and masonry.

¹ RPL is a system that allows those holding employment to validate the experience they have acquired with a view to obtaining official.

Generally speaking, the two main credentials (CQP and BQP) are very popular, with a growing number of applicants and successful graduates, despite a decline between 2016 and 2018 for the CQP. This increase is the result of actions taken to expand the number of occupations for certification and the deployment of examinations across the various regional centres of Burkina Faso. However, the increased intake is not aligned with the demand from private operators, who, as yet, do not sufficiently value these two credentials. The situation was confirmed by the 2016 ONEF study on access to the job market for young graduates from training centres, which showed a participation rate of only 39.1 per cent for CQP holders and 28.3 per cent for BQP holders.

The main reasons given are: (i) mismatch between courses and the needs of the job market and business requirements; (ii) limited access and increased competition in the labour market; (iii) poor quality of non-formal training, with a lack of focus on occupation-related skills; (iv) absence of a monitoring system and support for school leavers; and (v) non-recognition of credentials by employers.

Social inclusion

TVET is seen as a driver of social inclusion but significant inequalities remain in terms of accessibility for different groups.

Regional disparities in training options restrict access to TVET for rural populations, particularly in the South-Central region. Tuition fees, which are low in ANPE training centres, can be as high as 450,000 CFA francs for 12 months of training in private centres. This is an additional barrier for the most disadvantaged populations.

In general, girls are slightly over-represented in TVET. There were 11,881 girls and 9,719 boys enrolled in 2016/2017, i.e. a parity ratio of 1.22 (MJFIP, 2017). However, the distribution by training stream is highly variable and reflects the disparities observed in the labour market.

Efforts have been made in recent years to improve the training of people with disabilities, who until recently were largely excluded from the TVET system. As they live mainly in rural areas (80% according to a 2006 study), they face many obstacles in accessing skills development. Only a third are literate. With the adoption of a law protecting the rights of persons with disabilities in 2010, Burkina Faso has established a legal framework to promote their access to training and employment. Since then, various measures have been taken by the government in addition to the actions taken by NGOs. There are a few specially adapted structures such as the Technical and Vocational Training Centre in Ziniaré, the Artisanal Village and the National Centre for Arts and Crafts in Ouagadougou (Dembele, 2016).



Lifelong learning

The National Employment Agency (ANPE), which reports to the MJPEJ, is responsible for organizing an intermediation and information system on the labour market. The Agency is also responsible for supporting self-employment for some categories of jobseekers. In practice, the use of the ANPE's career counselling and guidance services remains limited. For both career decisions and job market entry, young people rely primarily on personal contacts.²

² Results of the ENESI 2015 survey "Employment and unemployment module".



Key challenges

Despite the reforms undertaken since 2008 and the progress made in various areas, Burkina Faso continues to face multiple challenges in the area of TVET:

1 **Lack of coordination among TVET stakeholders.**

The fact that several ministries are involved in vocational training is a major challenge, despite the consultation entities available at the highest level. For example, the system's fragmentation hampers efforts to harmonize training standards in certain sectors such as agriculture.

2 Skills mismatch.

Vocational training is still largely provided in a school-style approach, with training centres being built in all regions without really taking market requirements into account. The tendency of students to select tertiary sector courses does not reflect the job creation potential of the primary sector.

3 Insufficient practical applications within training programmes.

Access to training does not guarantee entry into a work place for all students, which is the best way to acquire practical experience. However, it has been observed that business managers are sometimes reluctant. The main reasons given are a low activity level in the business and mistrust in the trainees who could damage technical equipment due to their lack of experience. Access to training is an even greater issue in rural areas where businesses are scarce.

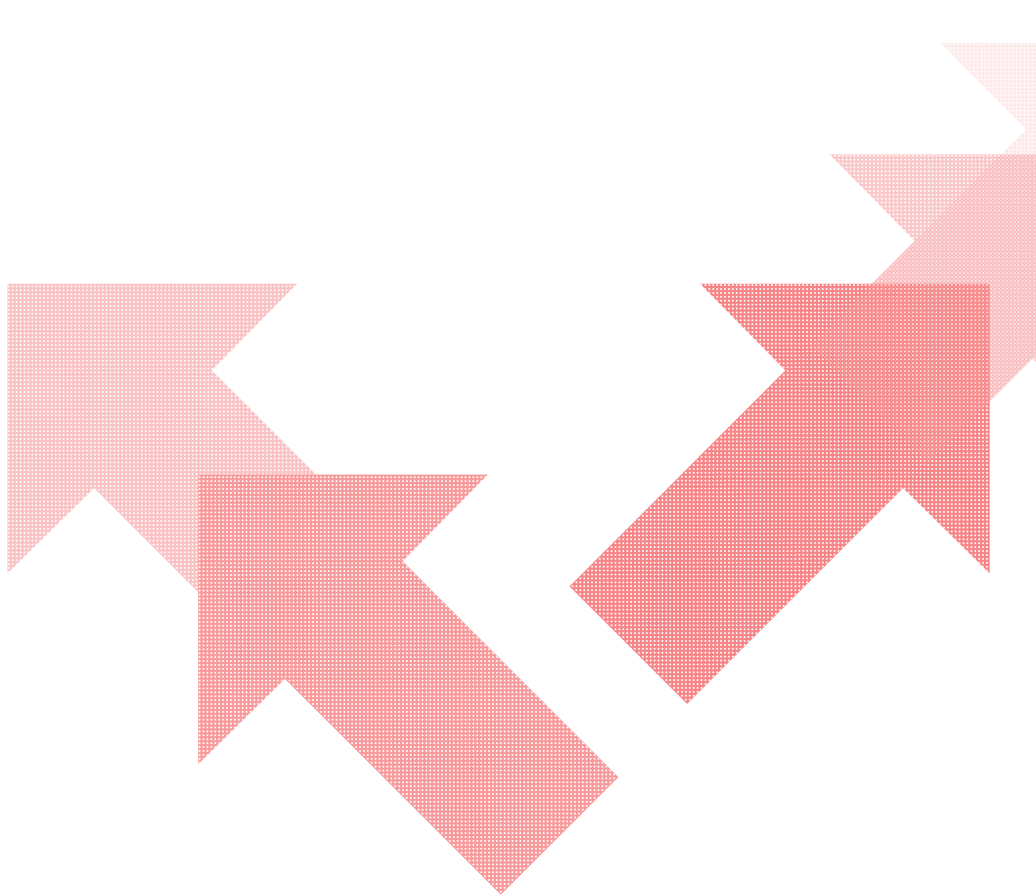
4 Quantitative shortages in training opportunities.

For many years, general education was the focus in Burkina Faso. Despite efforts made in recent years, the provision of TVET courses remains marginal compared to general education. The Diagnostic Study on Youth Employment (2014) shows that only 5 per cent of young people aged 16 to 35 have been given technical and vocational training. There is a shortage of teaching facilities for students, which is reflected in the fact that TVET accounts for barely 10 per cent of the national education system.

5 Low involvement of professionals in the current certification process.

The National Commission for the Certification of Training Programmes (CNC-PF), in both its composition and its mandate, has full powers to mobilize professionals from the private sector and involve them in the certification process. However, the role of the private sector in the certification process is still marginal, reflecting the limited interest shown by employers in the credentials.

The way forward





1

Stronger alignment of the training provided with job market requirements.

In particular with more robust mechanisms for monitoring and anticipating the skills required.

2

Improved practical applications within training programmes.

To improve access to practical training, the State could provide incentives to training institutions and businesses. Such incentives could be in the form of grants or loans for training centres to purchase equipment and tax exemptions or easier access to markets for businesses. A sufficient number of qualified trainers is also needed to supervise the practical training courses.

3 Greater quality in formal apprenticeships and learning outcomes in the informal sector.

Numerous projects have already been carried out for this purpose in recent years to enable the stakeholders to acquire a degree of expertise. Lessons from past experiences need to be learned in order to further the reform of learning models, in particular through the adoption of training standards, trainers' training and the recognition of skills acquired in the informal sector.



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4

Adaptation and standardization of training, supervision and certification standards.

There is still not enough progress in the area of standardization, which needs to be pursued. It also seems advisable that Burkina Faso continues to participate in the sub-regional initiative to set up a platform for sharing vocational training curricula, programmes and tools between Benin, Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger, Senegal and Togo.

5 Strengthened tripartite management and effective operation of the public-private partnership.

Although agreements have been signed between the State, employers' organizations and unions, this partnership was slow to materialize before the recent launch of the Vocational Training and Apprenticeship Support Programme (PAFPA), with the participation of the CNPB in technical management functions. Previously, the TVET community viewed the PPP as a mere co-financing tool and not as a means of improving staff training and qualification. This implementation should continue, which can be done through:

- A review of the legal and regulatory framework of the PPP;
- The definition and formalization, by consensus, of the content of the PPP;
- The formulation of an operational strategy for the development of the PPP;
- A review of the consultation frameworks.

6 **Supporting job creation in growth sectors through appropriate training policies.**

TVET can actively help economic diversification and contribute to a more sustainable and inclusive development model by increasing skills for the future, especially among young people. For example, the creation of green jobs, such as waste collection and recycling, requires the development of adequate technical training courses. In agriculture, training initiatives are already helping to develop the value chains for rice, cashew and sesame production, while taking into account the need to protect the environment.

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