International Labour Organization

Next generation sector skills bodies

Driving productivity, innovation, decent work and social justice

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Foreword

We stand at a critical juncture in the global world of work. The pace of change, driven by the convergence of rapid digitalization, the artificial intelligence revolution, the urgent transition to a green economy, and profound demographic shifts, is no longer linear; it is exponential. In this era of "poly-crisis", the ability of nations to adapt, innovate, and thrive depends almost entirely on the agility and resilience of their skills systems.

Yet, in too many countries, a "broken link" remains between the skills provided by training institutions and the rapidly evolving needs of the labour market. This disconnect not only stifles enterprise productivity and innovation but, more critically, denies individuals, particularly youth and vulnerable groups, access to decent work and social mobility.

To bridge this divide, we cannot rely on the static, top-down governance models of the past. We need dynamic, institutionalized partnerships where industry does not just use skills but actively co-creates them for contributing to employment, productivity and inclusive growth. This is the mandate of **Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs)**.

The International Labour Organization (ILO) has long championed SSBs as vital instruments of social dialogue. It produced "A Resource Guide on SSBs" in 2021. However, the context has shifted dramatically since our last guidance on this subject. What was sufficient five years ago is no longer adequate today.

This new publication, ***Next generation sector skills bodies: Driving productivity***, innovation, decent work and social justice, presents an innovative framework for the "Next Generation" of SSBs. It moves beyond the traditional focus on occupational standards to envision SSBs as strategic engines of sectoral transformation. It challenges these bodies to expand their mandate, integrating skills development with business development services to drive productivity, foster innovation, and support the "Just Transition" to sustainable economies.

Crucially, this guide reinforces that successful SSBs must be built on the bedrock of **tripartism**. Effective skills governance requires the active voice of **employers**, who know what skills are needed; the voice of **workers**, who ensure training leads to decent conditions and fair pay; and the voice of **government**, to ensure coherence and equity.

We invite policymakers, social partners, and development practitioners to use this guide not merely as a technical manual, but as a roadmap for reform. By building robust, industry-led, and inclusive Sector Skills Bodies, we can repair the link between education and employment and build a future of work that leaves no one behind.

We wish to express my deep appreciation to **Ashwani Aggarwal**, Head of the Skills Policy and Governance Unit, for his leadership in conceptualising, steering, and completing this publication, and for crafting the innovative framework for the "Next Generation" of SSBs.

Sukti Dasgupta

Director of the Employment, Skills
and Sustainable Enterprises Department
International Labour Organization

Srinivas B. Reddy

Chief, Skills and Employability Branch
International Labour Organization

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Ashwani Aggarwal, Head of Skills Policy and Governance at the ILO, conceived, led and edited this publication and served as its principal author. Martin-Christian Kent contributed as co-author.

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We are grateful for the leadership and guidance of Sukti Dasgupta, Director of the Employment, Skills and Sustainable Enterprises Department and Srinivas B. Reddy, Chief of the Skills and Employability Branch at the ILO.

Endorsements

Representing voices from every region, these endorsements from Sector Skills Council leaders and senior executives affirm the publication"s global relevance, practical value, and contribution to strengthening industry-led skills systems.

Americas

"This publication is a forward-looking and highly practical guide for navigating the future of work. By placing industry partnership, social dialogue, and innovation at the centre of skills governance, it offers a powerful blueprint for building more productive, inclusive, and resilient economies."

- Philip Mondor, President and CEO, Tourism HR, **Canada**

"Sector skills bodies are powerful platforms for social dialogue, bringing together employers, workers, governments, and training providers to align skills development with the evolving needs of the labour market. By showcasing diverse models, experiences, and lessons learned from different countries, this publication provides practical inspiration for strengthening these bodies and fostering more responsive, inclusive skills systems."

- Lady Beatriz Quevedo Cantor, National Learning Service (SENA), **Colombia**

Africa

"As a sector, construction stands at the intersection of skills, technology, and livelihoods. This guide offers a practical blueprint for next-generation sector skills bodies to raise productivity on site, embed innovation in training, and ensure growth translates into decent work for every artisan, technician, and professional. Its emphasis on social justice resonates deeply with our mandate: a productive sector must also be a fair one, opening doors for youth, women, persons with disabilities, and workers in the informal economy. The Construction Sector Skills Body of Ghana fully supports this framework and looks forward to aligning our strategies with its principles."

- Samuel D. K. Amegayibor, Chairperson, Construction Sector Skills Body, **Ghana**

"Tourism and hospitality are at the heart of Ghana"s tourism vision. For our sector to compete globally, we must move beyond traditional training toward sector skills bodies that actively drive productivity, embed innovation in service delivery, and guarantee that growth creates dignified jobs. This guide provides exactly that roadmap, helping us close skills gaps in customer experience and digital hospitality while ensuring that the women, youth, and community-based operators who power our sector benefit fairly from its growth. The Tourism and Hospitality Sector Skills Body of Ghana welcomes this framework and will align our occupational standards and apprenticeship models with its principles."

- Prof. Eunice Fay Amissah, Chairperson, Tourism and Hospitality Sector Skills Body, **Ghana**

"Sector skills bodies play a vital role in aligning skills with industry demand, driving productivity, and enhancing competitiveness. This ILO publication provides a deep and exceptional understanding of these mechanisms, offering tremendous support for the establishment, management, and operational effectiveness of SSBs worldwide."

▶ Bldr Samson Ameh Opaluwah, President, Sector Skills Council for Building, **Nigeria**

"The Next Generation Sector Skills Bodies guide highlights the urgent need for skills systems to adapt to rapid changes driven by digitalization, artificial intelligence, green economy transitions, and demographic shifts. The guide advocates for dynamic, industry-led sector skills bodies founded on tripartism, expanding their role to drive sectoral transformation, innovation, and inclusive growth. Policymakers and practitioners are encouraged to use this framework as a roadmap to bridge education and employment, ensuring a future of work that benefits all."

▶ Thabo Mashongoane, CEO, Mining Qualifications Authority, **South Africa**

"This guide closely aligns with Tanzania"s National Framework for Academia–Industry Collaboration and offers a clear roadmap for establishing effective, industry-driven sector skills institutions."

▶ Eng. Fredrick Salukele, Director of TVET, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology, **Tanzania**

"The importance of sector skills bodies within the value chain and ecosystem — ensuring relevance and quality in skills training — lies not only in identifying the workforce needs of industry but also in determining how these gaps are addressed. They perform two critical roles: helping to diagnose the ailment and prescribing the right medication. This publication is highly timely and points exactly in the right direction."

▶ Ousman Sillah, Secretary-General, Sub-Saharan Africa Skills and Apprenticeship Stakeholders Network (**SASASNET**)

Europe

This guide demonstrates why Sector Skills Bodies are critical to the future of work. In an era of rapid technological change, artificial intelligence and accelerating job transformation, countries need an effective mechanism that can anticipate changing skills needs and bring together employers with education and training partners to ensure that the current and future workforce have the skills required.

▶ John Rogers, CEO, The Workforce Development Trust (incorporating Skills for Health, Skills for Justice, People 1st International), **United Kingdom**

Asia and the Pacific

"The success of skills development depends on strong industry ownership and institutional mechanisms that align training with evolving labour market needs. This ILO publication provides an important roadmap for governments, industry associations, and sector skills bodies seeking to create sustainable, demand-driven skilling systems."

- Arindam Lahiri, CEO, Automotive Skills Development Council (ASDC), **India**

"Sector skills bodies are not merely institutions for workforce development — they are strategic engines of economic transformation. By bringing industry, government, and academia onto a common platform, they create future-ready talent ecosystems that drive innovation, productivity, employability, and national competitiveness. In an era defined by rapid technological disruption, the role of agile, industry-led skilling frameworks has become indispensable. This landmark publication by the ILO provides a powerful global blueprint for nations seeking to build resilient, inclusive, and demand-driven skills systems capable of shaping the workforce of the future."

- Dr Mohit Soni, CEO, Media & Entertainment Skills Council, **India**

"The future belongs to those who learn, adapt, and act with purpose. Sector skills bodies play a critical role in shaping future-ready talent ecosystems by aligning workforce capabilities with the evolving needs of industry. By drawing on global best practices rather than reinventing the wheel, we can accelerate capability building, strengthen implementation, and create sustainable impact for employers, workers, and the nation. This publication offers practical insights that support faster learning and adaptation, enabling stakeholders to translate knowledge into action and workforce potential into a powerful driver of shared prosperity."

- Dr Mohd Syukri Sudari, Vice-President, Malaysian Employers Federation, **Malaysia**

"The report highlights a very real and growing challenge: the gap between what the training system delivers and what industry actually needs. It reinforces that simply refining qualifications or increasing provision is not enough; we require a system built around industry demand, with stronger labour market intelligence, clearer sector priorities, and institutions that can translate that into practical outcomes. That is the shift from traditional skills bodies to "next-generation" sector skills organisations.

From a New Zealand perspective, this is directly relevant to the role of Industry Skills Boards. Our job is to make that connection work — bringing together industry, providers, and government to ensure the system is aligned and delivering real value. The opportunity from this report is not to expand scope unnecessarily, but to sharpen our focus through better data, stronger workforce planning, and more disciplined delivery. That is what will build credibility with industry and ensure the system produces people with the skills employers actually need."

- Philip Aldridge, Chief Executive, Energy and Infrastructure Industry Skills Board, **New Zealand**

Arab States

"Having led the work on national skills strategy in Saudi Arabia, I recognize that the central challenge in skills governance is institutionalizing effective coordination between industry, government, and training systems. This publication provides an authoritative and practical framework for countries seeking to build demand-led skills ecosystems that drive productivity and economic transformation."

▶ Ahmed M. Humedi, General Manager of Skills Planning, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

"This document provides a timely and practical roadmap for countries aiming to strengthen employer engagement in skills development. Its vision for next-generation sector skills bodies resonates strongly with Saudi Arabia"s ongoing sectoral efforts to build more demand-driven and future-ready skills systems."

▶ Khalid Al-Shahrani, Senior Adviser to the Deputy Minister, Ministry of Human Resources and Social Development, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia

With appreciation

The authors extend sincere thanks to the leaders of Sector Skills Bodies for their endorsements and their commitment to using and promoting this guide in building stronger, more responsive, and sustainable sector skills systems.

Ashwani Aggarwal
Martin-Christian Kent

Acronyms

AI	Artificial Intelligence
ANZSIC	Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification
CBC	Competency-Based Curricula
CEDSI	Centre of Excellence for Dairy Skills in India
CET	Continuing Education and Training
CETA	Construction Education and Training Authority (South Africa)
CITB	Construction Industry Training Board (United Kingdom)
CoE	Centre of Excellence
CSCS	Construction Skills Certification Scheme (United Kingdom)
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTVET	Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (Ghana)
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (Australia)
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training (South Africa)
DSP	Digital Skills Partnerships (United Kingdom)
EBRD	European Bank for Reconstruction and Development
FSTC	Future Skills Talent Councils (Malaysia)
GSC	Green Skills Committee (Singapore)
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
ILO	International Labour Organization
ISC	Industry Skills Council (Bangladesh)
ISIC	International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities
IWG	Industry Work Groups
JSC	Jobs and Skills Council
LLL	Lifelong Learning
LMI	Labour Market Intelligence
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MQA	Mining Qualifications Authority
MSDE	Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (India)
MSME	Micro, Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
MSSC	Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee
NAQAA	National Accreditation and Quality Assurance Authority
NBTE	National Board for Technical Education (Nigeria)
NCVET	National Council for Vocational Education and Training (India)

NDS	National Development Strategies
NOS	National Occupational Standards
NSDA	National Skills Development Authority (Bangladesh)
NSDC	National Skill Development Corporation (India)
NSQF	National Skills Qualification Framework (India, Nigeria)
NVQF	National Vocational Qualifications Framework
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OS	Occupational Standard
PET	Pre-Employment Training
PPP	Public-Private Partnership
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
SENA	Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (Colombia)
SENAI	Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial (Brazil)
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority (South Africa)
SFw	Sectoral Skills Frameworks
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprises
SSB	Sector Skills Body
SSC	Sector Skills Council
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
STED	Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification
SWMC	Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council (Australia)
TEC	Tertiary Education Commission (New Zealand)
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
TVSDC	Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (Jordan)
WDC	Workforce Development Council (New Zealand)

Executive summary

The context: The urgency of now

The global world of work is navigating a "poly-crisis" driven by converging megatrends: rapid digitalization, the expansion of Artificial Intelligence (AI), the climate transition, and profound demographic shifts. In this volatile context, well-functioning skills systems are essential for productivity, decent work and social justice.

Yet in many countries, a persistent "broken link" exists between education and training systems and the real economy. Policymakers and business leaders face a paradox in which high unemployment coexists with acute skills shortages. While education systems expand, the "wiring" connecting classrooms to workplaces is often frayed. This guide argues that the missing link is not simply more training, but effective, institutionalized mechanisms that engage industry in defining and meeting skills demand.

Why a sectoral approach?

Economic transformation unfolds within sectors – such as automotive, construction, manufacturing, agriculture, care, ICT and tourism – each shaped by distinct technologies and value chains. A sectoral approach enables tailored solutions, faster responses to emerging skills needs, and structured dialogue between stakeholders. Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) leverage industry networks to co-design standards and enrich national frameworks They create agile, industry-led mechanisms aligned with real market demand.

Purpose and rationale

Many countries have established sector-level mechanisms to engage industry in skills development, yet skills mismatches persist, training often remains poorly aligned to labour market needs, and MSMEs struggle to access relevant skills solutions. Common challenges include unclear mandates, fragmented institutional roles, weak governance, unstable funding, limited labour market intelligence and partnership of Industry. As a result, many SSBs exist largely on paper or as short-term projects.

This guide aims to support countries to establish or revitalise SSBs that are strategically embedded in national skills ecosystems, genuinely industry-led, and financially sustainable.

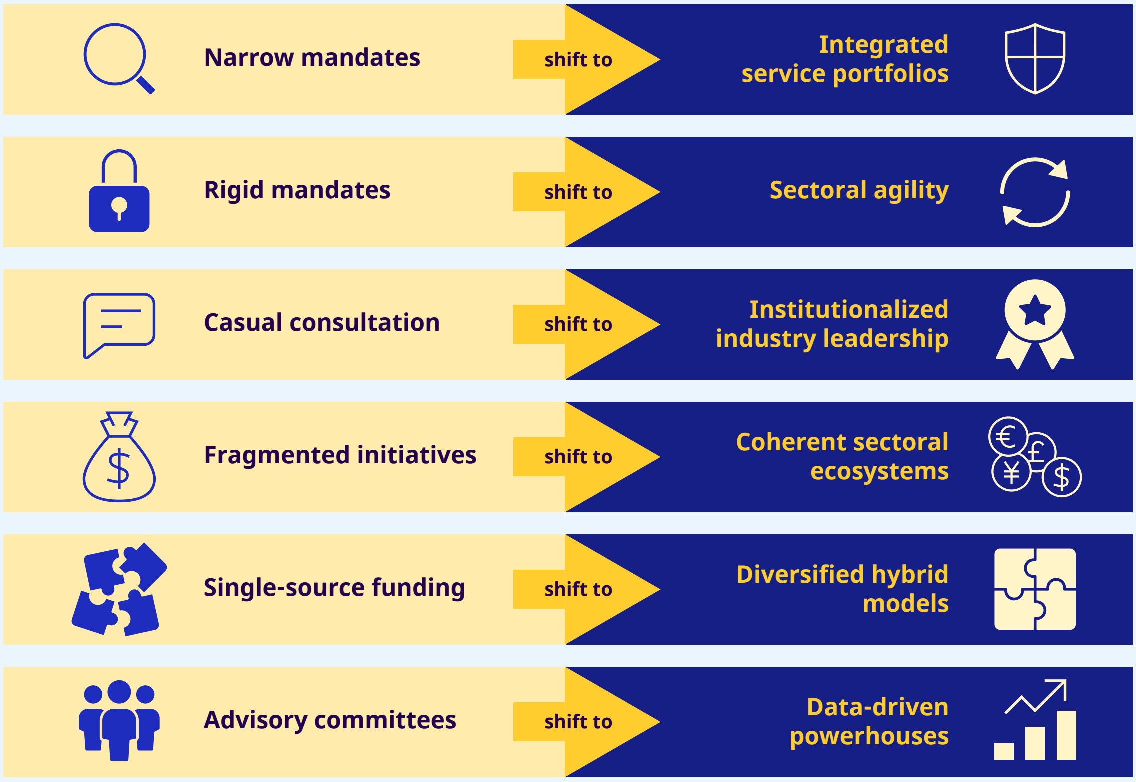
The paradigm shift

The guide calls for a shift from "first generation" Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) to "next generation" SSBs across six dimensions:

- **From narrow mandates to integrated service portfolios:** Transition from a limited focus on skills standards development toward a comprehensive model that integrates high-level skills development with specialized business development services to drive both workforce readiness and enterprise growth.
- **From rigid mandates to sectoral agility:** Replace "one-size-fits-all" approaches with flexible roles tailored to sector and institutional maturity and specific policy priorities.
- **From casual consultation to institutional industry leadership:** Shift from episodic industry dialogue to enduring, multi-stakeholder governance led by Industry.

- **From fragmented initiatives to coherent sectoral ecosystems:** Align isolated initiatives into a unified sectoral strategy that operates within a clear national framework and oversight arrangements.
- **From single-source funding to diversified hybrid models:** Evolve from precarious, single-source funding to resilient hybrid models that blend public investment, employer levies, and earned income.
- From advisory committees to data-driven powerhouses: Transform legacy boards into high-performance, digitally enabled hubs that drive sectoral growth through institutionalized labour market intelligence, evidence-based business development, and a culture of continuous innovation.

▶ Figure 1. Paradigm shift for Next- Generation Sector Skills Bodies



Source: authors' own elaboration.

Strategic value: The Triple Bottom Line

Effective SSBs are not merely administrative structures; they act as catalysts for sustainable development, decent work and social justice. The guide redefines their value through a **Triple Bottom Line**:

1. **Economic:** raising productivity, facilitating technology adoption and innovation, and promoting investment, employment and decent work.
2. **Social:** advancing social justice and cohesion, empowering marginalized groups, promoting equality and inclusion.

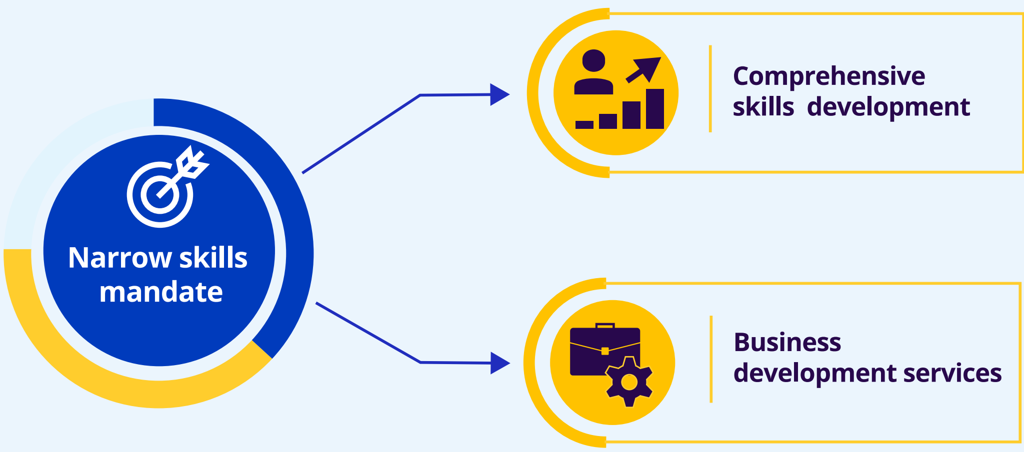
3. **Environmental:** supporting a "Just Transition" by identifying green skills needs and reskilling workers from carbon-intensive sectors.

Roles and responsibilities: Promoting dual mandate

To enhance sustainability and impact, the guide proposes expanding SSB mandates beyond traditional skills standard-setting to include comprehensive skills development and business development services:

- **Skills Development Domain:** Generating labour market intelligence, developing occupational standards and curricula, quality assurance of training delivery, managing training levies, promoting work-based learning, and developing sector skills strategies and providing policy advice.
- **Business Development Domain:** providing productivity advisory services, supporting technology adoption and innovation including AI and green technologies, empowering SMEs and start-ups, strengthening industry capacity for policy influence.

Figure 2. Shifting to a dual skills mandate



Source: authors' own elaboration.

Box 1. The dual-mandate model: A blueprint for SSB Sustainability

Industry engagement in Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) often falters because policy frameworks frequently overlook a core truth: stakeholders require a clear return on their investment of time and financial resources. While the long-term benefits of a skilled workforce are undeniable, the immediate costs of participation often deter private sector partners. To ensure active collaboration, SSBs must transition from a model of "expected contribution" to one of **"mutual value."** By integrating Business Development Services (BDS), SSBs can provide immediate, tangible benefits to enterprises, creating a powerful incentive for industry to engage.

This dual mandate not only secures industry "buy-in" but also addresses the critical issue of institutional sustainability. By offering fee-based business services, SSBs can diversify their funding beyond a reliance on government grants or donor support. This revenue generation leads to greater financial autonomy and long-term self-sustainability.

Ultimately, this evolution creates a **strategic win-win** for government, industry, and the skills ecosystem alike.

Evidence base and audience

The guide synthesizes comparative analysis of SSB models across 18 countries, spanning mature systems such as Australia, South Africa, New Zealand and Singapore, and newer initiatives including Ghana, Jordan, Nigeria, Ethiopia, Kenya and Zambia. Its framework has been shaped by international organizations, national experts and practitioners, and field-tested through training and country pilots.

It targets policymakers and national skills authorities, social partners, industry associations and enterprises, SSBs, training providers, academia and development partners. The eight chapters address the case for change; definitions and value of SSBs; roles and responsibilities; governance; oversight; financing; step-by-step establishment and operation; and cross-cutting challenges and future directions.

Structure of the Guide

The publication provides system-level guidance on the strategic design, establishment and operation of SSBs. It combines policy guidance with practical tools and good practice examples for policymakers and practitioners.

The guide offers a step-by-step roadmap covering:

- **The case for change** and global evidence.
- **Roles and responsibilities** through functional matrices.
- **Governance arrangements** and decision-making structures.
- **Oversight bodies** and accountability mechanisms.
- **Sustainable financing** models and levy systems.
- **Implementing** a practical sequence for establishing and operating resilient SSBs.

Governance arrangements and oversight structures

Governance design is a key determinant of SSB performance and credibility. This guide examines legal status, autonomy, membership, board and committee structures, and secretariat arrangements, illustrating alternative models through country cases. It highlights the importance of tripartite or multi-stakeholder representation for legitimacy, while stressing the need for lean structures that enable timely decision-making and avoid “governance fatigue”.

A dedicated chapter examines oversight bodies and their relationship to SSBs, including ministerial oversight, national skills authorities, and industry bodies, public–private partnerships and multi-layered arrangements. Across models, core oversight functions include registration, strategic coordination, performance monitoring and evaluation, resource allocation, and capacity development. A central theme is balancing SSB autonomy with robust accountability to support innovation while maintaining alignment with public objectives.

Sustainable financing

Recognizing that many SSBs falter due to lack of sustainable funding, the guide analyses typical cost structures and financing options, emphasizing the need to align mandates with realistic budgets. It warns against “mandate inflation” without corresponding resources, which undermines credibility and impact.

The guide maps a spectrum of financing sources, including government funding, employer contributions, levies, donor support and income generation through paid services, often combined in hybrid models. Case examples illustrate how different systems secure predictable resources while maintaining accountability. Key policy messages include diversifying funding sources, ensuring transparency, protecting core functions, and using performance-linked mechanisms to incentivize quality and responsiveness.

Establishing and operating SSBs: a phased roadmap

The guide outlines a phased approach to establishing and operationalizing SSBs: planning and design, institutional setup, and operationalization. Recommended steps include setting up multi-stakeholder steering mechanisms, defining SSB remits and guidelines, securing funding, establishing governance and secretariats, and implementing sector strategies informed by robust labour market intelligence.

The guide stresses the value of piloting and learning, advising countries to start with a limited number of strategic sectors before scaling. Annexes provide practical tools, comparative overviews of SSB models, and illustrative examples of sector skills strategies.

Challenges and success factors

Drawing on international experience, the guide identifies common challenges such as fragmented mandates, funding constraints, uneven industry participation, capacity gaps, weak governance, political interference, and underdeveloped labour market information and monitoring and evaluation systems.

From this diagnosis, it distils critical success factors for next generation SSBs, including:

- clear strategic purpose aligned with national priorities;
- robust legal and governance frameworks;
- strong industry leadership combined with social dialogue;
- sustainable and diversified financing;
- investment in institutional capacity and data systems;
- strategic partnerships;
- phased, learning-oriented implementation; and
- robust monitoring and evaluation.

Future orientation: SSBs as system integrators

Looking ahead, the guide positions SSBs as agile system integrators within national skills ecosystems, linking skills development with productivity, technology adoption, industrial policy, decent work and social justice. It encourages SSBs to embed green and digital skills across qualifications, use data and new technologies for real-time labour market intelligence, and ensure sector strategies reflect the needs of women, youth, older workers, persons with disabilities and SMEs.

For policymakers, the question is no longer whether to engage sector stakeholders in skills development, but how to design institutions that make sectoral leadership effective, legitimate and sustainable. SSBs are not ends in themselves, but strategic tools to make skills systems more responsive, coherent and inclusive.

The time to reimagine and reinvigorate Sector Skills Bodies is now.

Company Manitalia in Durres. The Manifacture Italiana has set up its foundations in Albania since 1995 with a small number of workers and in 2015 had 300 employees, of which 90% women. © Marcel Crozet/ILO.

1 Introduction: Navigating a new skills landscape

1.1. Navigating a new skills landscape: The urgency of now

The global world of work is facing a "poly-crisis" that is fundamentally reshaping labour markets. We are no longer witnessing gradual evolution; we are navigating a convergence of disruptive megatrends – rapid digitalization, the explosion of Artificial Intelligence (AI), urgent climate transitions, and profound demographic shifts.

In this volatile environment, the cost of inaction is rising.

Well-functioning skills systems are essential drivers of employment, productivity, and social justice. Yet, despite their potential, a "broken link" exists between training systems and the real economy in many countries. As highlighted by a joint study from the World Bank, ILO, and UNESCO (Aggarwal et al., 2023), without structured industry engagement, skills systems become disconnected from labour market realities.

This disconnect results in a paradox: high unemployment coexisting with severe talent shortages. Enterprises struggle to find the skills they need to innovate, while individuals – particularly youth and vulnerable groups – face barriers to decent work. To bridge this divide, countries require more than just policy documents; they need institutionalized, industry-led leadership. They need effective Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs).

1.2. Why this Guide? Why now?

While many countries have established SSBs, a significant number struggle to deliver results. Some lack agility, others face funding crises, and many fail to translate dialogue into action and ensuring industry leadership.

This publication addresses this specific inflection point. It recognizes that the global situation has changed rapidly, and what worked few years ago may not work today. This guide moves beyond basic theory to provide a **comprehensive, innovative framework** for the "Next Generation" of SSBs.

It is designed to help stakeholders:

- **Revitalize** existing SSBs that have become dormant or ineffective.
- **Establish** new, resilient SSBs designed for the digital and green era.
- **Operationalize** key functions that deliver measurable value to enterprises and learners.

1.3. Methodology: An evidence-based approach

This guide is not merely theoretical; it is grounded in rigorous research and real-world application. The insights presented here are drawn from a comprehensive evidence base developed over several years:

- **Global Case Studies:** An in-depth analysis of SSB models in **18 diverse countries**, capturing lessons from both mature and emerging systems.
- **Expert Consensus:** Findings were regularly reviewed by members of an Expert Committee comprising of national and international experts, including from global and regional development partners such as the World Bank, OECD, UNESCO, European Training Foundation and Cedefop.
- **Practitioner Feedback:** Insights gathered from focus group discussions, interviews with country specialists, and feedback loops from SKILLS BRIDGE Masterclasses and Global Skills Forum 2025 having focus on SSBs.
- **Training programmes:** Concepts were refined through country-focused training programs, including sessions at the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITC-ILO) in Turin and Rwanda, and African Regional workshop in Ghana which focused on real-world scenario planning.
- **Field Testing:** The concepts and recommendations are piloted in a number of countries including Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia, Ghana, and Nigeria.

1.4. Target audience

This guide serves as a practical roadmap for the diverse stakeholders involved in the skills and enterprise development ecosystem, including:

- Policymakers and Training Authorities
- Social Partners (Employers' and Workers' Organizations)
- Industry Associations and Enterprises
- Sector Skills Bodies
- Training Providers and Academia
- Development Partners

1.5. Structure of the Guide

The document is organized into eight chapters, each addressing a key building block of an effective SSB system:

1. **Introduction:** Context, rationale, methodology, and the case for change.
2. **Understanding SSBs:** Defining the "Next Gen" SSB, its strategic value, and key definitions.
3. **Roles and responsibilities:** Core functions, from Labour Market Intelligence (LMI) to standards development.
4. **Governance arrangements:** Structuring legal status, board composition, and membership models.
5. **Oversight bodies:** Mechanisms for coordination, quality assurance, and accountability.
6. **Funding considerations:** Developing sustainable financing models beyond government grants.
7. **Establishing and operating SSBs:** A step-by-step operational roadmap for implementation.
8. **Challenges and recommendations:** Navigating common pitfalls and success factors for long-term impact.

Worker on a construction site. Orascom Construction Industries (OCI) is a leading construction contractor active in emerging markets. Based in Cairo, it employs more than 40,000 people in over 20 countries. © Marcel Crozet/ILO.

2 Understanding Sector Skills Bodies

This chapter introduces the concept of sector skills bodies (SSBs), examines the rationale for their establishment, and highlights the diversity and classification of SSB models and terminology used internationally.

2.1. What are Sector Skills Bodies?

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) are industry-led organizations that play a pivotal role in aligning skills development with labour market demand within specific economic sectors, thereby promoting productivity, innovation, employability, and decent work.

They provide a structured platform for collaboration among key stakeholders, such as sectoral industry associations, employer and worker organizations, relevant government ministries, and education and training authorities and providers. By fostering collaboration and dialogue, SSBs help address skills mismatches and support workforce development that is responsive to sector-specific needs.

The mandates, organizational structures, and financing mechanisms of SSBs vary considerably across countries, shaped by national contexts and the requirements of each sector. While countries may use varying terminology to describe these entities, this publication collectively refers to them as Sector Skills Bodies and adopts country-specific names when discussing individual cases

▶ **Figure 3 . Examples of national terminology used to describe Sector Skills Bodies**

Source: authors' own elaboration.

Explore!

- The commonly used term internationally for these bodies is "Sector Skills Councils", as in the UK and India. Alternative terminologies include Sector Skills Bodies (Ghana), Sectoral Councils (Qatar), Sector Education and Training Authorities (South Africa), Jobs and Skills Councils (Australia), and Industry Skills Councils (Namibia).
- For a comprehensive overview of the varied terminology used internationally, please see Annex B.

2.2. Why establish Sector Skills Bodies?

Skills and Lifelong Learning (LLL) systems are key drivers of employability, productivity, decent work, and inclusive growth. However, in many countries, these systems face persistent challenges such as outdated curricula, inadequate infrastructure, and ineffective pedagogy. These deficiencies lead to skills mismatches, graduate unemployment, and talent shortages for enterprises.

Global megatrends – including rapid digitalization, artificial intelligence, the green transition, demographic shifts, and migration – are fast-changing labour market needs and intensifying these challenges.

A fundamental cause of these issues is that industry engagement remains fragmented and often ineffective in shaping skills policy. Without institutionalized mechanisms to involve industry in analysing evolving demand and translating it into standards, curricula, and flexible learning opportunities, skills mismatches will continue to widen. Previous attempts to involve industry have often lacked scale, sustainability, and lasting impact.

A solution: Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs)

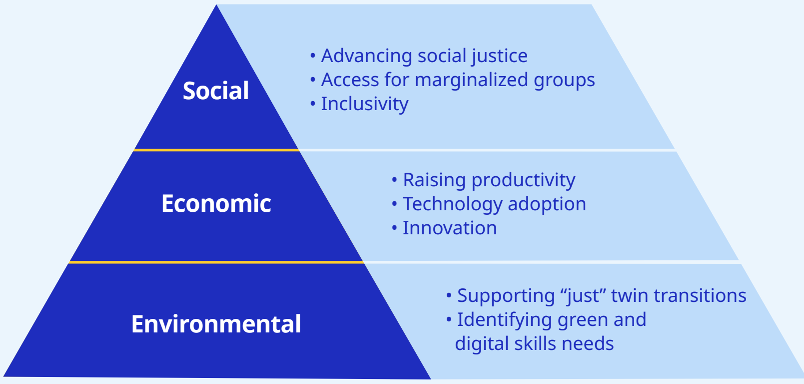
Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) provide a proven mechanism to embed industry leadership and foster effective partnerships at a sectoral level. Engaging industry in this way offers two distinct advantages:

1. **Developing policy coherence** between National Development Strategies (NDS) and skills strategies.
2. **Leveraging existing industry associations** at a sector level to mobilize their members in building partnerships with skills institutions.

Typically, an NDS prioritizes economic sectors where a country has a competitive advantage and where growth can support sustainable development. It is crucial that skills strategies align with these priority sectors. This alignment is best achieved through sectoral approaches that strengthen policy coherence.

Enterprises within a specific sector often share similar skills needs and are usually represented by industry associations. By adopting sectoral approaches, these associations can effectively mobilise their members to collaborate with skills institutions to better anticipate future skills needs, adapt to changes in the labour market, and strengthen their role as platforms that support innovation, inclusive skills development and enhance productivity.

▶ **Figure 4. The strategic impact and role of sector skills bodies**



Source: authors' own elaboration.

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) are not just administrative structures; they are catalysts for sustainable development. By operationalizing the partnership between government, employers, and workers, SSBs align skills development with the **Triple Bottom Line**: driving economic prosperity, ensuring social justice, and accelerating environmental sustainability.

Through this holistic approach, SSBs deliver measurable value across the skills ecosystem, enterprises, the broader society, and for individual learners. The following table summarizes how SSBs benefit key stakeholders *(ILO, 2023; Aggarwal et al., 2023).*

▶ **Table 1.** How sector skills bodies benefit key stakeholders

For the skills eco-system	For enterprises	For society, economy and environment	For individuals
Responsiveness: Training supply aligns fast with market demand, including urgent green and digital shifts.	**Productivity & efficiency:** Skilled workers drive resource efficiency, waste reduction, and circular economy practices.	**Social justice:** Reduces structural inequalities by formally recognizing skills acquired in the informal economy.	**Empowerment:** Overcomes barriers for vulnerable groups (e.g., women, migrants) through targeted interventions.
Equity & inclusion: Democratizes access to training, ensuring curricula and standards are free from bias.	**Innovation:** A diverse, environmentally literate workforce accelerates the adoption of clean technologies.	**Just transition:** Ensures workers in carbon-intensive sectors are reskilled for green jobs, leaving no one behind.	**Future-proofing:** equips learners with "green skills" required for emerging jobs in the low-carbon economy.
Quality assurance: Qualifications are industry-endorsed, standardized, and updated to reflect new environmental regulations.	**Risk mitigation:** Better compliance with evolving safety and environmental standards.	**Sustainability goals:** Accelerates national progress toward **Net Zero** and SDG targets by solving green talent shortages.	**Mobility & wages:** Recognized qualifications facilitate career progression, better wages, and decent work.

Crucially, SSBs play a vital role in advancing **social justice**. By ensuring that quality training opportunities are accessible to marginalized groups – including women, youth, persons with disabilities, and workers in the rural and informal economy – they help dismantle structural barriers to decent work.

Core roles at a glance

To achieve these integrated outcomes, SSBs perform a specific set of strategic functions. While mandates vary by country, the core roles typically include:

1. Identifying skills needs
2. Developing standards, qualifications and programmes
3. Promoting partnerships
4. Advocating and advising
5. Quality assurance and monitoring

Note: The details on roles and responsibilities are discussed in depth in the **next chapter**.

2.2.1. Global endorsement

Recognizing their strategic value, international organizations such as the ILO, OECD, UNESCO, and the World Bank strongly advocate for the establishment of Sector Skills Bodies and have urged their member states to institutionalize SSBs as part of national skills strategies (Aggarwal et al. 2023). Box 1 presents key policy statements from these institutions:

Box 2. Global policy directions on SSBs

- ILO Recommendation concerning Quality Apprenticeships (No. 208) recommends establishing **sectoral or occupational skills bodies** to facilitate the implementation of quality apprenticeships (ILO 2023b).
- ILO *Skills and Lifelong Learning Strategy 2030* suggests providing evidence-based advice on national, subnational, and **sectoral policies**, strategies, and programs to align training with labour market demands (ILO 2023)
- ILO *Recommendation concerning Human Resources Development: Education, Training and Lifelong Learning (No. 195)* states countries should consider international benchmarks when investing in education and training and promote social dialogue and collective bargaining at all levels: international, national, regional, local, sectoral, and enterprise (ILO 2004).
- UNESCO's *Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2022–2029* emphasizes creation of national, regional and **sectoral stakeholder platforms** to facilitate private sector participation and communication between the world of education and the world of work (UNESCO 2022).
- TVET systems can enhance enterprise involvement in governance through mechanisms such as sector skills councils, promoting alignment between education and employment (Aggarwal et al 2023).
- The African Continental TVET Strategy 2025-34 recommends to support the establishment of sector skills bodies in the priority sectors to match the demand for skills with training provision, analyse and anticipate labour market and skill needs, and assess the quality and relevance of training programmes (African Union 2025).

In response, a growing number of countries, including Algeria, Australia, Bangladesh, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Colombia, Egypt, Ethiopia, Ghana, Hungary, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Kenya, Malaysia, Maldives, Namibia, Nigeria, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Singapore, South Africa, the Philippines, and Zambia are establishing or strengthening SSBs.

Thus, the establishment of SSBs is becoming a global policy priority, driven by the recognition that effective skills governance requires structured, sector-based collaboration.

2.3. Diversity in structure and function of SSBs

Across countries, SSBs differ significantly in their mandates, governance arrangements, and financing models. The diversity reflects variations in institutional context, stakeholder engagement, and national policy priorities.

- **Mandate**: While some SSBs concentrate on skills forecasting and standard setting, others assume broader responsibilities that include qualification development, quality assurance, and even the allocation of funding.
- **Governance**: SSB governance structures range from advisory committees to autonomous bodies, led either by government or employers, to tripartite arrangements that balance the interests of government, employers, and workers.
- **Financing**: Funding approaches differ widely, encompassing public financing, industry levies, or hybrid models that combine multiple sources.

Explore!

- For information on the roles and responsibilities of the SSBs, see Chapter 3.
- For information on governance structures of the SSBs, see Chapter 4.
- For information on financing of SSBs, see Section 6.

This diversity is exemplified by Australia and Ghana, having very diverse models. In Australia, Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) operate with a high degree of autonomy, each maintaining its own independent secretariat and governance structure. In contrast, Ghana's SSBs are supported by a centralized secretariat under the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET), which provides administrative and logistical assistance to all sector bodies.

Table 2. Comparative Overview of SSBs of Australia and Ghana

Aspect	Australia: JSCs	Ghana: SSBs
Secretariat Structure	Independent, each JSC manages its own secretariat	Shared, centralized secretariat supporting all SSBs
Governance	Industry-owned and led, with individual boards and committees	Coordinated by Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET), with oversight from a centralized secretariat
Legal Status	Incorporated as not-for-profit companies under the Corporations Act 2001	Established under the auspices of CTVET, not individually incorporated
Core Functions	Workforce planning, training product development, implementation and monitoring, industry stewardship	Curriculum development, skills gap analysis, industry engagement, policy advocacy
Funding and Support	Funded through Department of Employment and Workplace Relations (DEWR) grants, with adherence to an Integrity Framework	Supported by CTVET and international partners (e.g., GIZ, EU, SECO)

Source: (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations n.d.; Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training 2023)

Box 3. Australia: Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs)

A Jobs and Skills Council (JSC) is a not-for-profit, industry-owned and industry-led organization that brings together employers, unions and governments in a tripartite arrangement.

JSCs were established by the Australian Government in 2023, replacing the previous Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) to further strengthen industry voice in the vocational education and training (VET) system

Why JSCs have replaced IRCs?

Strengthening the role of industry and empowering them to drive reforms to Australia's vocational education and training (VET) system is key to ensuring employers and individuals can access the right skills at the right time.

A strong and strategic industry voice in Vocational Education and Training (VET) is essential to drive cross-sector collaboration, tackle workforce challenges, and ensure that qualifications evolve rapidly with industry needs. Strengthening this voice will better align qualifications with in-demand skills, driving productivity and helping more learners secure sustainable employment. It will also elevate VET as a credible and attractive pathway alongside higher education and other tertiary options.

At a time of global economic uncertainty, a reinvigorated VET system can empower individuals to upskill and reskill through training that builds on their existing knowledge and experience, supporting their ability to adapt, remain employable, and thrive in a changing labour market.

JSCs envision to build strong partnerships with Registered Training Organizations (RTOs) to ensure delivery issues are considered early in training product design, and to ensure training and assessment practices meet employer needs.

What are JSCs functions?

JSCs are responsible for the following four core functions:

- Workforce planning: It is the strategic centrepiece for JSCs and informs the other functions. Workforce planning will underpin intelligence-gathering for strategic priorities and will be a critical focus to guide strategic planning.
- Training product development: It requires JSCs to develop training products in line with standards set by Skills Ministers to improve the quality, speed to market and responsiveness of training products.
- Implementation, promotion and monitoring: JSCs will partner with training providers and organizations to align workforce planning objectives and national training products with career advice and training delivery.
- Industry stewardship: JSCs will act as a source of intelligence on workforce issues affecting their industries and provide advice on national training system policies.

JSCs must also maintain strong governance, including employer and union representation on boards and operational committees, to ensure broad industry engagement and accountability.

They are governed by employer and union representatives, and their performance is monitored under a national framework to ensure accountability and continuous improvement. As of 2025, there are 10 JSCs, each aligned with specific industry sectors

Source: (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations n.d.)

▶ 2.4. Key takeaways

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) are strategic platforms that enable industry to play a leading role in shaping the skills ecosystem at the sectoral level. By anchoring skills development in labour market demand, SSBs help build responsive, inclusive, and futureready systems. They are vital for unlocking workforce potential, enhancing productivity, and driving sectoral transformation.

SSBs contribute to national skills systems in the following ways:

- **Align skills with labour market demand**: Ensure training reflects actual industry needs, boosting employability and workforce relevance.
- **Foster inclusive stakeholder collaboration:** Unite employers, workers, educators, and government for coherent and inclusive skills governance.
- **Generate timely labour market intelligence**: Provide data and insights to inform policy, curriculum design, and investment decisions.
- **Drive sectoral transformation and resilience**: Support upskilling and reskilling to adapt to technological, environmental, and economic shifts.
- **Adapt to national and sectoral priorities**: Offer flexible models tailored to country contexts, sector dynamics, and institutional capacities.
- **Boost productivity and innovation**: Equip workers with relevant skills to drive innovation and improve sectoral performance and competitiveness.
- **Advance sustainable development and social justice**: Contribute to promoting decent work, inclusive growth, and broader economic growth.

It is important to emphasize that SSBs are instruments for achieving broader policy objectives – such as improved employment outcomes, enhanced productivity and innovation, and sustainable development – rather than ends in themselves. Their establishment should be guided by a clear assessment of sectoral challenges and by determining whether SSBs, and which specific model, represent the most suitable solution within the national and sectoral context.

▶ 2.5. References

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Visite aux exploitations agricoles bénéficiaires de projets soutenus par l’OIT.
Tunisie. ©Marcel Crozet/ILO.

3 Roles and responsibilities

This chapter explains the key roles and responsibilities of Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) and how these are designed to meet the needs of industries and workers. This chapter highlights common practices and lessons learned from global examples.

3.1. Core roles of Sector Skills Bodies

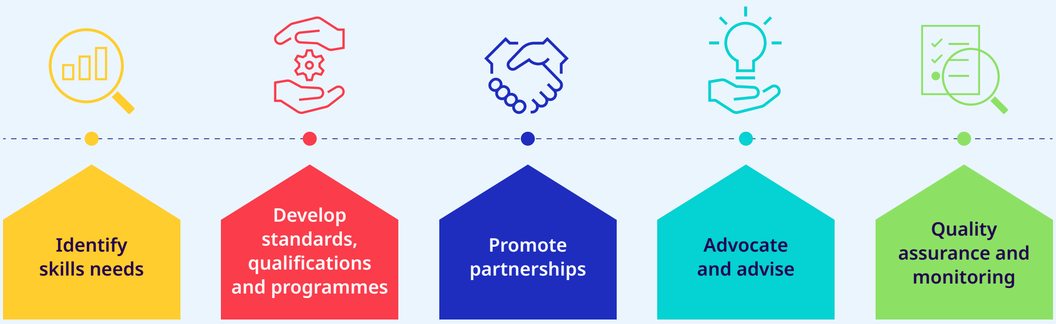
The primary objective of SSBs is to address skills mismatches and promote skills and workforce development within a sector. Their core responsibilities[1] usually include[2]:

1 For More details on how to perform these functions, refer to chapter 7.

2 Based on an analysis of roles of SSBs from countries across the world including 18 country case studies.

1. **Identifying skills needs**: SSBs conduct research to identify current and future skills gaps in their sectors.
2. **Developing standards, qualifications and programmes:** SSBs play a pivotal role in designing and updating occupational standards, qualifications, and curricula that align with industry needs.
3. **Promoting partnerships**: SSBs facilitate collaboration among employers, workers, training providers, government agencies, and other stakeholders to enhance the quality and relevance of training.
4. **Advocating and advising**: SSBs serve as a voice for their sectors, providing policy advice and advocacy for skills development strategies that meet industry needs. They engage with policymakers to influence the design and implementation of education and training policies.
5. **Quality assurance and monitoring**: SSBs are involved in monitoring and evaluating training programs to ensure they meet established standards and effectively address skills gaps. This includes assessing the outcomes of training initiatives and making recommendations for continuous improvement.

▶ **Figure 5. How sector skills bodies benefit key stakeholders**



Source: authors' own elaboration.

Although Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) share a set of core responsibilities, their specific mandates and functions vary across national contexts. In Ghana, for example, SSBs primarily focus on foundational tasks such as conducting skills gap analyses, setting occupational standards, and facilitating industry engagement. But the scope of SSBs in countries such as South Africa, India, Canada, Australia, the Gambia and the UK tend to cover some advanced roles related to coordination and implementation of skills initiatives and programmes. These advanced roles are mentioned in box 3.

Box 4. Countries who have assigned higher level mandate to SSBs

- In South Africa, the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) are entrusted with the administration of funds received through the skills development levy, which is legislated by Government for all companies in South Africa meeting certain criteria.
- The National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) in India plays a central role in quality assurance and the implementation of national skills initiatives.

- In the United Kingdom, Sector Skills Councils support enterprises in enhancing productivity and workforce development.
- In the Gambia, SSCs maintain sector qualifications frameworks and oversee and formalize apprenticeship programmes
- In **Canada**, Sector Councils are responsible for designing sector-specific training programmes that address distinct labour market needs, including the development of digital competencies within the technology sector.
- **Australia**'s Jobs and Skills Councils are tasked with developing training products that are closely aligned with industry requirements, thereby ensuring the continued relevance and responsiveness of vocational education and training.

3.2. Paradigm shift in the mandate for SSBs: Making them sustainable and relevant in the changing world

While most Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) traditionally concentrate on skills development – from foundational to advanced roles – their potential to drive enterprise-level business development remains underutilized. By actively supporting enterprises in areas such as productivity enhancement, innovation, technology development and adoption, and market access, SSBs can become catalysts for sustainable enterprises and economic growth.

This dual focus on inclusive skills and business development will also overcome two critical challenges faced by SSBs: sustainability and engagement of industry. Focusing also on providing business development services to industry will not only deepen enterprise engagement and ownership but also creates a virtuous cycle: stronger businesses are more likely to invest in workforce development, while SSBs benefit from diversified revenue streams and enhanced institutional sustainability. In essence, integrating business development into their mandate allows SSBs to become strategic partners with industry in improving productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of enterprises, specifically SMEs.

To facilitate a clearer understanding of this new mandate, the International Labour Organization (ILO) has developed a functional matrix (table 3). *This matrix is structured around three strategic roles (Advise/advocate, Develop and Manage/ support) for two broad domains (skills development and business development), and detailing the tasks covered under these domains and roles. Each task is further elaborated in the subsequent sections along with country examples to provide clarity on its scope and implementation.*

Figure 6. Shifting to a dual skills mandate

Source: authors' own elaboration.

Table 3. Functional matrix – Potential roles of Sector Skills Bodies[3]

	Skills development (Actions to support skills system in matching skills supply and demand)	**Business development** (Actions to support enterprises in innovation, productivity, competitiveness, and growth)
Advise and advocate	• Advocate the benefits of skills and lifelong learning • Promote role models and champions • Advise on labour market information and skills policy	• Advocate investment in workforce development • Provide advisory services to enterprises
Develop	• Analyse jobs and skills mismatches • Develop occupational standards • Develop qualifications and training programmes	• Drive innovation, technology adoption and digitalization • Develop capacity of industry to influence government policy • Pilot models for collaboration between skills institutions and industry
Manage or support	• Support professional development of teachers, trainers, and assessors • Support gender equality and social inclusion • Support development of quality learning resources and methods • Support career and employment counselling • Maintain sectoral knowledge products' repositories and promote knowledge and resource sharing • Quality assurance of training • Promote quality apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities • Undertake training evaluation and impact assessment • Facilitate development and implementation of sector skills strategy and plans • Administer training levy funds • Manage government and industry skills initiatives • Organize skills conference and competitions	• Empower startups and SMEs • Support upskilling and reskilling initiatives • Facilitate RPL • Support green and sustainable business practices • Facilitate cooperation and knowledge sharing with SSBs in other sectors and countries • Administer license to practice

Example: SENAI, Brazil

The **Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial (SENAI)** (transl. National Service for Industrial Training), established in 1942 at the initiative of Brazil's manufacturing employers, is Latin America's largest provider of technical and vocational education and training (TVET). Each year, it trains over **2 million workers** across 28 industrial sub-sectors.

SENAI operates as a **not-for-profit network of secondary-level professional schools**, maintained by the **National Confederation of Industry (CNI)**. Its mission is to promote industrial development and enhance the competitiveness of Brazilian industry through high-quality education, innovation, and workforce development.

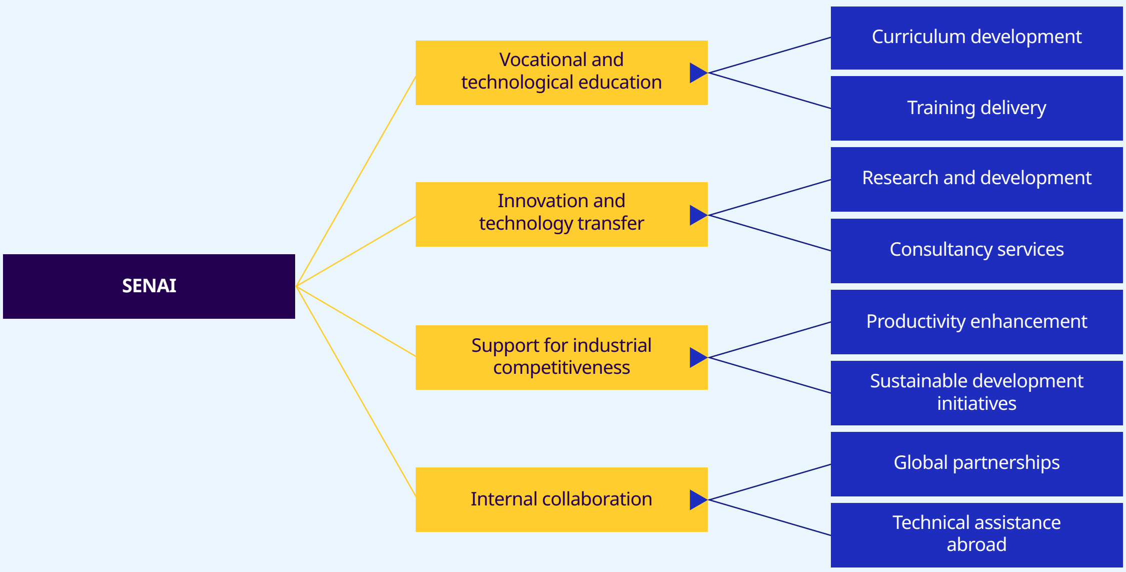
3 Authors designed this matrix, which was reviewed and validated by the expert group.

Key features of the SENAI model

- **Employer-led governance**: SENAI was founded by employers and operates independently of government, under the strategic direction of the CNI.
- **Integrated training delivery**: Unlike most SSBs, SENAI has its own national training infrastructure, enabling direct delivery of TVET and apprenticeships.
- **Innovation ecosystem**: Supports innovation and technological advancement in industry by operating research centres, innovation hubs, and technology transfer initiatives to bridge academia and industry.
- **Sectoral reach**: Supports companies in 28 industrial sub-sectors, including chemistry, mechanics, and construction.
- **Cross-sectoral collaboration**: Works alongside SENAC (services) and SENAR (agriculture) to cover Brazil's broader skills ecosystem.

Figure 7 illustrates extensive roles of SENAI in Brazil. These cover both skills development and business development services (innovation and technology transfer, support for productivity and competitiveness) aspects.

Figure 7. SENAI, Brazil extensive role for both skills and business development



Source: Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial n.d.

For SSBs to perform higher-level tasks, particularly in the domain of "Manage or Support", they require sufficient institutional capacity. As such, they typically need to operate as autonomous bodies rather than as committees, allowing for more agile decision-making, resource management, and stakeholder engagement.

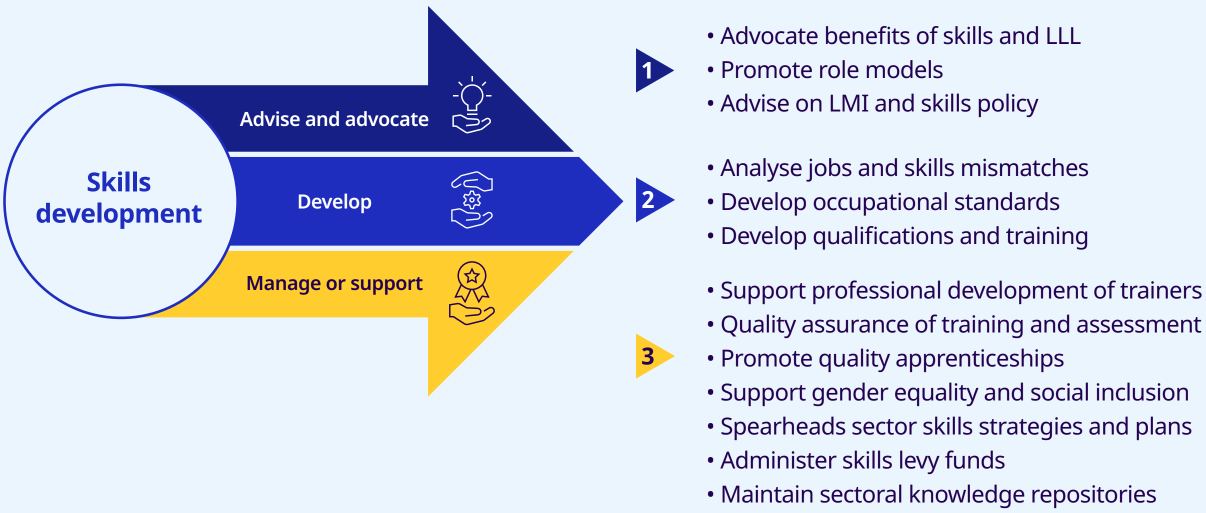
Explore!

- For more information on the autonomous body and committee structures go to section 4.2.

▶ 3.3. Skills development

"This domain covers the roles of Sector Skills Bodies in improving the responsiveness, quality and inclusiveness of the skills system. It includes identifying current and future skills needs, developing occupational standards, qualifications and training programmes, advising on skills policy, supporting trainers and learning resources, promoting apprenticeships and inclusion, assuring training quality, and coordinating sector skills strategies, initiatives and funding, as explained in the following sub-sections."

▶ Figure 8. Skills development framework



Source: authors' own elaboration.

3.3.1. Advise and advocate

3.3.1.1. Advocate the benefits of skills and lifelong learning

SSBs play a pivotal role in promoting the value of skills development and lifelong learning. They do so by encouraging increased investment from governments, industries, and individuals, and by fostering robust public–private partnerships. These efforts contribute to the strengthening of skills development systems, institutions, and programmes, thereby enhancing employability, driving productivity and innovation, promoting social inclusion, and supporting sustainable economic growth.

SSBs advance this agenda by:

- Presenting evidence-based research and case studies that demonstrate the economic and social returns of investing in skills.
- Leading awareness campaigns through mass media, social media, and community engagement initiatives.
- Monitoring and publicizing results through reports, policy briefs, and impact stories to illustrate the value of skills initiatives.

Example

- The UK's "Skills for Scotland" strategy underscores the importance of lifelong learning to cultivate a flexible and skilled workforce. Sector Skills Councils contribute by identifying sector-specific skill gaps and advocating for relevant training programs, thereby improving both employability and productivity (Scottish Government 2007).

3.3.1.2. Promote role models and champions

To boost participation across diverse sectors, SSBs often highlight role models and champions who exemplify excellence, inclusion, and leadership in their fields. These individuals, often referred to as Skills Ambassadors, inspire career interest and foster positive perceptions of vocational pathways.

By promoting success stories and enabling mentorship opportunities, SSBs aim to dismantle stereotypes and cultivate a more inclusive workforce.

For instance, the UK Resource Centre (UKRC) has promoted gender equality in science, engineering, and technology by showcasing accomplished women professionals. Such campaigns play a key role in attracting underrepresented groups and promoting diversity in high-skill industries (UKRC n.d.). (UK Parliament 2010)

Box 5. Leverage global initiatives: WorldSkills Ambassadors

SSBs can enhance the visibility and appeal of vocational careers by aligning with global initiatives such as the WorldSkills Ambassador Programme. This programme engages former WorldSkills competitors, trainers, and industry leaders who serve as role models and advocates for skills excellence. These ambassadors share personal success stories through schools, skills competitions, media campaigns, and policy dialogues, helping to change public perceptions about vocational education and encourage youth participation in technical careers.

SSBs can collaborate with WorldSkills ambassadors to conduct outreach, represent the sector at national and international events, and mentor aspiring professionals. Such initiatives help build a culture of excellence, inspire future talent, and promote greater employer and community engagement in skills development (WorldSkills International n.d.).

3.3.1.3. Advise on labour market information and skills policy

SSBs provide evidence-based advice to policymakers, social partners, industry stakeholders, education and training authorities, and other stakeholders based on sector-specific labour market intelligence. This includes analysis of job trends, emerging skills demands, and mismatches. SSBs help shape responsive policies and strategies to strengthen sectoral skills ecosystems and align training with evolving labour market needs.

Examples

- **ECO Canada (environmental industry)**: Produces labour market forecasts and skills gap analyses to guide workforce development and align post-secondary programmes with employer requirements (ECO Canada n.d.).
- **Australia's Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs)**: Advise the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations on national training policies, integrate workforce planning with career guidance, and ensure training delivery meets sector-specific labour market demands (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations n.d.).

Box 6. New Zealand- Workforce Development Councils (WDCs)

1. Origin and reform context

- Established in 2021, replacing **Industry Training Organizations (ITOs)** which had been in operation since 1992.
- Part of broader **TVET reforms** aimed at unifying **work-based** and **classroom-based** training under a consistent framework.
- **Legislation**: Enacted in 2019, came into effect on **11 June 2021**.

2. Transition from ITOs

- ITOs were **industry-led**, partly **privately funded**, and responsible for both **standard setting** and **training delivery**.
- The new model of WDCs separates **standard setting** (WDCs) from **training delivery** roles (e.g., Te Pūkenga, PTEs, wānanga).

3. Structure and governance

- **Six WDCs** established, replacing **11 ITOs**.
- WDCs are **public bodies**, reporting to the **Ministry of Education**.
- Members may be **appointed by the Minister**.
- All WDCs are **co-located** to reduce costs and foster collaboration.
- Each WDC includes:

  – An employer council

  – A secretariat for technical and operational support

4. Core functions

1. **Strategic skills planning**: Identify current and emerging industry skills needs and translate them into actionable requirements for the TVET system.
2. **Standards and qualifications**: Set standards, develop qualifications, shape curricula, and moderate assessments.
3. **Programme endorsement**: Endorse training programmes (work-based, on-campus, online) for New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) approval.
4. **Investment advice**: Advise the **Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)** on funding priorities.

5. System integration

- WDCs work closely with:

  – Te Pūkenga (national institute formed by merging 16 polytechnics)

  – Private Training Establishments (PTEs)

  – Wānanga (publicly-owned Māori tertiary institutions)

From 1 January 2026, New Zealand is replacing WDCs with Industry Skills Boards as part of the redesign of the vocational education and training system, aimed at restoring stronger regional decision making and increasing industry influence in standards setting, workforce planning and work-based learning. This package of reforms also includes the replacement of Te Pūkenga with a network of regionally led polytechnics, to better align provision with local employer and learner needs.

Source: (Tertiary Education Commission (New Zealand) n.d., Education and Training Amendment Bill 2025, Ministry of Education 2025).

3.3.2. Develop

3.3.2.1. Analyse jobs and skills mismatches

SSBs play a critical role in analysing labour market trends to identify current and future skills demands and mismatches within their respective sectors. By assessing demand, pinpointing shortages, and forecasting emerging trends, SSBs inform skills strategies and support alignment between training provision and industry needs.

Key functions include:

- Identifying current and emerging skills demands;
- Highlighting skills mismatches and shortages that impact sectoral growth;
- Forecasting occupational trends to guide training and education policy;
- Producing targeted research on specific sector issues, such as digital or green transitions, as seen in Canada's HR Development Councils (Public Services and Procurement Canada n.d.) and the UK's former Sector Skills Councils (The National Archives n.d.).

Examples

- In **South Africa**, Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) compile data from employers' workplace skills plans, training reports and other research. This data informs the Sector Skills Plans and National South African Occupations in High Demand Report, guiding fund allocation and immigration policy. (National Government of South Africa n.d.)
- In **India**, SSCs use data from a cross-sector portal managed by the National Skills Development Corporation to monitor trends and respond to changing sectoral needs. (National Skill Development Corporation n.d.)
- In **Serbia**, SSCs identify occupational changes and recommend adjustments to vocational training programmes to reflect evolving labour market conditions. ((National Occupational and Skills Council n.d.)
- In **Hungary**, Sectoral Skills Councils were established to address skills gaps and shortages. These councils link business and education, ensuring that vocational training reflects employer needs and enhances workforce relevance (CEDEFOP 2018).

Explore!

- For more information on the sector skills anticipation study go to chapter 9.

Box 7. Sector Skills Councils in Jordan

In 2017, with support from the ILO, the Jordanian Government initiated the development of **Sector Skills Councils (SSCs)** to enhance industry participation in the design and delivery of technical and vocational education and training (TVET). The aim was to better align training with labour market needs.

Early pilots were supported by the **European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD)**, **GIZ**, and the **ILO**, each working with sector partners to establish SSCs. From the outset, these organizations collaborated with the government to ensure a harmonized approach to SSC structures and Terms of Reference.

Legal framework and institutionalization

The **Technical and Vocational Skills Development Law No. (9) / 2019** formally introduced SSCs. This was followed by a **2023 bylaw** that clearly defined their roles, responsibilities, and governance, ensuring consistency across all SSCs and granting them formal recognition for the first time.

Roles and responsibilities of SSCs

Under the 2023 bylaw, SSCs are mandated to:

1. Propose sectoral policy directions for approval by the national council.
2. Identify priority skills and training needs.
3. Define requirements for implementing TVET programmes.
4. Evaluate sectoral training policies and recommend new specializations.
5. Develop and review professional and technical assessments.
6. Conduct sector-specific research and skills studies.
7. Collect and manage relevant data and documentation.
8. Engage experts to support research and advisory functions.
9. Establish technical committees to support specific tasks.

Structure and oversight

- **Composition**: SSCs are structured as committees comprizing private sector representatives, employee organizations, and the relevant ministry.
- **Governance**: SSCs are overseen by the **Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TVSDC)**, a tripartite body established in 2019 under Article 31 of the Constitution and Law No. (9) / 2019.

Until the legal framework was finalized, SSCs operated with **shadow boards**. While now formally recognized, many SSCs still rely on **donor funding** and lack the resources to establish dedicated secretariats, limiting their operational capacity.

Key takeaway

Jordan's SSC model demonstrates a strong legal and institutional foundation for sectoral skills governance. However, **sustainable financing and operational capacity** remain critical challenges for scaling and institutional effectiveness.

Source: (ILO 2018)

3.3.2.2. Develop occupational standards

SSBs are instrumental in developing occupational standards that define the competencies required for specific job roles within a sector. These standards underpin the design of qualifications, curricula, and assessment methods, ensuring that training is both consistent and aligned with real-world job requirements

The development of occupational standards process involves collaboration among employers, workers, and training providers to ensure that practical knowledge and skills are well represented.

For example, in **Nigeria**, the National Board for Technical Education (NBTE) works with SSBs to develop National Occupational Standards (NOS), which serve as a foundation for curriculum and assessment design (NBTE 2024). Increasing, many SSBs adapting existing NOS from other countries to their context to speed up the process and respond faster to labour market needs.

3.3.2.3. Develop qualifications and training programmes

Based on occupational standards, SSBs may also support the development of qualifications and training programmes. By embedding occupational standards into qualifications and curricula, SSBs help ensure that training remains relevant and aligned with evolving industry practices. However, this is not a core function of SSBs in all countries, some entrust it to separate qualifications or curriculum authorities. In several countries, SSBs initiated this role but later transitioned it to other institutions as systems matured.

Examples

- In **India**, SSCs under the guidance of National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET) align sector-specific qualifications with the National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF). (National Skill Development Corporation n.d.)
- In the **UK**, the Construction Industry Training Board (CITB) partners with employers and training institutions to create curricula that reflect modern techniques and safety standards, strengthening the employability of construction graduates (CITB 2023).

Box 8. Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) – Nigeria

1. Origin and purpose

- **Introduced**: 2013 as part of the policy to establish:
  - National Vocational Qualifications Framework (NVQF)
  - National Skills Qualification Framework (NSQF)
- **Objective**: Build a competent technical workforce to support economic growth and reduce youth unemployment.

2. Institutional framework

- **National Skills Council** created to oversee the system.
- SSCs established gradually, with a notable wave in **2020**.
- **Awarding bodies** and **TVET institutions** also play defined roles under the legislation.

3. Challenges

- **Slow implementation** due to:
  – Limited financial resources
  – Delayed acceptance and operationalization of the qualification framework
- **Only 3 of 14 SSCs** have produced significant outputs (mainly **national occupational standards**)

4. Governance and formation

- Sectors were **approached by government** to form SSCs.
- Provided with **guidance on board composition**.
- SSCs are intended to:
  – Involve employers in curriculum and qualification development
  – Develop **national occupational standards** to inform training

5. Strategic shifts

- Emphasis on **dual certification**: Encouraging higher education students to also pursue **TVET qualifications**
- Reflects a broader shift in positioning **TVET as a core pillar** of national development

Source: National Board for Technical Education (NBTE), 2024

3.3.3. Manage or support

3.3.3.1. Support professional development of teachers, trainers and assessors

SSBs can play a crucial intermediary role between industry and the Skills and Lifelong Learning system by strengthening the capacity of teachers, trainers, and assessors. Their support typically includes:

- **Workplace Immersion**: Organizing periodic work placements to ensure instructors maintain up-to-date, practical skills and insights into current industry practices.
- **Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)**: Coordinating RPL assessments and delivering targeted upskilling programmes to fill identified competency gaps.
- **Targeted Training Programmes**: Designing and delivering short courses or workshops on emerging technologies, sectoral innovations, and pedagogical best practices.
- **International Partnerships**: Facilitating study visits and collaborative projects with overseas institutes to expose trainers to global standards and teaching methods.

By investing in continuous professional development, SSBs enhance the quality, relevance, and responsiveness of Skills and LLL delivery, while deepening engagement between educators and sector stakeholders.

Example: Ghana's Tourism and Hospitality Sector Skills Body (SSB) has organized periodic industrial placements for Skills and LLL educators, enabling them to gain updated industry experience and enhance their teaching methodologies) (ILO 2020).

Box 9. Hungary's Sector Skills Councils (SSCs): Strengthening VET through Employer-Led Governance

1. Background and rationale

- Hungary created Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) in 2017 as multi-stakeholder bodies where employers hold a majority share.
- The aim was to make vocational education and training (VET) more responsive to labour market needs.
- Enabled by Parliament's Act CXCII/2017 and Government Decree 213/2018, SSCs were formally established in July 2018.
- The reform was part of a broader VET strategy launched in 2015 to improve attractiveness, quality, and relevance of VET and apprenticeships.

2. Objectives

1. Align VET curricula and standards with evolving sectoral skill needs.
2. Anticipate and close skill gaps and shortages.
3. Reduce fragmentation and overspecialization in the National Qualifications Register (HuQR).
4. Support teacher upskilling and integration of learning outcome-based qualifications.

3. Governance and stakeholders

- **Composition**: At least 51% of each council's members are economic stakeholders from the same sector.
- **Initial rollout**: 13 councils were formed, covering sectors such as engineering, tourism & catering, commerce, and IT.
- Oversight and coordination: Hungarian Chamber of Commerce & Industry and Hungarian Chamber for Agriculture act as secretariats.

4. Outputs and early results

- **Slimmer qualification offer**: The number of formal VET qualifications was reduced and clarified, improving transparency.
- **Standards-based curricula**: Over 475 outcome-based programme requirements validated, with SSCs acting as quality gatekeepers.
- **Employer-driven skills intelligence**: Regular sectoral analyses feed into national VET strategies and the new Register of Vocational Occupations (Szakmajegyzék).
- **Digital competence integration:** SSC-led taskforce mapped DigComp levels into occupation standards.
- **Resilience during COVID-19**: Online meetings ensured uninterrupted qualification and curriculum updates in 2020–21.

5. Lessons learned

1. Majority employer representation secures buy-in and keeps curricula market-relevant.
2. Phased rollout (design → approval → implementation) allowed early correction of overspecialization in HuQR.
3. Central chamber coordination provides administrative strength while retaining sector-specific autonomy.

4. Embedding skills anticipation and digital competence work within SSCs mainstreams forward-looking content.
5. Crisis-proof governance (virtual meetings, digital platforms) can maintain momentum in adverse conditions.

6. Transferability

Countries seeking to modernize VET can adapt Hungary's SSC model by:

- Legislating for councils where employers hold ≥ 50% voting power.
- Linking council recommendations directly to qualification register updates.
- Tasking councils with skills intelligence and teacher training mandates, not just curriculum design.
- Funding a digital platform for proposals and stakeholder feedback to ensure transparency and scalability.

Source: Cedefop. Sector skills councils (SSCs) – Hungary. Available at: https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/print/pdf/node/153611

3.3.3.2. Support development of quality learning resources and innovative methods

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) enhance quality of training by supporting the creation of innovative learning materials and methods. Their contributions include:

- **Learning resource development**: Sponsoring the production of sector-specific textbooks, case studies, e-learning modules, and multimedia guides.
- **Methodological innovation**: Piloting and scaling novel teaching approaches, such as simulation tools, blended learning platforms, and scenario-based exercises, to reinforce practical skills.
- **Technology-enhanced learning**: Integrating virtual and augmented reality (VR/AR) for immersive workplace simulations, micro-learning apps for just-in-time skill refreshers, and AI-driven adaptive learning systems that personalize content to individual learner needs.
- **Collaborative learning projects**: Facilitating industry-academic hackathons, maker-space workshops, and real-world project placements in collaboration with employers to bridge theory and practice.
- **Peer-to-peer and mentor networks**: Establishing online communities of practice.

Examples

- In the **Czech Republic**, SSBs worked with industry partners to develop vocational qualification standards and associated learning resources. The Electrical Engineering Council designed 23 national qualifications complete with tailored curricula and assessment guides, aligning technical training with precise job roles. (National Register of Qualifications (Czech Republic) n.d.)
- In **Singapore**, the Infocomm Media Development Authority's sector council introduced VR-based simulations for cybersecurity training, enabling learners to practice threat-response scenarios in a risk-free virtual environment (Infocomm Media Development Authority n.d.).
- In **India**, SSCs collaborate with the National Instructional Media Institute (NIMI) to develop instructional materials and teacher guides. (ILO 2019)

Box 10. Singapore's industry work groups (IWGS): a data-driven approach to skills mapping

A key challenge for Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) is ensuring that training programmes and skills standards remain relevant in fast-evolving industries. Singapore's Industry Work Groups (IWGs) offer a structured, government-led model for skills mapping, sector-specific training, and labour market forecasting.

Established in 2016 under the **SkillsFuture** initiative, IWGs support the development and continuous updating of **Sectoral Skills Frameworks (SFw)** across 35 industries, ensuring workforce planning keeps pace with technological change and industry demand.

Key features of the IWG Model

- **Sectoral Skills Frameworks (SFw)**: IWGs develop structured skills maps for each sector, detailing job roles, required competencies, and training pathways.
- **Continuous industry engagement**: IWGs collaborate with employers, sector agencies, and training providers to ensure training remains aligned with evolving needs.
- **Pre-Employment and Continuing Education (PET & CET)**: SFws guide both initial training and lifelong learning programmes.
- **Sector-specific adaptability**: IWGs tailor their approach – engaging large firms directly and reaching SMEs through chambers of commerce.
- **Integration of green and digital skills**: Emerging areas like sustainability and digital transformation are embedded in sectoral training plans.

How IWGs ensure skills relevance

Unlike traditional SSBs that focus primarily on occupational standards, IWGs emphasize **real-time skills forecasting** and **rapid curriculum adaptation**. For example:

- The **advanced manufacturing IWG** partners with global firms to embed Industry 4.0 skills into training programmes.
- The **Green Skills Committee (GSC)** identifies emerging green job roles and ensures training supports transitions into sustainability-focused careers.

Lessons for other countries

Singapore's IWG model demonstrates how **government leadership**, **employer collaboration**, and **data-driven planning** can create agile, future-ready workforce systems. It offers valuable insights for countries aiming to strengthen sectoral skills governance and improve training responsiveness.

Source: (SkillsFuture Singapore. n.d.)

3.3.3.3. Support gender equality and social inclusion in skills development

SSBs promote social inclusion by embedding gender and diversity targets within their mandates, setting outreach goals for underrepresented groups, and championing leadership opportunities for women, youth, and persons with disabilities. Key actions include:

- **Targets**: Establishing clear objectives for the participation of women, youth, disadvantaged groups, and persons with disabilities in skills programmes.
- **Outreach campaigns**: Partnering with community organizations and leveraging media to raise awareness of training opportunities among underrepresented populations.

- **Leadership development**: Encouraging and supporting women's leadership within sector governance and training roles.
- **Accessible training**: Adapting curricula, facilities, and delivery methods to remove barriers for learners with diverse needs.

Example

- In India, the Federation of Indian Women Entrepreneurs (FIWE), in collaboration with the Ministry of Tourism, delivers specialized skill development and certification programmes for women in hospitality and tourism, directly increasing female participation and career progression in the sector (FIWE, 2024).

3.3.3.4. Support career guidance services

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) can provide career guidance and counselling within their respective sectors. Drawing on labour market intelligence, SSBs offer accurate and timely information about employment opportunities, skill requirements, and career pathways. They may also collaborate or operate dedicated career centres, helplines, or digital platforms that connect individuals to guidance services, job-matching tools, and resources about vocational education and training (VET) options. Their work not only promotes informed choices but also strengthens the visibility and attractiveness of careers in key sectors.

Example

- In **Poland**, the newly established Sectoral Skills Centres (centra umiejętności) are explicitly mandated to provide counselling and career-support services as part of their sector programmes. These centres offer remote learning platforms, organize sector-specific training, and promote VET careers. Their integrated approach includes tailored career advice, thereby linking learners directly with current labour market needs (Cedefop & ReferNet 2025).

3.3.3.5. Quality assurance of training delivery and assessment

SSBs set and enforce standards for training quality. They may develop assessment criteria, authorize certification bodies, and audit or accredit providers to ensure they meet standards.

Example

- In India, the Banking, Financial Services and Insurance Sector Skill Council (BFSI SSC) undertakes accreditation of training service providers to ensure that only skilled, competent centres deliver BFSI training (BFSI SSC n.d.).

3.3.3.6. Promote quality apprenticeships and other work-based learning opportunities

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) play a central role in the design and promotion of high-quality work-based training, including apprenticeships. Their contributions typically encompass the following functions:

- **Advocacy and promotion**: SSBs lead awareness campaigns and disseminate employer case studies to highlight the benefits of apprenticeship training.
- **Employer engagement**: They identify and collaborate with businesses to host apprentices and facilitate access to government incentives.
- **Learner support**: SSBs provide practical guidance to prospective apprentices, including information on available opportunities and pathways for career progression.

Example

▷ In **New Zealand**, Industry Training Organizations, acting as sector skills bodies, proactively promote apprenticeships to young people, offering advice and guidance as well as acting as brokers for the financial incentives offered by government to employers. (Te Pūkenga n.d.)

Box 11. Sector Skill Councils (SSCs) in India – Overview

1. Origin and evolution

- **2009**: SSCs were introduced under the **National Skill Development Policy**, alongside the creation of the **National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC)**.
- **2014**: The **Skill India Mission** was launched, emphasizing industry engagement and training quality.
- **2016**: SSCs were consolidated from **40 to 36** under **Skill India 2.0**, aiming to enhance workforce employability.

2. Governance and structure

- SSCs are **not-for-profit**, standalone bodies licensed by the **NSDC**.
- Governed by a **Board of Directors** including:
  - Key employers
  - Worker representatives
  - Relevant ministries
- **NSDC** retains oversight powers, including the authority to remove the **Chairperson** and **CEO** if performance standards are not met.

3. Institutional roles

- SSCs and NSDC: Responsible for **short-term training**.
- **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**: Oversees broader **TVET** (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) provision.

4. Mandated functions of SSCs

- Identify skill development needs.
- Develop sectoral skill plans and maintain skill inventories.
- Define competency standards and qualifications.
- Conduct assessments and certifications.
- Set norms for affiliation, accreditation, and examinations.
- Train trainers and assessors.
- Promote **academies of excellence**.
- Ensure **decent employment** for trained individuals.
- Promote **social inclusion** and **apprenticeships**.
- Benchmark skills to **international standards**.
- Accredit training institutes.

Source: National Skill Development Corporation. Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). https://nsdcindia.org/sector-skill-councils

3.3.3.7. Undertake training evaluation and impact assessment

SSBs assess the performance and outcomes of skills programmes to ensure value for learners, employers, and funders. Their evaluation activities typically include:

- **Outcome Tracking**: Gathering data on graduate employment rates, employer satisfaction, and income changes.
- **Impact Studies**: Conducting formal assessments to measure skills acquisition and economic benefits.
- **Continuous Improvement**: Using evaluation findings to refine programme design, delivery methods, and resource allocation.

Example

- The Skill Council for the Mining Sector (SCMS) in **India** conducted an impact assessment of a joint industry training initiative, revealing that 92 percent of participants reported significant upskilling and 89 percent experienced higher incomes post-training. (Skill Council for Mining Sector 2023)

3.3.3.8. Facilitate development and implementation of sector skills strategies and plans

A core function of a Sector Skills Body (SSB) is to develop a comprehensive Sector Skills Strategy or Workforce Development Plan at the outset of its mandate. Doing so enables the SSB to:

- **Mobilize Key Partners**: Engage employers, industry associations, and other social partners around a shared vision for skills development.
- **Align the Skills and LLL Ecosystem**: Bring together stakeholders, from training providers to government agencies, to ensure coherent support across the vocational education and training system.
- **Set Clear Priorities**: Identify and sequence the most urgent sectoral skill needs, creating an actionable roadmap for addressing gaps and emerging challenges.

By front-loading this strategic planning process, an SSB not only secures buy-in from its sector but also establishes a structured action plan to guide all subsequent activities.

Examples

- In **Ghana**, Sector Skills Bodies, collaborated with the Council for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (COTVET) to develop and roll out sector skills strategies in construction, agriculture, and tourism and hospitality) (ILO 2020).
- In **South Africa**, the Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA) employs labour market forecasting to anticipate future skill shortages in mining, crafting sector skills strategic plans that guide training provision and safeguard sector sustainability (MQA 2019).

Explore!

- For more information on the developing sector skills strategy, go to section 7.5.1.

3.3.3.9. Administer skills levy funds

In some systems, SSBs manage dedicated training levies or funds. They allocate government or levy-collected budgets to approved training activities in their sector.

Example

- In South Africa, its Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), functioning as SSBs, are financed by a 1% payroll levy on all employers who have a payroll above R500 000 per annum. Each SETA receives a major portion (80%) of its sector's levy to fund education and training, disbursed as mandatory grants for approved employer training plans, and discretionary grants targeting levy-paying Employers and small or non-levy employers. (CHIETA 2017; TETA n.d.)

Explore!

- For more information on levy funding go to section 5.3.
- For more information on how the Sector Education and Training Authority engages with the levy go to chapter 6.3.2.

3.3.3.10. Manage government and industry skills initiatives

SSBs often serve as intermediaries for public training schemes. Governments may contract SSBs to roll out sector-specific programmes.

Examples

- In the **UK**, SSBs established National Skills Academies in priority industries; the Retail Skills Academy identified and accredited training centres nationwide to deliver a common curriculum under one brand. (BIS 2009)
- In **Australia**, the now-superseded Industry Skills Councils helped administer the National Workforce Development Fund (2011–2016), playing a key role in programme administration and assisting firms to plan and access training. (Federal Financial Relations 2021)

3.3.3.11. Maintain sectoral knowledge products' repositories and promote knowledge and resource sharing

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) play a crucial role in knowledge and resource sharing by maintaining comprehensive and up-to-date repositories of sector-specific knowledge products. These may include occupational standards, curricula, learning materials, assessment standards, and tools. Such repositories serve as valuable resources for qualification authorities, awarding organizations, and training providers, enabling them to align content, delivery, and assessment with industry needs, reducing development time and cost.

In addition to developing and maintaining these resources, SSBs can act as facilitators of collaboration across the training ecosystem. They build networks of training institutions, trainers, and assessors to foster peer learning and exchange of good practices. By organizing inter-institutional forums, thematic workshops, and online platforms, they encourage resource sharing and continuous improvement in training delivery.

3.3.3.12. Organize skills conferences and competitions

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) elevate the profile and professionalism of their industries by organizing events such as industry summits, skills fairs, and competitions. These activities showcase talent, foster healthy competition, and strengthen links between training providers, employers, and learners.

- **National and Regional Skills Contests**: Many SSBs coordinate competitions aligned with WorldSkills or similar platforms to benchmark performance against international standards.
- **Industry Showcases**: Summits and fairs bring together stakeholders to explore innovations, share best practices, and promote career opportunities.

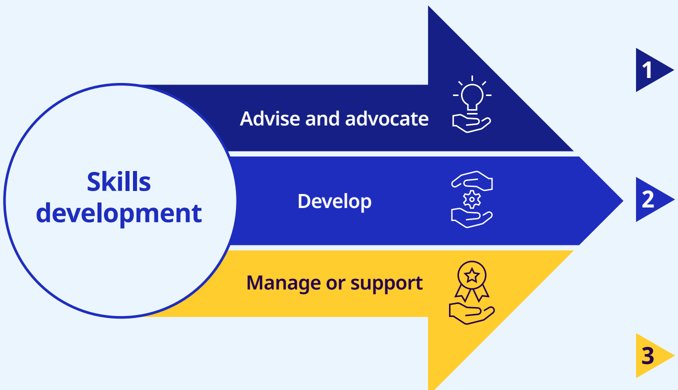
Example

- India's **Tourism and Hospitality Skill Council (THSC)** actively supports its apprentices and trainees in WorldSkills competitions. In 2024, THSC-backed competitors secured medals in hotel reception, patisserie, and cookery, achievements the council highlights to inspire students and engage industry partners (Food & Beverage News 2025).

3.4. Business development

This domain extends the role of Sector Skills Bodies beyond training to supporting enterprise productivity, competitiveness, innovation and sustainable growth. It includes providing advisory services, encouraging investment in workforce development, supporting technology adoption and digitalisation, strengthening collaboration between enterprises and skills institutions, empowering start-ups and SMEs, promoting upskilling, reskilling, RPL and green practices, and facilitating knowledge exchange and licensing arrangements, as explained in the following sub-sections.

Figure 9. Business development framework



1.
- Advocate benefits of skills and LLL
- Promote role models
- Advise on LMI and skills policy

2.
- Analyse jobs and skills mismatches
- Develop occupational standards
- Develop qualifications and training

3.
- Support professional development of trainers
- Quality assurance of training and assessment
- Promote quality apprenticeships
- Support gender equality and social inclusion
- Spearheads sector skills strategies and plans
- Administer skills levy funds
- Maintain sectoral knowledge repositories

Source: authors' own elaboration.

3.4.1. Advice and advocate

3.4.1.1. Provide advisory services to enterprises

SSBs serve as expert consultants to enterprises, analysing labour market trends and advising on training plans, technology adoption, productivity improvements, and innovation. They produce sector reports, benchmarking studies, and organize roundtables to guide companies.

Example

- In **New Zealand**, Workforce Development Councils (WDCs), which have replaced Industry Training Organizations, are mandated to advise industry and government on skills investment. They maintain a strategic view of future skills needs and provide advice on vocational investment, determining the appropriate mix of skills and training for their sectors. WDCs also offer employers brokerage and advisory services regarding workforce development (Tertiary Education Commission 2024).

3.4.1.2. Promote investment in workforce development

SSBs encourage employers to invest in training by demonstrating the benefits and returns on such investments. They disseminate evidence indicating that skilled workforces enhance productivity, innovation, and competitiveness. By articulating the business case for skills, SSBs aim to increase corporate training budgets.

Example: The **British Council** finds that companies investing in workforce development not only close critical skills gaps but also gain diverse perspectives, improve employee retention, and attract top talent. By sharing these insights, SSBs encourage firms to prioritize and increase funding for employee learning and development. (British Council 2023)

3.4.2. Develop

3.4.2.1. Drive innovation and technology adoption in enterprises

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) play a pivotal role in helping enterprises embrace emerging technologies and digital practices. Their key activities include:

- **Trend Analysis**: Monitoring sector-specific technological developments and assessing their impact on workforce needs.
- **Standards Development**: Updating occupational standards to incorporate new digital competencies and technology-driven roles.
- **Targeted Training**: Designing and promoting programmes, such as short courses, simulations, and certifications, that equip workers with the skills to implement and leverage new technologies.
- **Strategic Collaboration**: Partnering with industry bodies and technology providers to pilot and scale digital solutions in real-world work environments.

Example

- In the **Caribbean**, SSBs have collaborated with regional industries and the Inter-American Development Bank to craft and deploy sector-wide technology upgrade strategies. These initiatives guide enterprises through digital transformation, ensuring workers acquire the capabilities needed to maintain competitiveness in a rapidly evolving market. (Maxwell, Pavón & Epstein 2019)

Box 12. Digital Skills Partnerships (DSPs) – United Kingdom

1. Origin and purpose

- **Launched**: 2017
- **Objective**: Coordinate **digital upskilling** across multiple industries, ensuring integration of digital competencies into all workforce training programs.
- **Distinctive Feature**: Unlike traditional **Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs)**, DSPs are **cross-sectoral** and focus specifically on **digital transformation**.

2. Key features

- **Multi-Sectoral Digital Upskilling**: Embeds digital skills across all sectors.
- **Public-Private Collaboration**: Involves government, tech firms (e.g., Microsoft, Google), and training providers.
- **Regional DSPs**: Six regional partnerships tailor strategies to local workforce needs.
- **Support for SMEs & Digital Inclusion**: Offers free digital training for small businesses and underserved groups.
- **Alignment with National TVET Strategies**: Ensures coherence with broader vocational education policies.

3. Examples of practice

- **North West DSP**: Partners with Microsoft and Google for digital apprenticeships and cloud certifications.
- **South West DSP**: Works with local colleges to integrate AI and data analytics into technical training.

4. Strategic role

- DSPs exemplify how **SSBs can evolve** to support **digital transformation**, ensuring that TVET systems remain responsive to the demands of the digital economy.

Source: (Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology. 2021)

3.4.2.2. Develop capacity of sector industry associations to influence government policy

SSBs enhance the ability of sector industry associations to actively participate in policy dialogues and influence government decisions related to skills development. Core activities include:

- **Capacity Building**: Delivering workshops on situational analysis, benchmarking good practices, and formulating policy options to ensure association members can propose practical, evidence-based solutions.

- **Position Paper Development**: Guiding associations through research and drafting of position papers on critical issues, such as emerging technologies, skills shortages, or funding models, to inform public debate and policy formulation.
- **Strategic Advocacy Support**: Supplying labour market data, synthesizing policy briefs, and providing negotiation training so associations can articulate sector priorities with confidence.
- **Policy Engagement Platforms**: Convening regular forums and consultations where associations present their evidence and policy proposals directly to policymakers.

Example

- In the **United Kingdom**, SSBs have partnered with industry associations to refine and communicate sector skills priorities, directly influencing the development of demand-driven qualifications and competency frameworks. Through tailored workshops on data analysis and position paper drafting, UK SSBs have significantly strengthened associations' ability to contribute to national training policy (Payne 2007).

3.4.2.3. Develop and pilot models for collaboration between skills institutions and enterprises

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) actively promote innovative partnerships that link vocational training providers with industry, ensuring that curricula and learning pathways are closely aligned with employer needs. These collaborative initiatives typically encompass the following components:

- **Curriculum co-design**: SSBs work jointly with enterprises to develop training modules and practical components that embed real-world skills into vocational programmes.
- **Work-based learning schemes**: They help structure apprenticeships, internships, and project-based assignments within companies to complement classroom instruction and enhance experiential learning.
- **Governance frameworks**: SSBs contribute to the establishment of clear roles, responsibilities, and communication channels among training institutions, employers, government bodies, and themselves to sustain effective collaboration.
- **Performance monitoring**: They facilitate the collection and analysis of feedback from learners, trainers, and employers to refine partnership models and scale up successful practices.

Example

- In **Azerbaijan**, the European Training Foundation supported pilot projects in selected sectors to establish SSBs and foster cooperation between the VET system, employers, and government. These pilots facilitated ongoing dialogue on skills policy and informed the development of sustainable, sector-driven collaboration models (European Training Foundation 2014).

3.4.2.4. Industry-led centres of excellence for a specific sector

Industry-Led Centres of Excellence (CoEs) are specialized institutions formed through partnerships among industry, Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs), and training providers. As hubs of innovation and best practice, CoEs deliver demand-driven training and value-added services tailored to sector needs. By pooling expertise and resources, they strengthen workforce competencies, boost productivity, and enhance sector competitiveness.

Core functions:

- **Demand-driven training:** Delivering specialized courses in technical, digital, and soft skills directly aligned with industry requirements.
- **Innovation and R&D support:** Piloting emerging technologies, co-developing new products or processes with enterprises, and providing access to prototyping labs or demonstration facilities.
- **Knowledge sharing and mentoring:** Hosting workshops, seminars, and demonstration projects to disseminate best practices; mentoring other training providers and SMEs in scaling up capabilities.
- **Certification and testing services:** Operating accredited testing facilities, offering product or skills certification to validate quality and compliance with industry standards.
- **Outreach services:** Deploying mobile training units or satellite centres to extend access in underserved regions and supporting cluster-based development initiatives.

Examples

- **Skill Development Institute (SDI), Bhubaneswar, India:** Established by the National Skill Development Corporation in partnership with industry, SDI supports multiple CoEs in sectors like energy and manufacturing. It provides foreign-language, soft-skills, and technical training; offers consultancy on process improvement; and operates the 'Skill on Wheels' mobile unit to reach learners across Odisha (Pradhan 2025).
- **Centre of Excellence for Dairy Skills, India (CEDSI):** Created by the Agriculture Skill Council of India as an autonomous entity, CEDSI focuses on dairy-sector capacity building, policy advocacy, R&D support, and knowledge management to ensure long-term sustainability and profitability (Centre of Excellence for Dairy Skills in India n.d).

Box 13. GREENOVET – Centres of Vocational Excellence for Green Innovation

The European Commission supports the establishment of Centres of Vocational Excellence (CoVEs) under the Erasmus+ programme, aiming to enhance skills ecosystems in strategic sectors. One such initiative is **GREENOVET**, which focuses on promoting **green innovation** through vocational education and training (VET).

Overview

GREENOVET fosters the development of VET excellence in green innovation across Europe by creating CoVEs that support sustainable, inclusive, and innovative regional economies. The initiative brings together VET providers, employers, local authorities, and innovation agencies to co-develop skills and training ecosystems aligned with green transition goals.

Participating regions

GREENOVET operates in four diverse regions, selected to reflect varying development contexts and priorities:

- Styria (Austria)
- Vaasa (Finland)
- Skopje (North Macedonia)
- Leiria (Portugal)

Activities and impact

The CoVEs deliver specialized curricula in green skills, facilitate knowledge transfer, support entrepreneurship, and enhance collaboration among education and labour market actors. The project contributes to upskilling the workforce and aligning VET systems with the European Green Deal and local economic strategies.

Source: (GREENOVET n.d)

3.4.3. Manage or support

3.4.3.1. Empower startups and SMEs

SSBs can catalyse entrepreneurship and strengthen startups and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) by offering a suite of targeted support services:

- **Incubation and mentorship:** Establishing incubation centres that provide early-stage startups with mentorship, co-working space, and networking opportunities.
- **Business development services:** Delivering tailored guidance on business planning, marketing strategies, operational management, and regulatory compliance.
- **Access to finance:** Facilitating linkages to funding sources, such as venture capital, grants, or loans, and advising on financial modelling and cash-flow management.
- **Ecosystem building:** Partnering with industry associations, investors, and government agencies to create a supportive environment for SME growth.
- **Entrepreneurial skills training:** Designing and delivering specialized training programmes that strengthen the leadership, digital and managerial competencies of entrepreneurs and their teams.

Examples

- **India's NSDC International:** Acquired a 10 percent equity stake in Startup Stairs Pvt. Ltd., a **Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade** (DPIIT) recognized incubator. This partnership aims to nurture 100,000 rural entrepreneurs in sectors such as drones, electric vehicles, AI, and robotics, offering funding, mentorship, and market access via the 'Drone Planet' platform (The Tribue India 2025).
- **Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council (B&WSSC), India:** Launched a CSR-funded initiative providing free courses in entrepreneurial and digital skills to 4,000 aspiring women entrepreneurs – leading many to establish home-based tailoring and beauty enterprises (Beauty & Wellness Sector Skill Council n.d.).

Box 14. Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) – United Kingdom

1. Origin and evolution

- **Introduced**: 2002 to replace **Industry Training Organizations**
- **Relicensing in 2011**: Reduced SSCs from 25 to 21
- **Funding shift**:
  – 2012: Moved to **project-based funding**
  – 2016: **All government funding ceased**
- **Current Status**:

– **No formal remit or direct funding**
– Operate autonomously with varied structures and functions

2. Initial roles

- Develop **occupational standards**
- Promote **vocational qualifications**
- Conduct **labour market analysis**
- Endorse qualifications and apprenticeship frameworks
- Provide **careers guidance** and advocate training investment

3. Current functions

- Some SSCs:
  – Coordinate **sector-based training**
  – License workers (e.g., **CITB**)
  – Develop standards for **devolved governments**
  – Run **awarding bodies**, produce training materials
  – Provide **apprenticeship quality assurance**
- Others:
  – Offer **consultancy services to industry**
  – Maintain **membership schemes**

4. Strategic insights

- SSCs now operate with **reduced functions and resources**
- Government has **centralized** apprenticeship and qualification development
- SSCs still contribute to **careers advice** and **apprenticeship support**
- Raises questions about:
  – What services employers are willing to fund
  – Where **public funding** remains essential

Source: (ILO 2023)

3.4.3.2. Support upskilling and reskilling initiatives

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) are pivotal in coordinating upskilling and reskilling programmes – often through public–private partnerships – to keep the workforce agile and future-ready. By monitoring emerging skill needs and updating curricula accordingly, SSBs help workers maintain relevance in sectors undergoing technological shifts or adapting to new global standards.

Example

▷ In 2022, India's Aerospace and Aviation Sector Skill Council (AASSC), in collaboration with Airbus and Tata STRIVE, launched a reskilling and upskilling initiative targeting youth for careers in airport operations and aerospace manufacturing. Leveraging existing training centres, the programme offers updated courses in aircraft maintenance, engineering, and drone technology – strengthening the aviation sector's talent pipeline and enhancing employability. (Airbus 2022)

Box 15. Industry Skills Councils (ISCs) in Bangladesh – Overview

1. Origin and purpose

- **First ISC**: Established in **2014** in the **leather and leather goods** sector.
- **Policy Drivers**:
  – Lack of sectoral skills intelligence
  – TVET-industry mismatch
  – Weak quality assurance
  – Inadequate assessors/trainers
  – Need for standardized certification

2. Expansion

- **Total ISCs**: 16 as of 2025 (including agriculture, logistics, and plastics)
- **Planned**: 4 more ISCs to be established

3. Legal and institutional framework

- Governed by the **NSDA Act 2018**
- Operate under the **National Skills Development Authority (NSDA)**

4. Structure

- Composed of:
  – Board of Directors
  – Technical Sub-Committees (TSCs)
  – Dedicated Secretariat for operational support

5. Mandated functions

1. Link industries with training providers
2. Identify in-demand occupations
3. Develop competency standards and curricula
4. Forecast industry skill needs
5. Conduct periodic skills-gap analyses
6. Facilitate local and overseas employment
7. Support assessment of trainees, trainers, and assessors
8. Promote apprenticeships
9. Supply skilled labour to enhance productivity and profitability
10. Foster public-private partnerships in skills development

Source: (ICT ISC. N.d.)

3.4.3.3. Promote Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) can play a transformative role in advancing the adoption of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) by enterprises, ensuring that competencies acquired through informal or non-formal means are formally recognized and certified. By championing RPL, SSBs contribute to more inclusive and efficient workforce development, while also enhancing employee motivation and organizational productivity. Their key actions in this domain typically include:

- **Stakeholder Engagement**: Raising awareness among employers, industry associations, and worker organizations about the benefits and value of RPL.
- **Implementation Support**: Assisting enterprises in the design and execution of RPL processes, including the development of assessment methodologies and documentation protocols.
- **Standards Alignment**: Collaborating with employers to map competency assessments to established industry standards and occupational profiles.
- **Quality Assurance**: Partnering with government agencies, training providers, and accreditation bodies to ensure the credibility, consistency, and recognition of RPL certifications.

Example

- **Textile Sector Skill Council (TSC), India:** Implemented RPL programmes for powerloom weavers, formally assessing their skills and awarding nationally recognized certificates. This initiative improved weavers' employment prospects and enabled access to advanced training opportunities (National Skills Network, 2017).

3.4.3.4. Support green and sustainable business practices

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) are instrumental in driving the shift toward environmentally sustainable industries by defining and embedding green competencies within training ecosystems. They:

- **Design green qualifications:** Develop and maintain sector-specific qualifications for renewable energy, waste management, and emerging green technologies.
- **Curate targeted programmes:** Roll out specialized courses on solar, wind, small hydro, biomass, green hydrogen production, green construction, and electric mobility (including EV operation and charging-station maintenance).
- **Extend to circular economy:** Incorporate skills for municipal solid-waste management, sewage treatment, and e-waste recycling to support circular-economy objectives.
- **Engage industry partners:** Collaborate with government agencies, equipment manufacturers, and service providers to ensure training content reflects real-world sustainability practices and regulations.
- **Promote adoption:** Advocate for green skills adoption through awareness campaigns, employer roundtables, and inclusion of sustainability criteria in sectoral skills frameworks.

Example

- Energy & Utility Skills, the Sector Skills Council for the utilities sector in the UK, has integrated green competencies by developing low-carbon technician standards, launching a carbon literacy e-learning module, creating sustainable water management courses, and piloting smart-grid and hydrogen blending projects. These initiatives align training with environmental regulations, build decarbonization capabilities, and establish innovation hubs within utility companies. (Energy & Utility Skills n.d.)

Box 16. Industry Work Groups in Singapore – Overview

1. Origin and purpose

- **Established**: 2016 to support the development of **Sectoral Skills Frameworks (SFw)** across **35 sectors**.
- **Objective**: Map occupations, define required skills and proficiency levels, and align training with sectoral needs.

2. Ongoing role

- Sectoral agencies **update SFws** with **industry input**.
- Ensure alignment of **pre-employment training (PET)** and **continuing education and training (CET)** with evolving sectoral demands.

3. Adaptive approach

- **SkillsFuture Singapore (SSG)** tailors approaches by sector:
  - **Work Groups**: Effective for sectors with **large employers**.
  - **Intermediaries** (e.g., Chambers of Commerce, professional bodies): More effective for **SME-dominated sectors**.

4. Key initiatives

- **SkillsFuture Queen Bee Network**:
  - **Goal**: Support **SMEs** in business transformation and workforce upskilling.
  - **Types**:
    - Large enterprises with SME value chains (e.g., **Seng Siong**)
    - Large enterprises with specialized expertise (e.g., **Bosch-Rexroth** in Industry 4.0)
- **Green Skills Committee (GSC)**:
  - Focus on **green transition** and **emerging skills**.
  - Oversees:
    - Identification of green job roles
    - Task transformation
    - Accelerated reskilling
    - Monitoring reskilling uptake
  - Operates through **sectoral sub-workgroups** involving:
    - Sectoral agencies
    - Employers
    - Institutes of higher learning
    - Labour unions

Source: (SkillsFuture Singapore. n.d.).

3.4.3.5. Facilitate cooperation and knowledge sharing with SSBs in other sectors and countries

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) strengthen workforce development by partnering with peer organizations – both within other sectors and across borders – to exchange best practices, harmonize training standards, and tackle shared skills challenges.

Key activities

- **Global Fora Participation:** Engaging in international networks and conferences to share insights on sectoral skills strategies and innovation.
- **South–South and Triangular Cooperation:** Facilitating peer-to-peer exchanges of knowledge, resources, and successful models among Global South partners
- **Cross-Sector Programme Development:** Collaborating with SSBs in other industries to co-design interdisciplinary curricula that reflect converging technological and market trends.
- **Digital Knowledge Platforms:** Publishing research reports, labour market analyses, and training toolkits online – to ensure wide accessibility and promote transparency.

Examples

- **ILO Training Course (June 2025):** In June 2025, the International Training Centre of the ILO (ITCILO), in collaboration with the ILO Skills Branch, delivered the fourth edition of the in-person course Sectoral Approaches to Skills Development in Turin. Designed for policymakers, members of national and Sector Skills Bodies, TVET authorities, and employers' and workers' organizations, the course uses expert-led sessions, collaborative group work, case studies, and practical exercises to help participants apply sectoral skills anticipation, governance and financing models, and standards/quality approaches in their own contexts. By convening peers from multiple countries and institutions around shared sectoral challenges, the course strengthens ongoing networks for cross-country exchange and practical knowledge transfer that SSBs can draw on when refining mandates, tools, and delivery models.
- **SKILLS BRIDGE Masterclasses:** The SKILLS BRIDGE Masterclasses provide an online peer-learning series that connects SSB practitioners and wider TVET and labour-market stakeholders to share country experiences, troubleshoot implementation challenges, and disseminate practical tools for sectoral skills governance. Delivered with partners (including global organizations and national skills institutions), the masterclasses create a structured space for cross-country learning and collaboration, helping participants translate lessons into concrete actions such as improving skills intelligence, strengthening stakeholder engagement, and accelerating standards and training reforms. The series has also attracted broad international participation, helping extend SSB cooperation and knowledge sharing across sectors and countries at scale.
- In **Australia[4],** under the national VET reform process, Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) and Skills Service Organisations such as IBSA Manufacturing partnered with councils representing ICT, business services, mining, and automotive to identify skills that cut across multiple industries – including robotics, automation, cybersecurity, digital literacy, data analytics and sustainability. Instead of each sector creating separate qualifications, the partners designed joint "cross-sector projects" that created common units, updated national training packages, and embedded emerging technologies into apprenticeships and vocational programmes in multiple sectors simultaneously. This approach reduced duplication, improved training quality, and ensured workers could move across industries and retrain more easily – particularly valuable in a labour market undergoing digital transformation.

4 https://ibsa.org.au/cross-sector-projects/

Box 17. Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA) – Colombia

1. Origin and purpose

- **Established**: 1957 under the **Ministry of Labour**
- **Mission**: Provide **accessible, relevant, and high-quality vocational education and training** to support:
  – Labour market needs
  – Employability and competitiveness
  – Social inclusion and economic development

2. Scale and reach

- **Largest TVET provider** in Colombia; second largest in Latin America (after SENAI, Brazil)
- Infrastructure includes:
  – **118 training centres**
  – **3,000+ training venues**
  – **180 mobile classrooms**
  – Coverage includes **urban, rural, and remote areas**

3. Strategic objectives

- Develop workforce skills and competencies
- Facilitate job access and career progression
- Promote inclusion for underserved and vulnerable populations
- Advance digital skills and technological innovation
- Support regional development and economic diversification

4. Governance

- Led by the **Dirección General (General Directorate)**:
  – Sets strategic direction and policy
  – Coordinates national implementation

5. Labour market alignment

SENA has a Labour and Occupational Observatory (OLO) that carries out analytical activities to anticipate emerging occupations and new skills demands in strategic sectors for the country, such as technology, renewable energy and agriculture-related technologies. It undertakes the following activities:

- Monitoring occupational trends at national and international levels.
- Tracking laws, decrees and regulations that have an impact on the productive sector
- Benchmarking against international classifications, such as the International Standard Classification of Occupations (ISCO), ChileValora, O*NET, and other comparable frameworks.
- Analysis of labour market data to better understand changes, needs and skills gaps
- Uses **Mesas Sectoriales (Sectoral Round Tables)**:
  – 85 currently in operation
  – Tripartite forums involving employers, unions, and TVET centres
  – Identify sector-specific skill needs and inform curriculum development

Source: (Servicio Nacional de Aprendizaje (SENA). n.d.)

3.4.3.6. Administer license to practice

Certain occupations mandate formal licences to ensure practitioners meet essential competency and safety standards. Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) can collaborate with regulatory bodies to design, administer, and monitor licensing schemes that align with both national and international occupational standards. By overseeing certification processes and maintaining register systems, SSBs help safeguard service quality and public trust.

Example

In the United Kingdom, the Construction Skills Certification Scheme (CSCS) operates as a voluntary licensing mechanism. Administered in partnership with industry-led SSBs, CSCS issues site-specific cards that verify an individual's training and qualifications against SSB-defined standards for health, safety, and craft skills. This scheme has become a cornerstone of professionalizing the UK construction workforce and enhancing on-site safety (Construction Skills Certification Scheme n.d.).

Explore!

- For more information on the UK Construction Industry Training Board's Construction Training Register go to https://www.citb.co.uk/courses-and-qualifications/check-a-card-training-record/log-into-the-portal/

▶ 3.5. What influences the roles of SSBs and how are these assigned?

The roles assigned to Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) are shaped by a combination of contextual, institutional, and stakeholder-related factors. These roles are not static; rather, they evolve in response to national priorities, governance structures, and the maturity of the skills ecosystem. Four interrelated factors typically influence the scope and nature of an SSB's mandate:

1. **Policy challenges and labour market demands**: The specific skills-related challenges that an SSB is expected to address – such as youth unemployment, technological disruption, or labour migration – play a critical role in defining its functions and strategic focus.
2. **Institutional landscape**: The existing division of responsibilities among ministries, training agencies, and intermediary organizations determines the niche that an SSB can or should occupy. The degree of overlap or complementarity with other institutions influences whether the SSB assumes a leadership, coordination, or support role.
3. **Resources and autonomy**: The availability of financial resources, legal authority, and organizational independence significantly affects the extent to which an SSB can undertake advanced functions, such as managing training funds, overseeing quality assurance, or implementing national initiatives.
4. **Enterprise capacity and commitment**: The strength of private sector engagement is a key determinant of an SSB's effectiveness. When employers recognize the value of the SSB's work, they are more likely to participate actively, contribute resources, and support the scaling of impactful initiatives. (World Bank 2019)

Countries adopt varied approaches to assigning roles to SSBs, depending on governance preferences, sectoral contexts, and the maturity of their skills ecosystems. These approaches generally fall into three broad models:

- **Uniform roles for all SSBs**: A standardized model in which all SSBs are assigned the same set of responsibilities. While this simplifies coordination and oversight, it may overlook sector-specific priorities and reduce responsiveness to distinct labour market needs.
- **Core roles with sectoral flexibility**: A hybrid approach in which all SSBs undertake a common set of foundational tasks, while retaining the flexibility to adapt their functions to address sector-specific challenges – for example, informal employment in agriculture versus automation in manufacturing.
- **Fully differentiated roles**: a tailored model in which each SSB is assigned bespoke responsibilities based on the dynamics of its respective sector. This approach, adopted in countries such as Canada, allows for maximum responsiveness and impact. (Giguère and Froy 2014)

In practice, many countries adopt a phased approach to role assignment. SSBs are often established with a limited mandate – typically focused on labour market analysis and skills planning – and gradually expand their functions as institutional capacity and stakeholder confidence grow. However, if initial responsibilities are defined too narrowly, there is a risk of employer disengagement, particularly if the SSB is perceived as lacking strategic influence (ILO 2023).

Box 18. Knowledge Centres (Kenniscentra) in the Netherlands – Overview

1. Origin and Purpose

- **Established**: Late 1990s across **17 sectors**.
- **Objective**: Strengthen collaboration between **TVET institutions and employers** to better align training with labour market needs.

2. Reform and transition

- **2012 Coalition agreement**: Called for restructuring due to:
  - **Budget cuts**: €40 million in 2015, €80 million from 2016.
  - **Inefficiencies**: 17 separate bodies with overlapping roles.
  - **Lack of coherence**: Fragmented qualification structures.
- **2015**: Knowledge Centres were **replaced** by:
  - **Stichting SBB** (Foundation for Cooperation between Vocational Education and Business)
  - **TVET institutions**, which absorbed some responsibilities

3. Stichting SBB – Role and structure

- **Launched**: 1 January 2012
- **Mandate**: Ensure optimal alignment between **secondary vocational education** and the **business community**
- **Advisory role**: Provides input to the **Ministries of Education, Culture and Science**, and **Economic Affairs**
- **Key policy themes**:
  1. Qualification & Examination
  2. Professional Practical Training
  3. Efficiency

- **Governance**: Includes representatives from both **employers** and the **TVET ecosystem**
- **Scope**: Develops **national agreements** on TVET, with **sector-specific content** negotiated at the sectoral level.

▶ 3.6. Key takeaways

For Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) to be effective and sustainable, their roles must be co-created through structured dialogue involving representatives of employers, workers, government, and skills regulatory institutions. Evidence suggests that the top-down imposition of responsibilities – without meaningful consultation – —often results in limited uptake, weak legitimacy, or outright failure. As the International Labour Organization (ILO 2019) observes, successful SSBs are grounded in consensus-building and shared ownership of objectives.

Several key lessons have emerged regarding the effective structuring of SSB roles and responsibilities:

- **Diagnose sector challenges clearly**: The mandate of an SSB should be rooted in a robust understanding of sector-specific skills gaps and workforce development needs. Without a sound diagnostic foundation, assigned roles risk being misaligned with actual labour market demands.
- **Phase responsibilities strategically**: SSBs should begin with achievable and visible functions – such as conducting skills needs assessments or validating training standards – and expand their scope progressively, based on demonstrated performance and evolving sectoral needs.
- **Promote role adaptability**: Given the pace of technological change and sectoral transformation, SSBs must be equipped to evolve in response to developments such as digitalization, automation, and the transition to green economies. Static role definitions can constrain responsiveness and long-term relevance.
- **Embed dialogue and accountability**: Regular, structured engagement with stakeholders is essential to validate evolving roles, gather feedback, and align expectations across the skills ecosystem.
- **Ensure coherence between mandate and means**: The governance structure, staffing, and financing mechanisms of an SSB must be aligned with its functional scope. Mismatches between mandate and institutional capacity can undermine both credibility and performance.

This adaptive and inclusive approach enhances the legitimacy, responsiveness, and effectiveness of SSBs. By positioning them as trusted institutions embedded in structured social dialogue, countries can ensure that SSBs contribute meaningfully to skills development in ways that are relevant, accountable, and resilient to dynamic economic and social change.

Regular system reviews are essential to clarify and recalibrate the evolving role of SSBs in programme development and implementation.

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Lab technician examines specimen with microscope in government rural health clinic, Uganda. ©Richard Lord/ILO.

4 Governance arrangements

Having examined the diverse roles and responsibilities of Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) in the previous chapter, it is equally important to understand how these bodies are structured and governed. This chapter therefore explores different governance models for SSBs, outlines key criteria for choosing among them, and highlights what the essential elements of sound governance frameworks are.

4.1. Why the governance arrangements of the SSB matter

Governance arrangements are pivotal in enabling SSBs to fulfil their objectives effectively. They establish frameworks of authority and accountability, clarify roles and responsibilities, decision-making hierarchies, and reporting lines. Strong governance promotes efficiency, accountability, innovation, and consensus orientated decision making.

Well-designed structures ensure that all key partners are engaged, reflecting each country's unique social partnership arrangements. The effective design of SSBs should enable:

- Representation and participation of key stakeholders in the sector
- Strong leadership role for industry
- Effective coordination across the skills ecosystem
- Capacity to deliver defined roles and responsibilities
- Balance between decision-making, accountability, and representation
- Efficient operations and resource utilization

What does governance structures of SSBs determines?

Who makes decisions about their operations and strategic direction?

How are those decisions made?

Who are they accountable to, and for what?

Box 19. Why is good SSB governance important?

- **Builds credibility with industry**: Employers are more likely to engage when they trust that the SSB represents their needs and operates professionally.
- **Strengthens trust with government**: Public authorities need confidence that the SSB uses public funds effectively to deliver national skills priorities.
- **Enhances efficiency and impact**: Strong governance ensures that resources are used wisely to achieve measurable outcomes.
- **Supports long-term sustainability**: Effective governance helps the SSB remain resilient, adaptive and relevant over time.
- **Ensures transparency and accountability**: Clear roles, responsibilities and reporting mechanisms demonstrate responsible use of resources.

Explore!

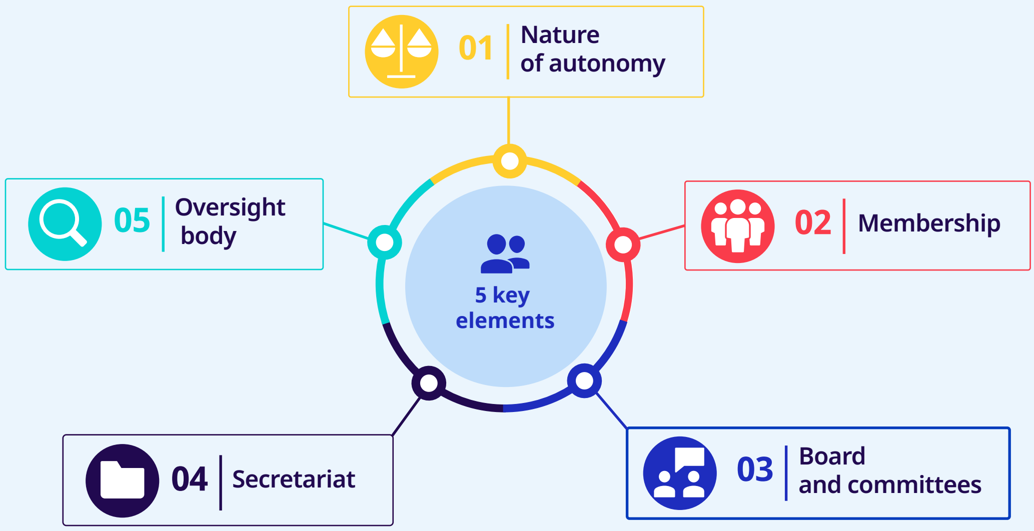
- For more information on the types of stakeholders to include to go section 3.2.2.

4.2. Key elements of an SSB structure

Key elements to consider when designing the organizational structure of an SSB are:

- Nature of autonomy
- The membership
- Board and committees
- Secretariat
- Oversight bodies

Figure 10. What are key elements of SSB govervance structure



Source: authors' own elaboration.

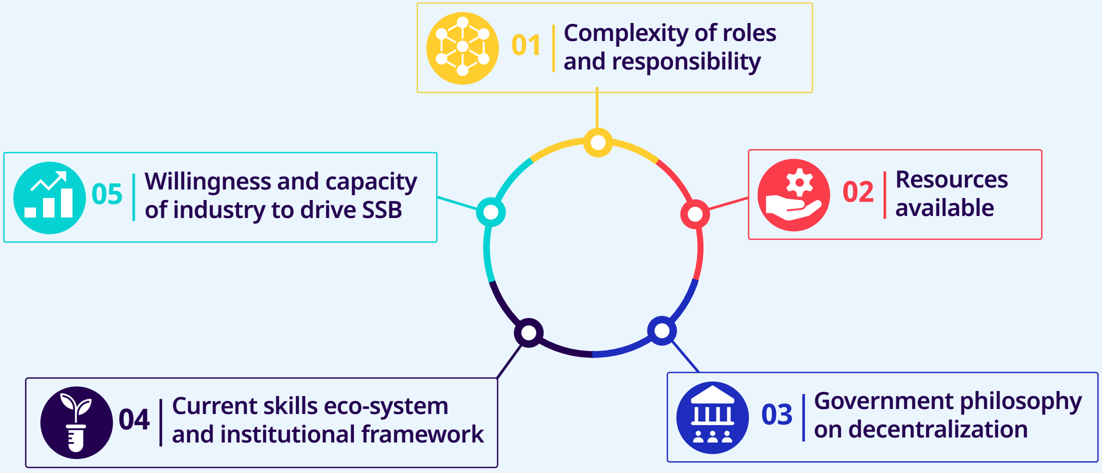
4.2.1. The autonomy of Sector Skills Bodies

The degree of autonomy granted to SSBs is a critical design choice. It shapes their governance model, legitimacy, and capacity to mobilize stakeholders. Autonomy may range from SSBs embedded in government structures to fully independent organizations, depending on contextual and strategic factors.

4.2.1.1. Key factors influencing the autonomy of Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs)

The level of autonomy that a SSB can or should exercise depends on several interrelated factors. These influence not only the governance model but also the sustainability and effectiveness of the SSB's operations.

▶ **Figure 11. Main factors for autonomy**



Source: authors' own elaboration.

Complexity of roles and responsibilities

The complexity of roles and responsibilities is a key factor in determining the appropriate level of autonomy for SSBs. SSBs that manage or implement programmes require greater autonomy to operate effectively. In contrast, advisory or research-focused SSBs can function well within committee-based structures.

Resource availability

Autonomous SSBs require significantly more financial resources than committee-based models – for both setup and ongoing operations. Therefore, the availability of funding is a key design factor in deciding the type of organizational structure of an SSB.

Industry leadership and capacity

Autonomy is more viable when sector stakeholders demonstrate strong leadership, institutional capacity, and financial commitment. Effective functioning depends on industry ownership and readiness to lead and sustain the SSB independently.

Government philosophy on decentralization

The extent to which governments are willing to decentralize decision-making and delegate authority also shapes the autonomy of SSBs. In highly centralized systems, SSBs may have limited operational independence and flexibility.

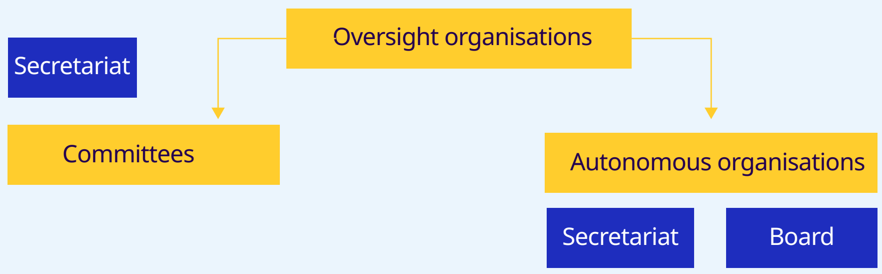
Skills ecosystem and institutional framework

The broader skills ecosystem, including the roles of existing institutions, affects the feasibility of autonomy. Resistance may arise if autonomy is perceived to overlap or conflict with the mandates of other bodies. Clear role definition and coordination mechanisms are essential to avoid institutional friction.

4.2.1.2. Types of SSB Structures

Countries have broadly adopted two organizational models for SSBs: **Committee-Based Structures** and **Autonomous Organizations**. Table 3 provides a comparative analysis of key features, advantages and disadvantages of the two models.

▶ **Figure 12. Two main approaches to integrate the secretariat and members**



Source: authors' own elaboration.

▶ **Table 3. Structural models: Comparative overview**

Model	Key Features	Advantages	Disadvantages
Committee-based structure	Operates under a central secretariat, typically convened by a sector ministry or public agency or sector industry association.	• Quick to establish with minimal bureaucracy • Low operational costs • Suitable for advisory and research roles	• Limited sector visibility • Weak implementation capacity • Dependent on external secretariat support
Autonomous organization	Independent, non-profit entity with legal status and its own governance structures.	• Full decision-making authority • Dedicated secretariat with technical expertise • Strong industry buy-in and visibility • Greater flexibility and responsiveness	• Higher setup and operational costs • Require sustained capacity-building • Longer lead time to become fully functional

This comparison highlights the trade-offs: committee models are cost-effective and quick to launch but are better suited to lighter advisory roles, while autonomous organizations demand more resources and time to build but deliver stronger implementation capacity, visibility, and industry ownership.

Table 4 presents examples of countries having SSBs as autonomous organizations or committee structures.

▶ **Table 4.** Global examples of SSB models by structural type

Autonomous organizations	Committees
Australia Bangladesh Canada India New Zealand Nigeria South Africa United Kingdom	Colombia Denmark Ghana Jamaica Jordan Saudi Arabia Singapore Spain The Gambia

Global experience demonstrates that autonomy is not absolute.

Global experience shows that autonomy exists along a continuum, shaped by funding arrangements, legal status, and institutional authority. Understanding this continuum enables policymakers and sector leaders to design governance models that are both practical and responsive to the specific conditions of their sectors.

Countries such as Bangladesh, Canada, and the United Kingdom illustrate diverse approaches.

- **Bangladesh**: Formally autonomous but operate under government-endorsed mandates. Licensed to perform specific functions with oversight from designated ministries. Funding may be partial or project based.
- **Canada**: Sector Councils operate independently without formal regulatory roles. They bid for government funding on a project basis to support sector initiatives. In addition to public project-based grants, Canada's Sector Councils have often leveraged supplementary contributions, potentially including private or partner in-kind support, to enhance program sustainability
- **United Kingdom**: Sector Skills Councils retain government recognition but do not receive public funding or hold formal responsibilities tied to their licensed status, instead, they rely on contestable government grants and industry contributions for their operations.

Box 20. Canada's Workforce Development Councils (WDCs): Balancing autonomy, decentralization, and national coordination

A key challenge in structuring Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) is ensuring adaptability to sector-specific needs while maintaining effective governance. Canada's Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) offer a compelling example of how workforce planning can be decentralized and employer-led, while still aligned with national strategies.

Origin and purpose

- Initially established: 1990s as Sector Councils
- Reformed: In 2013 and 2021, transitioning to project-based funding
- Objective: Provide sector-specific, employer-led workforce planning aligned with national strategies

Governance and structure

- Independent and industry-driven
- Recognized by government, but not government-controlled
- Operate under sector-specific mandates to ensure responsiveness to labour market realities

Key functions

- Labour Market Research: Conduct sector-specific workforce analysis to identify skills gaps and future trends.
- Workforce Planning: Align training programs with employer needs and labour market demands.
- Stakeholder Collaboration: Engage employers, unions, and training institutions in co-designing sector strategies.
- Training Development & Support: Develop training programs, apprenticeships, and workforce mobility initiatives.
- Industry-Led Decision-Making: Ensure training and certification standards reflect employer priorities rather than government frameworks.

How WDCs adapt to sector needs

Unlike centralized SSB models, WDCs operate under sector-specific mandates that allow them to prioritize workforce mobility, technical skills development, and labour market intelligence.

Examples include:

- The Transportation Association of Canada's WDC focuses on certification and labour market research to ensure a steady supply of skilled professionals in transport-related occupations.
- WDCs in manufacturing and healthcare emphasize apprenticeships and competency frameworks to develop industry-aligned training programs.

Strategic insights

Canada's decentralized, employer-led model demonstrates how SSBs can balance autonomy with national coordination. Countries seeking flexible workforce planning mechanisms may consider sector-specific councils that prioritize employer engagement while aligning with national TVET and workforce development strategies.

Source: (Employment and Social Development Canada n.d.)

4.2.2. Membership

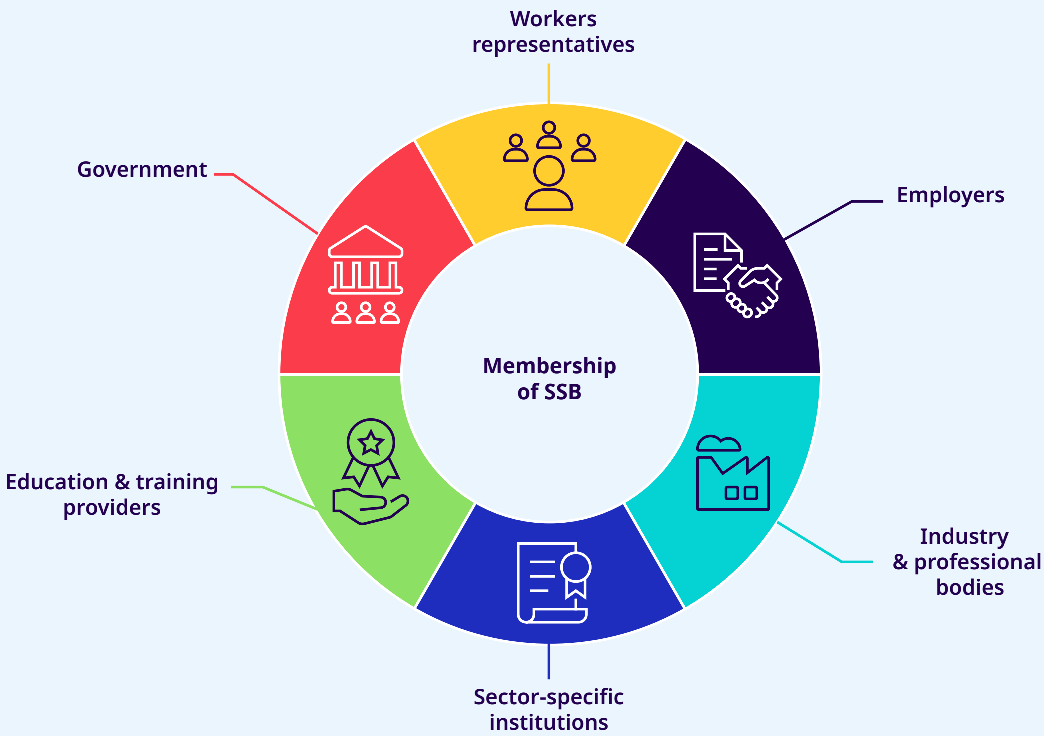
The effectiveness and legitimacy of a SSB depend on a balanced representation of sector stakeholders.

Core stakeholder groups

An effective SSB includes representatives from the following groups:

- **Employers**: A broad representation across sub-sectors, firm sizes (including MSMEs), regions, and both formal and informal enterprises.
- **Industry and professional bodies**: To provide sector-wide insights and support coordination.
- **Worker representatives**: Trade unions and representatives of youth, women, and persons with disabilities.
- **Government**: Officials from labour, education, sectoral ministries, and national skills agencies.
- **Education and training providers**: Public and private vocational institutions, lifelong learning centres, and higher education institutions.

▶ **Figure 13. Membership of SSBs**



Source: authors' own elaboration.

- **Sector-specific institutions**: Research centres, regulatory authorities, and other specialized agencies.
- Employers are often nominated by chambers of commerce or industry associations. However, open calls can broaden participation. A wide employer base strengthens legitimacy and ensures responsiveness to evolving sector needs.

Representation models

In practice, countries have different arrangements for stakeholders' representation in SSBs. The three most common are employer-led, tripartite, and multi-stakeholder models.

1. **Employer-led**: Governance is exclusively by employer appointees.
2. **Tripartite**: Balanced representation of employers, workers, and government.
3. **Multi-stakeholder**: Builds on tripartism by including education, research, and community-based organizations.

Table 5 outlines the strengths and limitations of common SSB governance models:

▶ **Table 5.** Strengths and limitations of common SSB governance models

Representation model	Advantages	Disadvantages
Employers only	• Provides a unified employer perspective • Enables faster decision-making	• Excludes workers, government, and training voices • Weakens social dialogue and sectoral buy-in
Tripartite	• Balances employer, worker, and government perspectives • Strengthens social dialogue • Aligns with national strategies	• Risk of government dominance • Slower consensus-building
Multi-stakeholder (tripartite plus)	• Includes training, research, and community expertise • Encourages cross-sector collaboration • Reflects the full skills ecosystem	• May dilute employer priorities • Complex governance • Potential for stakeholder conflict

Best practices favour tripartite or multi-stakeholder models, as they foster inclusive planning and shared ownership (ILO 2015). Table 6 illustrates examples of countries that have adopted one of the three types of membership models.

▶ **Table 6.** Illustrative country examples by membership model

Representation model	Illustrative countries
Employers only	Brazil, Canada
Tripartite (employers + workers + government)	Australia, Jamaica, Jordan, Spain, New Zealand
Multi-stakeholder	Denmark, The Gambia, Ghana, India, Latvia, Singapore, Slovakia

Box 21. Enabling Inclusive Participation in SSBs

Expanding stakeholder participation in Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) can be challenging, particularly in sectors with limited traditions of social dialogue. Effective inclusive governance depends on three key enablers:

- **Time and trust-building:** Structured processes, such as joint workshops, consultations, and fact-finding missions, help build mutual understanding of roles, priorities, and expectations among stakeholders.
- **Participatory leadership:** Establishing an executive board or council through social dialogue empowers stakeholders to jointly shape strategies and address challenges.
- **Ongoing facilitation:** A national skills authority or equivalent body should provide coordination support, such as secretariat services, convening meetings, and translating dialogue into measurable outcomes for both enterprises and workers.

Tailoring governance structures to each sector's context – size, maturity, and stakeholder landscape – helps strike the right balance between inclusivity, effectiveness, and autonomy. Regardless of the model, industry should form the majority of members to ensure strong industry ownership and alignment with labour market needs.

4.2.3. Board and committees

In autonomous SSBs, members typically elect an executive board, while in committee-based models, stakeholder roles are embedded directly in the governance structure.

Clearly defined provisions on board composition, chairperson appointment, term limits, and sub-committees are essential for strategic oversight, accountability, and alignment with national skills development priorities.

Board

- **Size and composition**
- **Chairperson**
- **Election and time period for members**
- **Sub-committees**

4.2.3.1. Composition of the executive or board of the SSB

For autonomous SSBs, a streamlined executive board or council is essential to ensure effective governance and strategic oversight.

4.2.3.2. Chairperson appointment

The chairperson is usually selected from employer representatives with recognized standing in the sector. Beyond leading the board, the chairperson engages with senior government officials, advocates for sector interests, and ensures alignment with sectoral needs. In some systems, the chairperson also serves on oversight bodies, promoting cross-representation and integration within the broader skills governance framework.

4.2.3.3. Term limits

Board members usually serve **three- to five-year terms**. Staggered rotations, often aligned with SSB's licensing or endorsement cycles, maintain continuity while allowing renewal. Decisions are typically made by **majority vote**, supporting democratic and transparent governance.

4.2.3.4. Sub-committees or working groups

SSBs often establish sub-committees or working groups to enhance efficiency and effectiveness of the SSBs by allowing detailed technical discussions on specific issues in smaller, focussed groups. For instance, sub-committees could be for:

- **Policy and Strategy**: Focuses on setting the overall direction, priorities, and long-term goals of the SSB, ensuring alignment with national development plans and international frameworks.
- **Finance and Administration**: Oversees budgeting, financial planning, resource allocation, and administrative operations to ensure the SSB functions efficiently and sustainably.

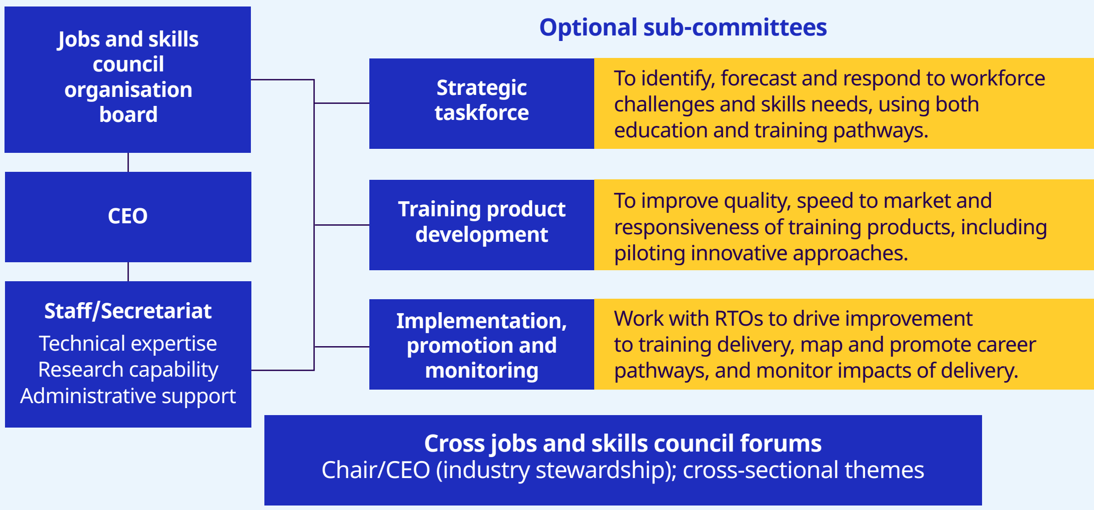
- **Stakeholder Engagement**: Responsible for building and maintaining relationships with key actors such as employers, training institutions, government agencies, and other partners to foster collaboration and support.
- **Standards and Qualifications**: Handles the development, review, and updating of occupational standards and qualifications, ensuring they are relevant to labour market needs and aligned with quality assurance frameworks.

Some SSBs also form sub-sectoral or regional committees, bringing in targeted expertise and expanding the SSB's reach. For example, an agriculture SSB might form committees for crops, livestock, or horticulture. In **India,** Media & Entertainment Skills Council (MESC) has sub-sector committees alongside regional committees, steering, finance, and grievance committees.

Example: Australia

Figure 14 illustrates a governance structure of a Jobs and Skills Council of Australia, with board, Secretariat and three sub-committees (Jobs and Skills Australia n.d.).

Figure 14. Australia-Jobs and Skills Council organization structure



Source: Jobs and Skills Australia n.d. Source: Jobs and Skills Australia n.d.

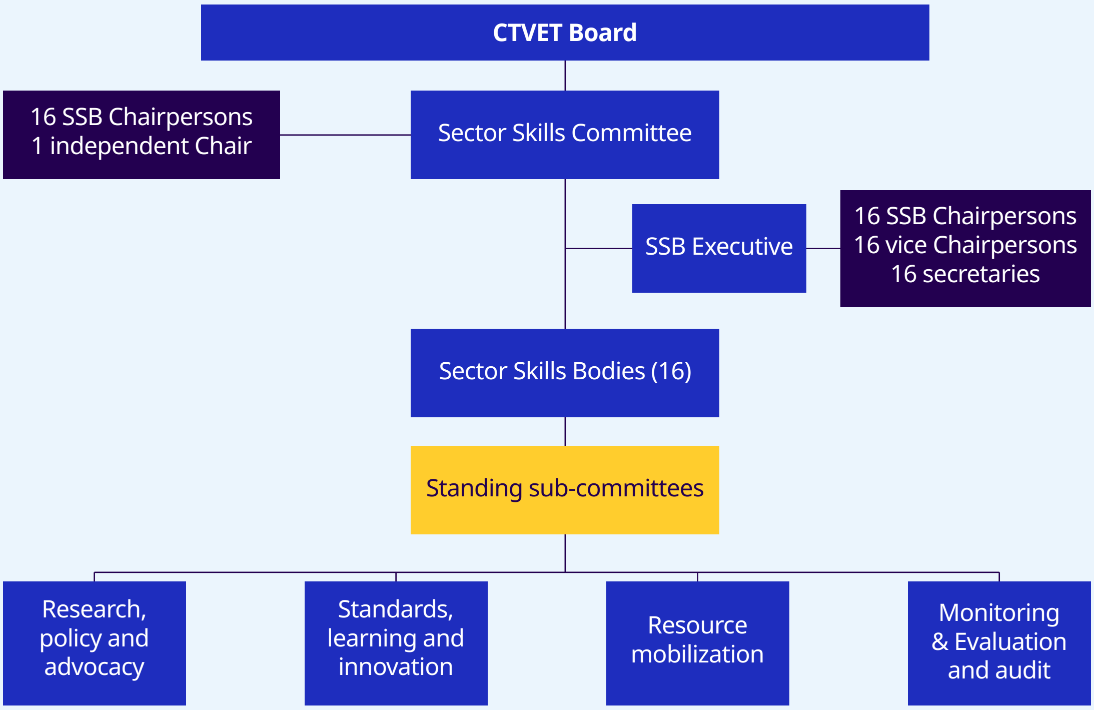
Example: Ghana

The Sector Skills Committee brings together chairpersons from each SSB, plus an independent private-sector chair. An executive committee (chair, vice-chair, secretary of each SSB) supports the SSC by reviewing issues before submission (International Labour Organization 2024).

Ghana Sector Skills Committee (SSC): The SSC is made up of the chairpersons from each established Sector Skills Body (SSB). Additionally, the SSC includes a chairperson who is a private sector practitioner and is not a member of any SSB.

Executive Committee Composition: The Executive Committee includes the leadership from each SSB, specifically: Chairperson, Vice Chairperson, and Secretary. This Executive Committee is a larger body designed to support the SSC, with the leadership from each SSB participating in discussions before presenting issues to the SSC.

▶ **Figure 15. Ghana SSC governance structure**



Source: ILO forthcoming

Box 22. Ghana's sector skills bodies (ssbs): A tripartite+ governance model

Balanced stakeholder representation is a key consideration in structuring SSBs. Ghana follows a tripartite+ governance model, bringing together government, employers, and unions, with donor and sectoral partners, to ensure collaborative decision-making and alignment with national workforce policies.

Ghana's SSBs operate under the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET), which oversees their work, ensuring alignment with national skills strategies and labour market needs.

Key features of Ghana's SSB governance model

- **Tripartite representation:** Employers, government agencies, and labour unions share decision-making authority.
- **Integration with national TVET policy:** SSBs operate under the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (**CTVET) framework**, ensuring alignment with national workforce strategies.
- **Industry advisory role:** Employers provide **direct input into training programs and occupational standards**.
- **Government & donor support:** Ghana's SSBs rely on **government contributions and donor funding**, ensuring financial sustainability.
- **Sectoral coordination:** SSBs **oversee training initiatives and skills assessments for key industries**, ensuring alignment with labour market needs.

For example:

- The Agricultural SSB collaborates with industry leaders and training institutions to develop agribusiness-related training programs.
- The Construction SSB works closely with the Ministry of Works to align skills frameworks with national infrastructure goals.

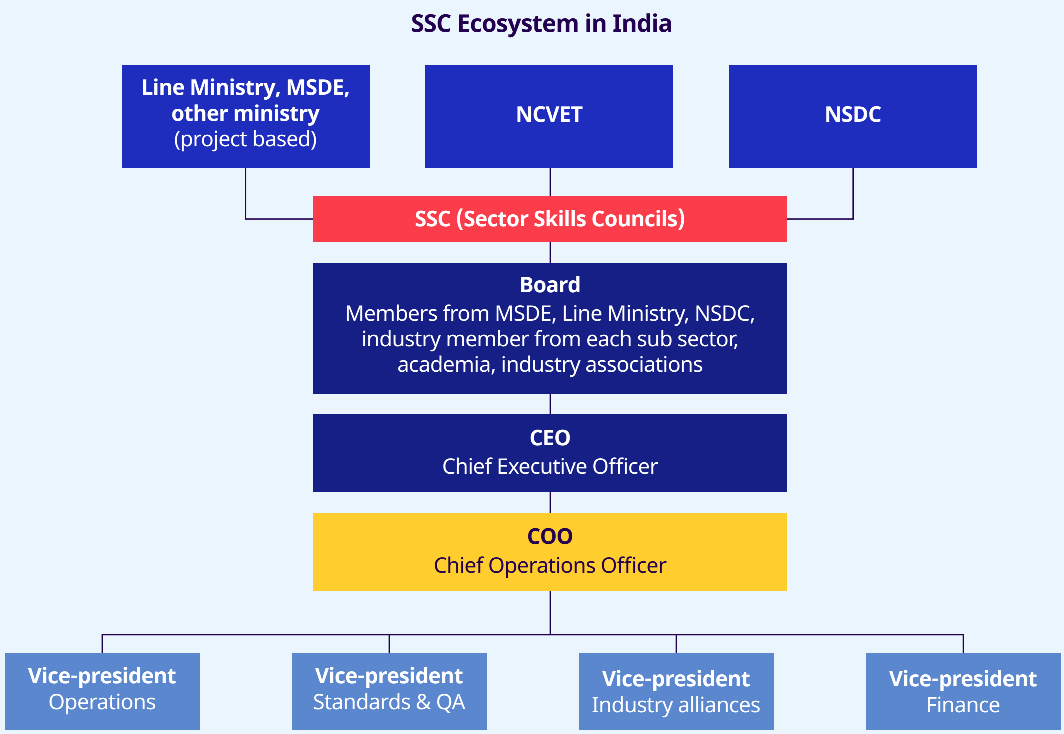
By combining government oversight, donor funding, and employer engagement, Ghana's tripartite+ governance model ensures that SSBs remain sustainable, relevant, and responsive to labour market needs.

Source: ILO, forthcoming

Example: India

Figure 16 presents the governance structure of India's Media & Entertainment Skills Council (MESC). It operates under the overall ecosystem coordinated by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE), the National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET), and the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC). The SSC is led by a board that includes representatives from government ministries, industry members from each sub-sector, academia, and industry associations. Its executive team consists of a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Chief Operations Officer (COO), supported by vice presidents overseeing operations, standards and quality assurance, industry alliances, and finance. This structure reflects India's approach of combining strong industry leadership with government oversight to ensure responsiveness to sectoral skill needs.

▶ **Figure 16. Media & entertainment Skills Council (mesc) of India**



Source: (Media & Entertainment Skills Council n.d.)

4.2.4. Secretariat

The secretariat is the operational backbone of an SSB, responsible for managing its day-to-day functions and ensuring effective implementation of board decisions. It may function as:

- An internal unit within an **autonomous SSB**, or
- A **centralized service** within an oversight body supporting multiple SSBs.

Key functions include:

- **Policy engagement**: Monitor and interpret sector-specific policy developments.
- **Stakeholder engagement**: Coordinate with sector actors and build partnerships across the skills ecosystem to identify needs and promote participation.
- **Skills standards development**: Facilitate consultations to design and update occupational standards.
- **Labour market information**: Conduct research on sectoral skills needs and labour market trends.

The size and structure of the secretariat should reflect the SSB's **mandate**, **sector scope**, and **available resources**.

Figure 17 illustrates the governance structure of South Africa's Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA), one of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). The MQA secretariat is headed by a Chief Executive Officer, supported by specialized managers for operations, stakeholder relations, risk and evaluation, finance, and corporate services. This structure highlights how a secretariat can provide strong technical, financial, and stakeholder engagement capacity, supported by board-level committees such as audit, finance, remuneration, and strategy.

4.2.5. Oversight bodies

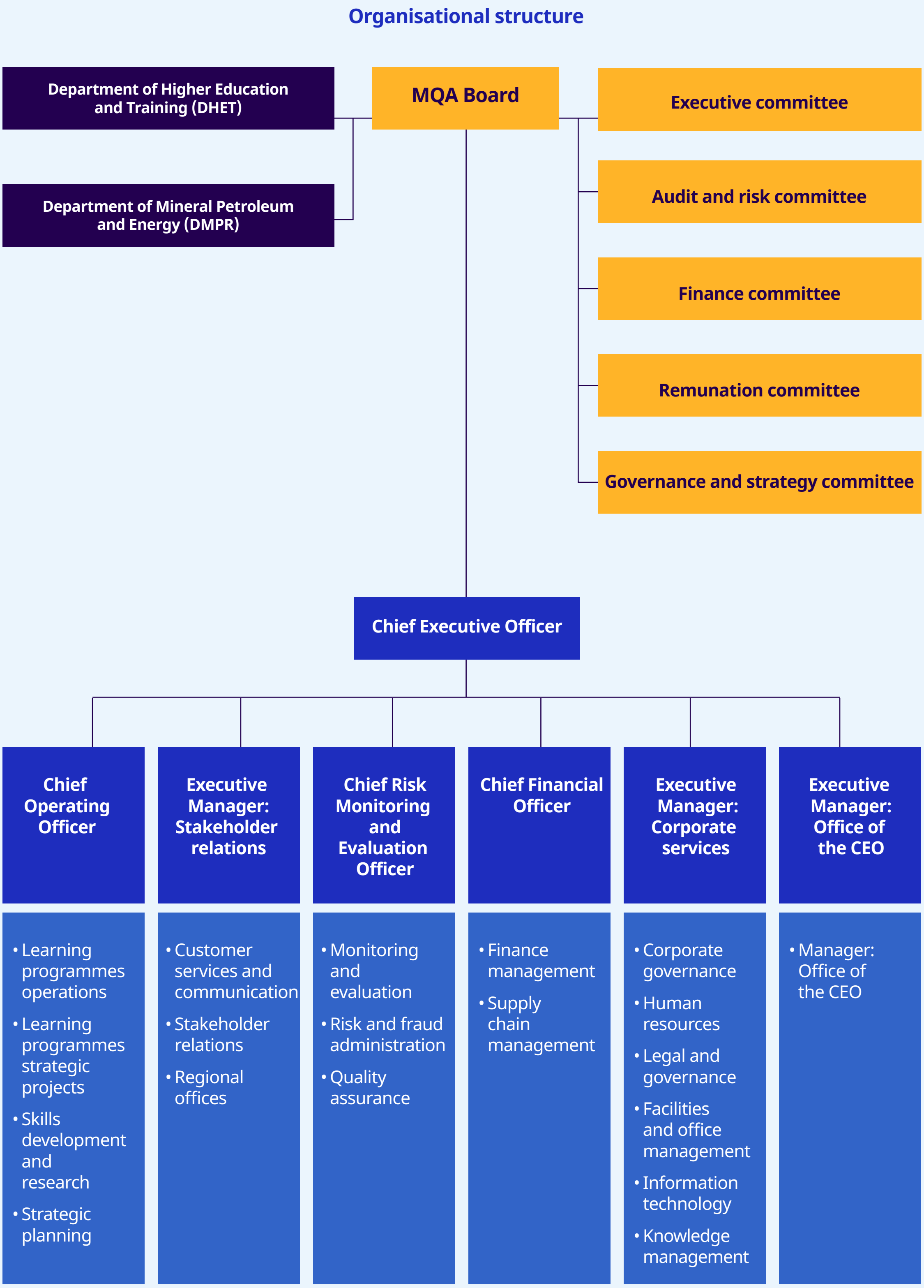
Oversight bodies safeguard the credibility and effectiveness of SSBs by ensuring alignment with national skills strategies, enforcing accountability, and supporting quality assurance across sectors.

Oversight bodies typically:

- Align SSB activities with national skills development goals
- Promote quality assurance and standardization across sectors
- Enhance coordination to prevent duplication and fragmentation
- Monitor performance to support continuous improvement
- Foster trust through transparency and accountability

Oversight structures differ across countries but generally take one of three forms: direct ministerial oversight, national skills authorities with a broader skills mandate, or public-private partnerships (PPPs) models. The details of oversight bodies are explored in greater detail in the following chapter.

Figure 17. South Africa-SETA (MQA governance structure)



Source: (Mining Qualifications Authority n.d.)

4.3. Key takeaways

1. **Establish clear governance frameworks:** Define clear rules for autonomy, membership, board and committee roles, secretariat functions, and oversight, with transparent lines of accountability and decision-making,
2. **Ensure balanced stakeholder representation**: Balance strong industry leadership with representation from government, workers, and training authorities and providers to enhance legitimacy and social dialogue.
3. **Align autonomy with sectoral capacity:** Design the level of autonomy to match sectoral capacity, resources, and mandates, ensuring independence is feasible and sustainable
4. **Build institutional capacity:** Strengthen board and staff capabilities, and resource the secretariat adequately to ensure effective governance and delivery.
5. **Delegate specialized functions to sub-committees:** Utilize sub-committees for tasks pertaining to standards, policy, finance, and coordination to deepen expertise and ease board workload.
6. **Promote adaptive and inclusive governance:** Foster adaptive governance through regular reviews, performance monitoring, and transparent, inclusive stakeholder engagement

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Employee at Zeno, Bangkok, a company designing moving advertisment panels.
© Thierry Falise/ILO

5 Oversight bodies

This chapter explores why oversight bodies are essential for Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs), defines their core roles and responsibilities, and analyses – different types of oversight models – highlighting their advantages and limitations.

▶ 5.1. The need for oversight of Sector Skills Bodies

Oversight bodies are critical to ensuring that SSBs function effectively, remain aligned with national priorities, and maintain credibility. The key reasons for establishing such bodies include:

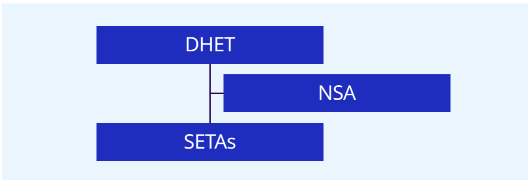
1. **Alignment with national priorities:** Ensures that SSBs contribute to national skills development goals while addressing sector-specific needs.
2. **Quality assurance and standardization:** Promotes consistency, comparability, and high standards across sectors and regions.
3. **Coordination and efficiency:** Prevents duplication of efforts and fragmentation among SSBs, especially in overlapping or related occupations and industries.
4. **Performance monitoring and evaluation:** Tracks the effectiveness of SSBs against agreed benchmarks and supports continuous improvement.
5. **Credibility and accountability:** Builds public and stakeholder trust through transparent operations, responsible resource use, and clear reporting mechanisms.

▶ 5.2. Types of oversight bodies and their structures

Oversight mechanisms for Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) vary across countries, shaped by governance traditions, policy priorities, and institutional frameworks. Four primary models are most observed, alongside dual or multi-layered systems:

1. Ministerial oversight
2. National skills authorities with broader skills remit
3. Chambers of commerce and industry bodies
4. Public-private partnerships (ppps)

5.2.1. Ministerial oversight



In this model, government ministries, typically those responsible for labour, education, or skills development, directly oversee SSBs. This ensures strong alignment with national policy priorities but may limit the autonomy and responsiveness of SSBs to industry needs.

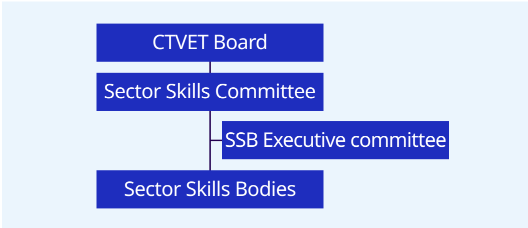
Example: South Africa

Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) report to the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and operate under the strategic guidance of the National Skills Authority (NSA). The NSA ensures that SETA activities align with the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030 and contribute to South Africa's broader socio-economic development – particularly in workforce development and skills training (Department of Higher Education & Training n.d.).

5.2.2. National skills authorities with broader skills remit

Some countries use national skills authorities with a wider mandate on skills development to oversee SSBs. These bodies integrate SSB activities into the broader skills ecosystem, promoting coherence and alignment across sectors.

Example: Ghana



- **CTVET Board**: CTVET Board, the overarching body, provides strategic direction and ensures SSBs align with Ghana's national Skills and LLL objectives. It plays a key role in coordinating curriculum development, quality assurance, and alignment with government policies.
- **Sector Skills Committee (SSC)**: The SSC is a standing committee of the CTVET Board that acts as a critical intermediary between CTVET and the SSBs. It provides expert guidance on labour market needs, oversees the development of occupational standards, and evaluates competency-based curricula to meet industry demands.
- Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs): As sector-specific entities, SSBs are responsible for identifying workforce needs, developing skills standards, and creating strategies for workforce development. Each SSB is composed of representatives from employers, trade unions, government agencies, and training providers, ensuring comprehensive stakeholder engagement. (Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training n.d.)

Other countries using this model include:

- **New Zealand**: Tertiary Education Commission (TEC)
- **Jordan**: Technical and Vocational Skills Development Commission (TSDC)
- **Bangladesh**: National Skills Development Authority (NSDA)

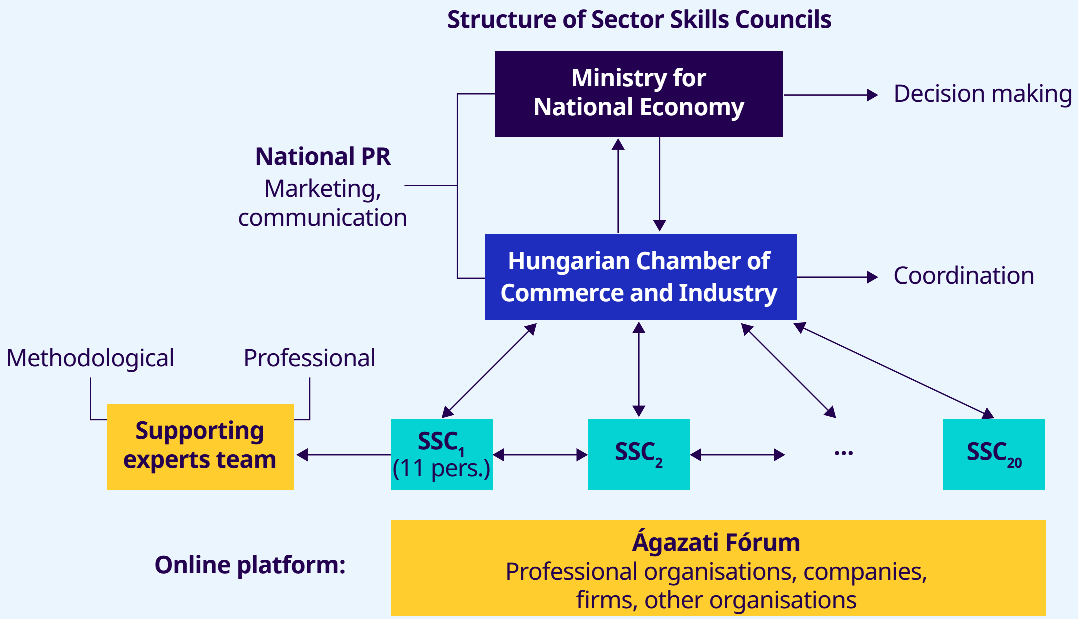
5.2.3. Chambers of commerce and industry bodies

In some countries, statutory chambers or recognized industry associations provide oversight. For example, in Hungary the Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Chamber for Agriculture oversee sectoral skills councils in their respective sectors. (Cedefop n.d.)

Example: Hungary

The Hungarian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Hungarian Chamber for Agriculture provide formal oversight position over sectoral skills councils for its own sectors

▶ **Figure 18. Hungary – SSC governance structure**



Source: (Cedefop n.d.)

5.2.4. Public-private partnerships

In some countries, oversight of Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) is carried out through Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs), where governance is shared among government, employers, and worker representatives. This model promotes multi-stakeholder ownership, enhances industry responsiveness, and supports alignment with national priorities.

Example: India

National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC), a not-for-profit public limited company, operates as a unique Public Private Partnership (PPP) model under the Ministry of Skill Development & Entrepreneurship (MSDE). With 51% private and 49% government ownership, it oversees SSCs by funding, monitoring, and ensuring alignment with national priorities. (National Skill Development Corporation n.d.)

5.2.5. Dual or multi-layered oversight

In many countries, **SSBs** operate within **multi-layered governance frameworks**, reporting to more than one authority. A ministry or national skills authority provides strategic direction, while regulatory or accreditation bodies oversee adherence to technical standards and quality. When well-coordinated, this dual oversight ensures both strategic alignment with national goals and technical compliance with standards.The following examples from **Iyndia** and **Australia** illustrate how SSBs function within such frameworks:

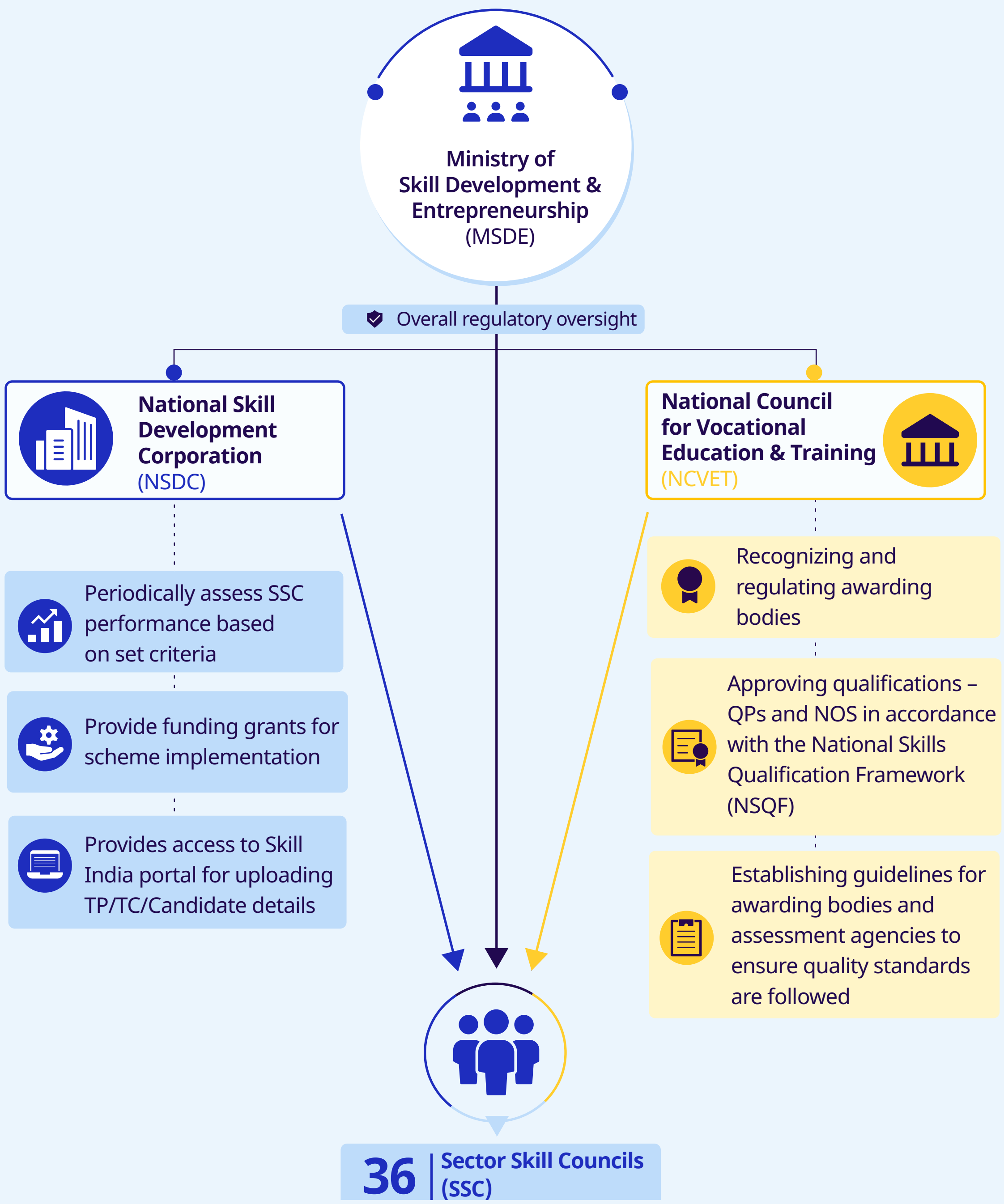
Example: India

India's skills ecosystem demonstrates a multi-layered oversight model:

- **National Skills Development Corporation (NSDC)**
  A public-private entity that oversees all Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). NSDC provides funding, monitors performance, and ensures alignment with national skilling priorities. It reports to the **Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship (MSDE)**.
- **National Council for Vocational Education and Training (NCVET)**
  A regulatory body responsible for approving qualifications developed by SSCs and accrediting them as awarding bodies. NCVET ensures quality assurance and compliance with national standards.

This dual oversight structure, with NSDC overseeing performance and funding, and NCVET regulating quality, balances accountability with quality assurance across the skills ecosystem.

Figure 19. India: Regulatory and oversight structure of sector skill councils in the skilling ecosystem

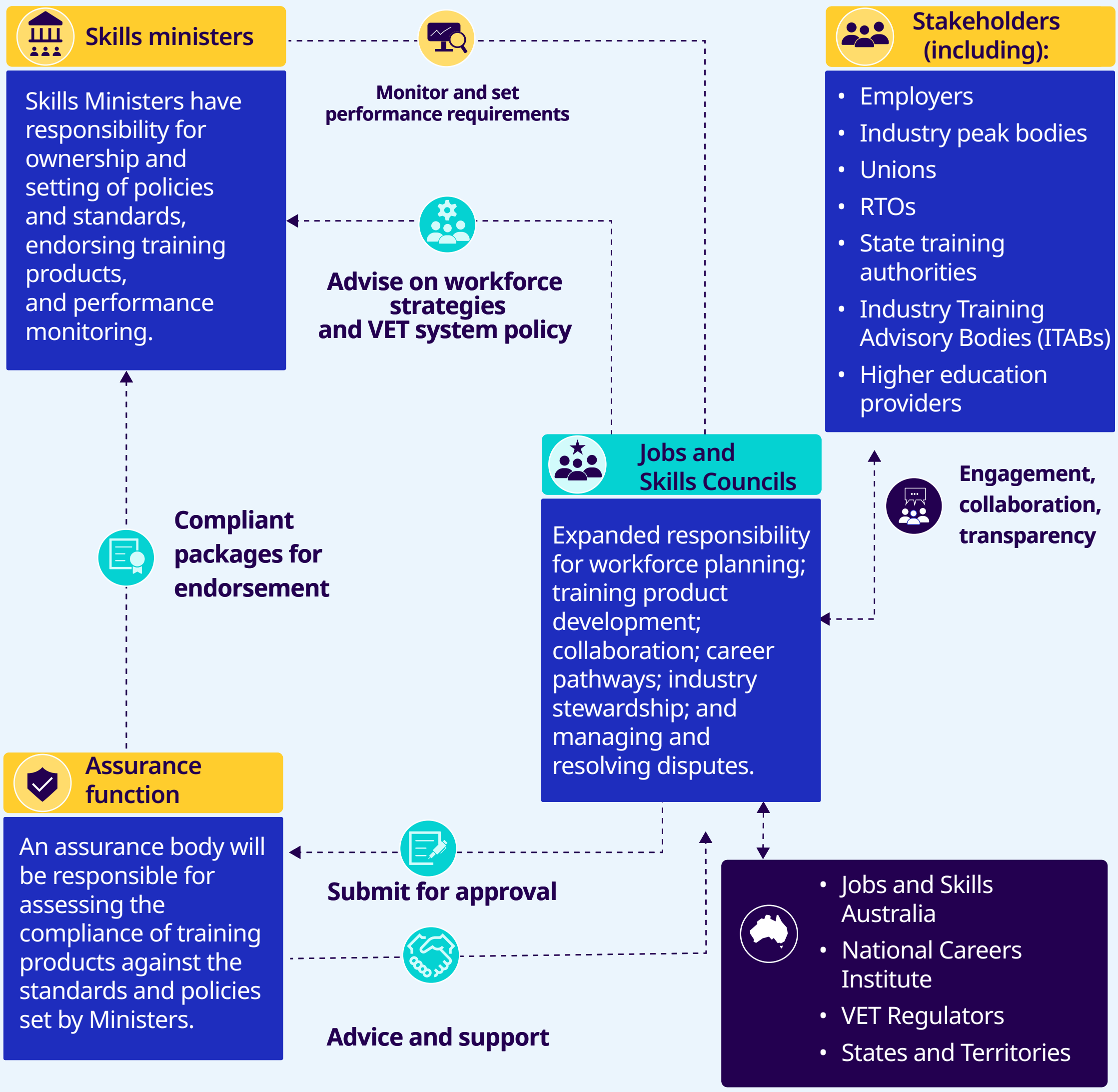


Source: ILO forthcoming

Example: Australia

Australia demonstrates a layered oversight model that combines ministerial governance with independent quality assurance mechanisms.

▶ **Figure 20. Australia: Jobs and skills council operating environment**



Source: Department of Employment and Workplace Relations n.d.

▷ Ministerial oversight

The Skills and Workforce Ministerial Council (SWMC) plays a central role in overseeing the governance of Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs). Comprizing nine ministers responsible for skills and training across Australian jurisdictions, and chaired by the commonwealth minister for Skills and Training, the SWMC:

- Sets strategic policy direction

- Endorses training products
- Monitors JSC performance to ensure alignment with national priorities

▷ **Assurance and compliance**

The Training Package Assurance Body, situated within the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, independently validates training packages against standards and policies established by the SWMC. This impartial body:

- Ensures compliance with national quality standards
- Enhances accountability and trust across the vocational education and training (VET) system
- Drives continuous improvement in training delivery

(Department of Employment and Workplace Relations n.d.)

5.3. Comparative analysis of oversight models

Oversight models for SSBs can have different governance structures, shaped by national context, institutional capacity, and stakeholder priorities. Table 7 summarizes the key advantages and disadvantages across the four primary models:

Table 7. Comparative advantages and disadvantages of oversight models for SSBs

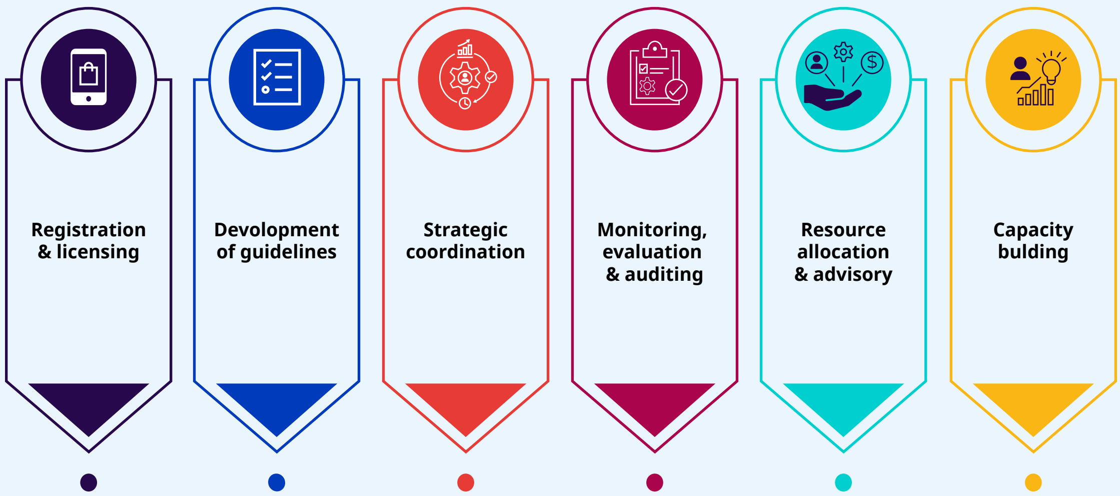
Oversight model	Advantages	Disadvantages
Ministerial oversight	• Clear alignment with government priorities and policies • Strong integration with public initiatives • Stable funding via government budgets	• Risk of political interference • Bureaucratic constraints • Vulnerable to leadership changes • May lack technical expertise
National skills authorities with broader skills remit	• Integration with broader skills ecosystem • Technical expertise in skills policy • Operational independence from politics	• Potential disconnect from economic/education policies • Funding challenges • Limited industry engagement
Chamber of commerce / industry bodies	• Strong industry alignment and credibility • Deep understanding of sectoral needs • Effective employer engagement • Existing networks for outreach and partnerships	• May prioritize business interests over broader social or educational goals • Limited experience in strategic and education governance • Risk of underrepresentation of non-industry stakeholders • Resource constraints for strategic oversight
Public-private partnerships	• Balanced stakeholder representation • Strong industry relevance • Diversified funding sources • Combines accountability with responsiveness	• Complex governance may slow decisions • Potential conflicts between public and private priorities

5.4. Core functions of oversight bodies

Oversight bodies typically perform six core functions, which together ensure the legitimacy, coherence, and effectiveness of Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs):

- **Registration and Licensing** of SSBs to ensure legitimacy and compliance.
- **Development of Guidelines** for the establishment, governance, and operations of SSBs.
- **Strategic Coordination** to align SSB activities with national policies and priorities.
- **Monitoring, Evaluation, and Auditing** of SSB performance to uphold standards and drive improvement.
- **Resource Allocation and Advisory** support to ensure adequate funding and optimal use of resources.
- **Capacity Building** initiatives to strengthen the institutional and operational capabilities of SSBs.

Figure 21. Core functions of oversight bodies



Source: authors' own elaboration

5.4.1. Registration and licensing

Oversight bodies have an important role in formally authorizing and legitimizing Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs). This typically involves a registration or licensing process through which an SSB is officially recognized as the designated skills entity for its sector. By requiring SSBs to operate under a government-issued license or mandate, the oversight authority ensures compliance with national standards and legal frameworks, reinforcing both credibility and accountability.

Licensing, usually time-bound and performance-based, incentivizes SSBs to maintain standards and align with national frameworks.

5.4.2. Development of guidelines

Oversight bodies develop guidelines, often in the form of regulations, by-laws, or directives, defining SSB mandates, governance, membership, and operational procedures. These ensure consistency, transparency, and compliance across the skills ecosystem.

By setting clear rules and standards, oversight authorities help new and existing SSBs understand their roles within the national skills ecosystem and the expectations for their performance.

5.4.3. Strategic coordination and alignment with national policies

Oversight bodies are responsible for ensuring that SSB activities are strategically coordinated and aligned with national skills strategies and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) frameworks.

They facilitate coordination among multiple SSBs and government agencies to avoid duplication and address cross-cutting skills challenges. Often, an apex or coordinating agency leads this effort, reinforcing mandates, resolving overlaps, and driving sectoral initiatives that support national objectives. By integrating sectoral strategies into national development plans, oversight bodies reinforce policy coherence and drive sectoral contributions to economic and social goals.

5.4.4. Monitoring, evaluation, and auditing of SSB performance

A key function of oversight bodies is to monitor and evaluate the performance of SSBs to uphold standards and foster continuous improvement. This involves establishing performance indicators and reporting requirements, often agreed upon at the outset.

SSBs are typically licensed for a fixed period and must submit regular reports, such as annual performance reviews or self-assessments, to the overseeing authority. These reports are reviewed, and audits or independent evaluations may be conducted to verify results, assess impact, and ensure value for money.

By rigorously monitoring outcomes, such as the development of training standards, industry uptake, and workforce competency improvements, oversight bodies can identify areas for enhancement, provide constructive feedback, and ensure accountability.

5.4.5. Resource allocation and advisory support

Oversight bodies often manage or guide the allocation of resources to SSBs and provide advisory support to ensure effective use. This involves coordinating government funding, including training levies, core budgets, or seed grants for new SSBs.

Additionally, oversight bodies advise on financial planning and resource mobilization, including strategies for industry co-funding and optimal use of training levies and grants.

5.4.6. Capacity building in SSBs

Oversight bodies are instrumental in building the capacity of both SSB members and secretariats, regardless of whether the SSB is a standalone industry body or a supported committee. They can achieve this through:

Training and development

Providing relevant training ensures that each SSB can undertake its core tasks effectively. Short training sessions or masterclasses should be delivered to committee and board members, focusing on their roles and responsibilities. Similarly, training should target building capacity of SSB secretariat for specific functions, such as labour market research and occupational standards development, to ensure a clear understanding of expectations and available resources.

Peer learning and ongoing support

Establishing regular forums for relevant officers to share experiences and challenges, exchange best practices, and develop collaborative solutions through peer and mentor support.

Initial milestones

Initial activities, such as skills assessments and occupational mapping, enable SSBs to share experiences, receive feedback from the oversight body, and collaborate on tasks such as labour force survey analysis or developing transferable skills standards. Where specific expertise is lacking, the oversight body may consider engaging national or international consultants to build capacity in niche areas like scenario planning.

Together, these functions enable oversight bodies to balance control with support, ensuring that SSBs remain legitimate, capable, and responsive to both sectoral and national priorities.

▶ 5.5. Managing performance of SSBs

Effective performance management ensures that Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) deliver on their mandates and contribute meaningfully to national skills development. Managing performance of SSBs is essential to ensure that Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) deliver on their mandates, remain accountable, and contribute meaningfully to national skills development. This involves setting clear performance measures, regularly reporting on progress and impact, and taking timely action to address underperformance.

5.5.1. Performance measures

Oversight bodies and SSBs should jointly define a balanced set of performance indicators, both qualitative and quantitative, aligned with agreed terms of reference. These indicators should align with the SSB's terms of reference and cover outputs, outcomes, and impacts.

Common indicators include:

- Number of labour market intelligence reports produced.
- Number of industry stakeholders consulted or engaged in SSB activities.
- Occupational standards or qualifications developed and endorsed.
- Number of learners trained, assessed, or certified to new standards.
- Participation in career events, distribution of guidance materials, or subscriber engagement with SSB platforms.
- Proportion of learners, trained under SSB standards, securing jobs in their sector.

- Employer investment mobilized, such as financial or in-kind contributions leveraged by SSBs to support training and skills development.

To assess **impact**, oversight bodies may collect additional evidence through surveys, interviews, or institutional feedback. For example, they might evaluate whether:

- Employers perceive improvements in workforce skills.
- Training institutions have adapted curricula based on SSB recommendations.

While it is difficult to attribute broader outcomes (e.g. reduced skills gaps or lower unemployment) solely to SSB interventions due to external influences, tracking outcome indicators, such as improved training quality or employment rates in targeted occupations, remains important.

5.5.2. Reporting performance and impact

SSBs are typically required to submit annual performance reports or self-assessments to the oversight authority. These reports should:

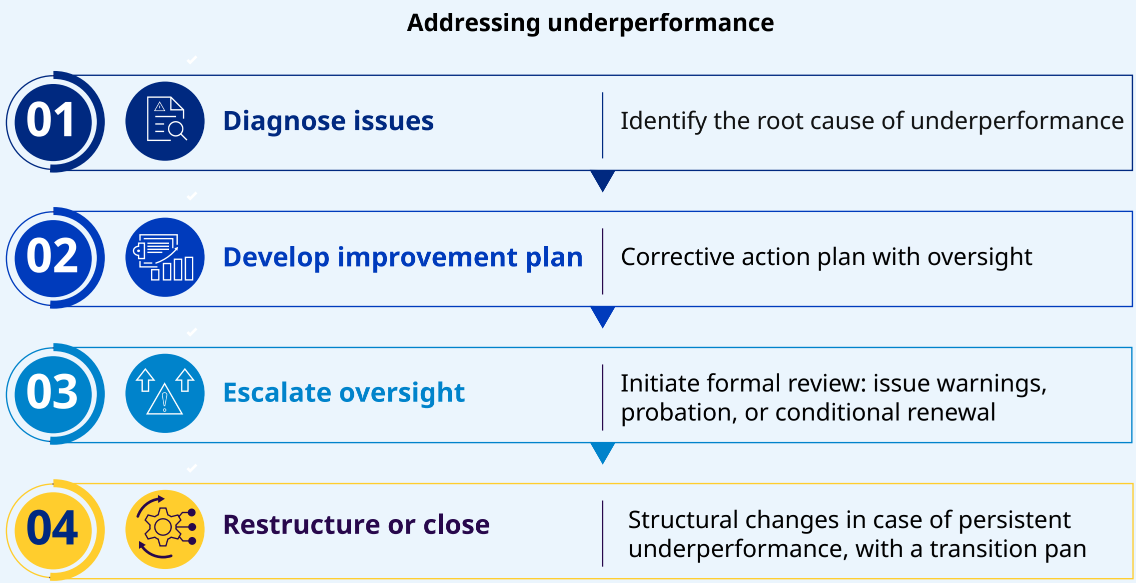
- Present achievements against agreed indicators.
- Provide evidence of outcomes and, where possible, broader impact.
- Highlight challenges and areas for improvement.

Oversight bodies use these reports to evaluate the effectiveness of SSBs and may supplement them with independent evaluations or audits to validate findings and strengthen accountability. For instance, in the United Kingdom, the UK Commission for Employment and Skills engaged the National Audit Office to assess the performance and value for money of Sector Skills Bodies during a licensing cycle. Such external reviews not only assess value for money but also reinforce the credibility of the SSB model among stakeholders.

5.5.3. Addressing underperformance

A robust performance management system must include clear mechanisms to address underperformance. When a SSB fails to meet its targets or fulfil its role, the oversight body should respond promptly and constructively, balancing accountability with support.

Figure 22. Key steps



Source: authors' own elaboration

▶ **Step 1: Diagnose issues**

The oversight body should review reports, performance data, and stakeholder feedback to identify the root causes of underperformance. This may involve direct discussions with SSB leadership to determine whether challenges stem from internal factors, such as limited capacity or weak governance, or external barriers such as economic downturns or policy or funding changes.

▶ **Step 2: Develop improvement plan**

In collaboration with the oversight body, the SSB should prepare a corrective action plan that is realistic and achievable, but which can generate real impact, effectively addressing the needs of each sector. This plan should outline specific remedial measures, revised performance targets, and a clear timeline for implementation. The oversight body should formally approve the plan and monitor progress through regular updates.

▶ **Step 3: Escalate oversight**

If performance does not improve within the agreed timeframe, the oversight body may initiate a formal review. In systems with time-bound licenses, this could result in warnings, probation, or conditional renewal of the SSB's mandate.

▶ **Step 4: Restructure or close**

In cases of persistent underperformance, structural changes may be necessary. Options include merging the SSB with another, reallocating its functions, or replacing its leadership. If the oversight body decides to withdraw the SSB's mandate, a transition plan must be in place to ensure continued sector representation and avoid disruption.

Throughout this process, **transparency and fairness** are essential. Oversight bodies should provide SSBs with opportunities to respond and improve, while acknowledging constraints such as limited resources or external shocks. With timely support and clear expectations, many performance issues can be resolved without resorting to drastic measures.

Ultimately, effective performance management ensures that SSBs remain accountable, responsive, and aligned with the skills needs of their sectors.

Example: India

The Sharada Prasad Committee, established by the Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship in 2016, conducted a comprehensive review of India's Sector Skill Councils (SSCs). The committee found that while SSCs were intended to be industry-led and responsive to labour market needs, many lacked the capacity to perform regulatory functions effectively. It highlighted issues such as fragmented governance, overlapping mandates, and inconsistent quality assurance mechanisms (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2016).

The committee recommended clearer accountability structures, improved industry engagement, and better alignment with national standards and international benchmarks. It also emphasized the need for SSCs to operate within a more integrated and credible skill development ecosystem (Ministry of Skill Development and Entrepreneurship 2016).

Example: South Africa

Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) were established in 2000, following the enactment of the Skills Development Act (1998) and the Skills Development Levies Act (1999). Initially covering 25 sectors, the number of SETAs was reduced to 23 in 2005 and further to 21 in 2011, following government reviews. (ILO 2023)

Box 23. Reform of sector skills bodies in Australia

Australia's approach to Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) has undergone multiple transformations over the past two decades. The most recent iteration, Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs) was introduced in January 2023 as part of broader TVET reforms. JSCs are tasked with:

- Workforce planning
- Developing training products
- Supporting TVET institutions
- Providing labour market intelligence

A history of reform

Australia's SSB system has evolved from Industry Training Advisory Boards in the 1990s to Industry Skills Councils, then Industry Reference Committees and Skills Service Organizations, before consolidating into Jobs and Skills Councils in 2023.

- **Late 1990s**: 29 Industry Training Advisory Boards provided sectoral input on training needs and qualifications.
- **2003–2015**: Replaced by 11 Industry Skills Councils (ISCs), which had six core functions:
    1. Industry engagement
    2. Workforce planning
    3. Training package development
    4. Quality assurance
    5. Skills advisory services
    6. Advocacy and promotion
- **2015–2023**: ISCs were replaced by:
    1. Industry Reference Committees (IRCs) – responsible for setting standards
    2. Skills Service Organizations (SSOs) – responsible for developing training packages
    3. This separation of standard-setting from delivery reflected a global trend in SSB design.
- **The Shift to Jobs and Skills Councils (2023–)**

JSCs consolidate the roles of both IRCs and SSOs, combining **industry stewardship** with **training product development**. They are expected to play an even more significant role in shaping qualifications – pending broader reforms to the TVET system.

Core functions of JSCs

1. **Workforce planning**: Conduct sectoral analysis to guide strategic priorities.
2. **Training product development**: Create training products aligned with national standards and industry needs.
3. **Implementation and monitoring**: Partner with training providers to align delivery with workforce planning and career guidance.
4. **Industry stewardship**: Serve as a source of intelligence on workforce issues and advise on national training policies.

JSCs operate as **autonomous, not-for-profit organizations** with **tripartite governance** (employers, unions, and government).

Lessons from Australia's experience

- **Continuity of purpose**: Despite structural changes, the core needs – labour market intelligence, occupational standards, and sector advocacy – have remained constant.

- **Systemic interdependence**: Changes to SSBs must be viewed within the broader TVET ecosystem. When one actor's remit shifts, others must adapt.
- **Cost of change**: Frequent restructuring can disrupt employer engagement, erode institutional memory, and incur financial costs.
- **Policy trade-offs**: Australia's move to **10 JSCs** reflects a preference for fewer, broader bodies that can cover multiple aligned occupations – balancing efficiency with sectoral specificity.

Source: (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations n.d.)

5.6. Good practices in oversight of SSBs

Effective oversight of SSBs is grounded in a set of good practices that foster accountability, collaboration, and impact. These practices help SSBs operate efficiently while staying responsive to sectoral needs and aligned with national skills development goals.

5.6.1. Inclusive governance

Oversight bodies should include representatives from government, employers, and workers, and wherever possible, from training providers, professional bodies, and underrepresented groups. Involving SSB representatives in governance structures, such as advisory boards or steering committees, ensures their perspectives inform broader decisions across the skills ecosystem. This inclusive approach fosters trust, relevance, and alignment with stakeholder needs.

5.6.2. Clear performance metrics and evaluation

Oversight bodies should set clear performance indicators, review and reporting requirements. Regular, transparent evaluations support accountability, enable evidence-based assessments, and foster continuous improvement.

5.6.3. Balanced autonomy and accountability

SSBs must have sufficient autonomy to respond to sector-specific needs. At the same time, oversight bodies should ensure alignment with national policy objectives and responsible use of resources. Striking this balance allows SSBs to innovate and respond to sectoral needs, while ensuring coherence, fiscal responsibility and public trust.

5.6.4. Integration with the skills ecosystem

Oversight bodies should foster coordination between SSBs and other skills ecosystem, actors, including ministries, training authorities and providers, and industry associations, to avoid duplication and maximize synergies. A broad oversight mandate allows for systemic alignment – ensuring that SSB outputs (e.g. standards, qualifications, labour market insights) are integrated into education, training, and employment strategies.

5.6.5. Evidence-based policy and planning

Oversight should be underpinned by robust data and analysis. Using labour market intelligence, tracer studies, and impact evaluations strengthens planning, supports adaptive strategies, and enhances the credibility of SSB governance.

5.7. Key takeaways

Effective oversight is a cornerstone of strong sector skills governance. The following key messages highlight the importance, diversity, and evolving nature of oversight mechanisms for Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs):

- **Oversight is essential:** Robust oversight mechanisms are vital for ensuring that SSBs operate with credibility, strategic focus, and accountability.
- **Oversight models vary:** Oversight structures vary across countries, shaped by political contexts, institutional frameworks, and the maturity of their skills ecosystems. Leadership may lie with line ministries, regulatory bodies, chambers of commerce, industry associations, or public-private partnerships.
- **Core functions are consistent:** Despite structural differences, oversight consistently encompasses key functions such as licensing, strategic alignment, capacity building, and monitoring, and evaluation.
- **Performance and impact matter:** Oversight bodies must track outputs, outcomes, and long-term impacts using a balanced mix of quantitative and qualitative evidence.
- **Oversight evolves:** Oversight systems are not static and evolve over time. Countries such as Australia and the UK have restructured their SSB oversight frameworks repeatedly, underscoring the need for regular review and adaptive reform.

As skills needs evolve, so too must the governance mechanisms, making oversight a dynamic, adaptive, and strategic lever for skills system transformation.

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Workers in a glass factory. © Apex Image/ILO

6 Financing and sustainability

6.1. Introduction

Financing plays a pivotal role in both the establishment and long-term sustainability of Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs). Well-designed financing models are critical for enabling SSBs to operate effectively, deliver quality services, and adapt to changing skills needs. Yet financing remains one of the most complex challenges in skills governance, requiring careful design to balance sustainability, equity, and efficiency. This chapter examines the key financial dimensions of SSBs, including typical cost structures, available funding sources, and strategic approaches to achieving financial sustainability over time.

6.2. Cost structures of SSBs

The financial requirements of Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) vary considerably, depending on several factors including their organizational structure, mandates, and the broader economic context such as cost of living in a given country. In general, the broader the mandate of an SSB, the greater its budgetary needs.

A key determinant of cost is whether the SSB is structured as an autonomous body or a committee. This section examines how different organizational models influence cost structures, to help policymakers make informed decisions regarding the appropriate SSB structure for their national context.

Policymakers must consider both the initial establishment costs and the recurring operational costs of SSBs.

Initial establishment costs typically include:

- Office infrastructure (space, equipment, and furniture),
- Recruitment of core staff,
- Development of operational manuals, norms, and procedures,
- Legal and registration costs.

Recurrent operational costs generally include:

- Staff salaries and benefits,
- Administrative and office expenses,
- Programme and activity costs required to perform the SSB's mandated functions.

Autonomous bodies incur high initial and operating costs but offer dedicated capacity for sustained sector engagement. **Committees** have minimal startup costs and lower baseline operating costs but may suffer from inefficiencies and slower output due to part-time engagement and reliance on host institutions. Here's a concise comparison of the initial and operating costs for Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) structured as **autonomous bodies** versus **committees**:

▶ **Table 8.** Cost comparison: autonomous bodies vs. committees

Cost factor	Autonomous body	Committee
Initial setup cost	**High** • Legal registration • Dedicated office space • Core staff • IT systems/administrative setup	**Low** • Leverages existing infrastructure (host ministry/ institutions) • Minimal setup • Ad-hoc secretariat support
Operating cost	**High** • Permanent staff salaries • Office maintenance and rent • Administrative expenses • Research/activities • Board meetings	**Variable (often lower)** • Member allowances/ honoraria • Meeting logistics • Part-time secretariat costs • Project-based expenses

Trade-off: While committees are more cost-effective in the short term, autonomous bodies often deliver greater long-term value due to dedicated capacity, faster execution, and clearer accountability. Committees may be more suitable in contexts with limited budgets or where SSBs are still emerging.

Cost of oversight bodies

In addition to SSB costs, the financial implications of operating an **oversight body** must be considered. These costs are often similar in nature (e.g., staffing, administration, coordination), but oversight bodies are frequently embedded within existing institutions, which can reduce start-up costs.

Examples

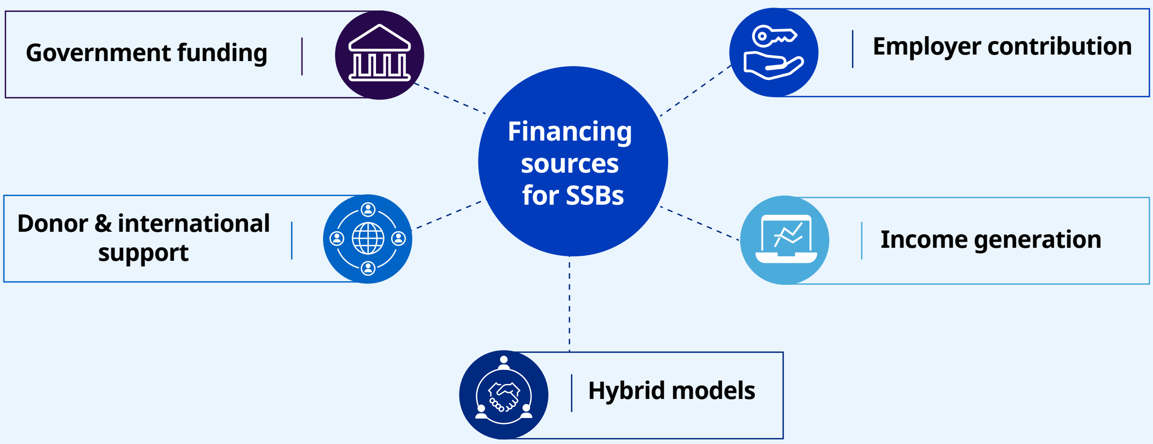
- In **Ghana**, the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET) assumed oversight responsibilities largely through existing structures, limiting new infrastructure costs (Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training n.d.)
- In **India**, the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) could take on oversight roles efficiently since it already functioned as a national skills agency (National Skill Development Corporation n.d.).

6.3. Financing sources for SSBs

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) can be financed through several funding models. The most effective approaches often blend multiple sources, providing both stability and flexibility while reducing dependency on a single stream. The primary funding mechanisms are:

1. Government funding
2. Employer contributions
3. Donor and international support
4. Income generation
5. Hybrid models

Figure 23. Financing source for SSBs



Source: authors' own elaboration

6.3.1. Government funding

Government funding is a foundational source of funding for many SSBs. It can cover:

- **Initial establishment costs** (e.g. infrastructure, staffing, legal setup),
- **Ongoing operational expenses**, either fully or partially,
- **Targeted programme funding** for specific initiatives.

Examples

- **Australia**: SSBs receive core funding from the Department of Education, Skills, and Employment. (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations n.d.)
- **New Zealand**: Uses a core funding model to allow SSBs to focus on their mandates without needing to divert attention to income-generating activities. (Tertiary Education Commission n.d.)
- **Canada**: Transitioned from core funding in 2016 to a competitive model. Since 2021, Workforce Development Councils and other organizations applied for funding through the **Sectoral Workforce Solutions Program (SWSP)**, which supports projects in training, reskilling, equity initiatives, and workforce development. (Employment and Social Development Canada 2025)
- **India**: Implements several national skills initiatives through SSBs, with funding channelled via government schemes. (National Skill Development Corporation n.d.)

6.3.2. Employer contributions

Employers are key stakeholders in SSBs and can contribute through various mechanisms:

- **Membership Fees**: Regular payments from member organizations to support core operations.
- **Training Levies**: Mandatory contributions from employers, often based on payroll or turnover, used to fund skills development activities.
- **In-kind Support**: Provision of resources such as expert staff, training venues, or equipment.

Example

- **South Africa**: The **Skills Development Levy (SDL)** requires employers, whose payroll is above R500 000 per annum, to contribute 1% of their total payroll. A large portion (80%) of this is allocated to Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), which function similarly to SSBs. 20% of the levy is allocated to the National Skills Fund to fund National Priorities in the Country (South African Revenue Service n.d.).

Box 24. South Africa's SETAs: A levy-based model for sustainable skills funding

Ensuring financial sustainability is a key challenge for Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs). South Africa's Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) provide a well-established example of a levy-based funding system that directly supports sectoral training and workforce development

SETAs were established in 2000 under the Skills Development Act (1998) and the Skills Development Levies Act (1999). They operate as autonomous, employer-funded organizations, overseeing sector-specific training and skills planning while ensuring strong industry participation.

Key features

- Employer-paid levy system: businesses with an annual payroll exceeding R500,000 must contribute 1% of their payroll to the south african revenue service (sars).
- Sector-specific funding allocation: each seta then receives 80% of the levies collected within its sector. 20% Is allocated to the national skills fund (nsf) within the department of higher education and training.
- Grant-based system for employers: employers who submit workplace skills plans (wsps) and annual training reports (atrs) can receive mandatory and discretionary grants for employee training and education
- Sector skills planning: setas are responsible for developing and annually updating the sector skills plans (ssps), ensuring that skills and LLL institutions align their programs with industry needs.

Source: (South African Revenue Service. n.d.)

Challenges of employer-funded models

- **Limited perceived value of core outputs**: Key SSB functions such as labour market intelligence and policy advice benefit the sector as a whole, but may not offer immediate, tangible returns to individual employers, reducing their willingness to contribute financially.
- **Low willingness to pay**: Employers – particularly small and micro-enterprises – may be reluctant to invest in training products without clear, measurable outcomes.
- **Reduced inclusivity**: Limiting access to services based on payment or membership can undermine the SSB's mandate to serve the entire sector.
- **Challenges in identifying viable commercial opportunities**: Developing non-competitive, commercially viable services that do not conflict with the SSB's public mandate can be difficult.
- **Unequal capacity across sectors**: Sectors dominated by small enterprises may struggle to mobilize sufficient employer contributions, unlike those with large, well-resourced firms.

6.3.3. Donor and international support

International organizations often provide technical and financial assistance to support the establishment, capacity building, and operations of SSBs. In many cases, multiple donors collaborate to support SSB development across priority sectors.

Examples

- **Jordan**: Supported by the ILO, World Bank, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), and GIZ. (ETF 2020)
- **Ghana**: ILO and GIZ assisted in establishing SSBs in three priority sectors. (ILO 2024a)
- **Ethiopia, Kenya, Zambia**: ILO supported the creation of SSBs.
- **Bangladesh**: Donor funding facilitated the establishment of the Industry Skills Council (ISC) for the Leather and Leather Goods Sector, leading to the creation of the Bangladesh Centre for Excellence in Leather Skills, which provides training, research, and curriculum development. (ILO 2012)

While donor investment is crucial, especially in low- and middle-income countries, **sustainability challenges** often arise once initial funding ends. These challenges are frequently due to:

- Lack of built-in sustainable funding strategies,
- Overreliance on assumptions of continued donor funding, which may not materialize.

6.3.4. Income generation

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) are increasingly expected to generate their own revenue. To achieve this, many have adopted diversified income generation strategies that align with their core mandate and uphold transparency and impartiality.

Some SSBs are authorized to generate income through delegated functions such as:

- Training delivery
- Assessment and certification
- Accreditation services

While these functions can support financial sustainability, they may also raise concerns about potential conflicts of interest. To mitigate such risks, it is essential to establish **robust governance mechanisms**, **functional separation of roles**, and **transparent financial reporting**. To reduce reliance on regulatory functions and enhance sustainability, SSBs can explore alternative income streams, including:

- Sale of training materials and curricula
- Participation in international projects and donor-funded initiatives
- Provision of business development and consultancy services to enterprises, such as workforce planning, skills gap analysis, and training needs assessments
- Management of skilling projects funded by public or private entities
- Engagement in Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) partnerships
- Donations and sponsorships from private sector or philanthropic organizations

These activities not only generate revenue but also strengthen the SSB's role as a sectoral knowledge hub and service provider.

Examples

- **India**: SSBs have engaged in international collaborations to provide training and consultancy. (ILO 2024b)
- **United Kingdom**: SSBs have developed and sold training products and services internationally. (European Commission 2009)

Box 25. India's Sector Skills Councils – Diversified income generation options

India's SSCs have developed a robust and diversified funding model. These operate as not-for-profit standalone bodies. Initially supported by the National Skill Development Corporation (NSDC) through a grant of up to US $600,000, they have progressively transitioned to independent revenue generation. Key funding sources include:

- **Membership fees** from enterprises, industry associations, and training providers

- **Affiliation fees** for training centres seeking SSC recognition
- **Certification and assessment fees** aligned with National Occupational Standards (NOS)
- **Monetization of training products**, including curricula and learning materials
- **Advisory services** for industry-led skill development strategies
- **Collaboration projects** with industries and international partners, including CSR initiatives
- **Project management services** for government and private sector skilling programs

This model has enabled India's SSCs to move from reliance on government grants to financial self-sufficiency, while maintaining sectoral impact and credibility.

Source: (ILO 2024c)

Guiding principles for sustainable income generation

To ensure that income-generating activities do not compromize regulatory functions, SSBs should:

- Maintain **clear separation** between commercial and regulatory roles
- Adopt **transparent pricing models** and **conflict of interest policies**
- Align all services with the SSB's **core mission and public interest**
- Regularly **monitor and evaluate** the impact of income-generating activities on quality and impartiality

By adopting a **purpose-driven income strategy**, SSBs can enhance their financial sustainability while reinforcing their role as trusted custodians of skills quality and relevance.

6.3.5. Hybrid Models

Blending public, private, and other funding sources can enhance financial sustainability and reduce dependency on any single stream.

Example

- **Canada's Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Council** combines **government grants** with **corporate sponsorships** to fund its initiatives, enabling both stability and innovation. (ICTC n.d.)

Box 26. Brazil's SENAI – A hybrid funding model

SENAI, Brazil's leading provider of vocational education and training (VET), operates with a hybrid funding model combining public and private sources:

1. Employer contributions (Sistema S)

a. Legally mandated payroll contributions from employers fund vocational education.
b. Once the primary source, these have declined in relative importance.

2. Government funding

a. Operational subsidies and project-specific funding aligned with national workforce goals.

3. Fees and tuition

a. Charges for training programs and specialized courses paid by individuals or companies.

4. Donations and sponsorships

a. Contributions from companies, foundations, and international organizations for equipment, research, or scholarships.

5. Income-generating activities

a. Consulting services and specialized industry training tailored to enterprise needs.

SENAI's model demonstrates how a VET institution can balance public mandates with entrepreneurial approaches to ensure long-term sustainability.

Source: (UNESCO 2022)

6.4. Analysis of funding methods

The table below presents a comparative analysis of common funding mechanisms used by Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs), highlighting their advantages and limitations.

Table 9. Analysis of funding methods

Funding method	Pros	Cons
Government grants	• Stable funding aligned with national skills policies	• Risk of politicization • Bureaucratic delays • Limited flexibility
Employers' contribution	• Encourages accountability to industry needs	• Volatile during economic downturns • Uneven participation across sectors
Skills levies	• Ensures employer buy-in • Sustainable if legally mandated	• Requires robust administration • Resistance from SMEs • Compliance challenges
Donor support	• Facilitates initial setup • Brings international expertise	• Time-bound funding • May not ensure long-term sustainability
Income-generating activities	• Diversifies income streams • Promotes innovation and market responsiveness • Encourages entrepreneurial mindset	• Risk of mission drift • Requires business acumen and resources • Potential conflicts of interest
Hybrid models	• Diversifies financial risk • Balances public and private interests	• Complex governance structures • Higher coordination and transaction costs

6.5. Conclusion: Towards sustainable financing mechanisms for SSBs

Securing sustainable funding remains a critical challenge for Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) globally. From the outset, policymakers must identify viable financing models that can support an SSB's mandate over the long term (ETF 2013). International experience confirms that there is no one-size-fits-all solution – various models (government-funded, industry-funded, donor-supported, income generation, or hybrid) have been tested, each with distinct advantages and limitations.

Risks of over-reliance on one funding stream and commercialization

Experience has shown the limits of **single-source funding models**. Reliance solely on government budgets can leave SSBs vulnerable to political shifts or fiscal austerity, whereas expecting councils to self-finance entirely through industry fees or commercial activities is equally fraught (ILO 2023). Notably, attempts to transition from public to purely employer funding have often proved **unsustainable**. In several countries where authorities withdrew core funding after initial periods, many SSBs could not survive or had to downsize and merge, as a purely employer-funded approach failed to generate sufficient revenue (Powell 2016).

Employers are generally reluctant to pay for services that confer broad sectoral benefits if non-paying competitors also benefit, creating a free-rider problem (Powell 2016). If an SSB restricts its outputs only to paying members or engages heavily in fee-for-service consulting, it risks limiting its impact and straying from its core mandate. Furthermore, councils often struggle to find commercial revenue streams that do not conflict with their remit. For instance, when an SSB starts providing training or certification to raise funds, it may come to be seen as a competitor to training providers rather than a neutral coordinator, eroding trust among stakeholders (Aggarwal et al., 2023). These **risks of over-commercialization** highlight the importance of safeguarding the SSB's public mission even as it explores income-generating avenues.

Likewise, **donor funding** or project-based grants – while helpful as startup support – are inherently short-term. Donor-initiated SSB projects have proven largely unsustainable unless a long-term domestic funding source (public or levy-based) takes over to finance ongoing operations (ILO 2020). This underscores the need for local ownership of financing mechanisms from early on.

Skills levies have emerged as a promising mechanism for sustainable employer co-financing. These levies can support SSB operations and reduce dependence on annual government appropriations (ILO, 2020). However, their success hinges on **transparent governance** and **demonstrable value** to employers.

In practice, **hybrid funding models** have proven most effective. These combine public funding – through direct budget allocations or earmarked training levies – with private sector contributions such as membership fees, levies, or paid services (ILO 2020;). This approach balances financial stability with stakeholder ownership, enabling SSBs to deliver sector-wide public goods (e.g., standards development, labour market research) while reducing reliance on any single funding source.

Governance and accountability

Effective governance is essential to make hybrid financing work. Public funding should come with accountability mechanisms but avoid excessive control that could undermine an SSB's autonomy and industry relevance (Powell, 2016). Similarly, private contributions must be managed transparently to prevent dominance by any single interest group. Research shows that embedding SSBs within ministries or tying funding too tightly to government contracts can erode their independence (Powell 2016). Conversely, involving employers in funding decisions – such as through training fund boards – can improve buy-in and compliance (Johanson, 2009).

A **tripartite governance structure** – involving government, employers, and workers – is key to ensuring accountability, transparency, and impartiality. This structure reinforces the SSB's role as an "honest broker" in the skills ecosystem (ILO 2023).

Efficiency and cost management

In addition to diversifying revenue, SSBs must manage costs efficiently. Lean administrative structures, shared services (e.g., common labour market information systems), and in-kind contributions (e.g., office space, seconded staff) can significantly reduce overheads. For instance, rather than each SSB building its own information systems, common platforms for labour market data or trainee tracking can be established and used by multiple sector bodies – an approach that has proven cost-effective in some countries. Similarly, co-locating SSB secretariats within existing institutions or securing in-kind contributions (such as office space or seconded staff from industry and training providers) can lower operating expenses. Every such saving enables more funds to be channelled into the SSB's substantive work on skills development. Ultimately, a sustainable financing strategy must not only raise adequate resources but also use them efficiently in pursuit of the council's objectives (Powell, 2016; ILO 2023). These savings allow more resources to be directed toward core functions such as standards development, quality assurance, and sectoral coordination.

6.5.1. Key takeaways: Sustainable financing for SSBs

A sustainable financing strategy for SSBs must blend **diverse funding sources**, **strong governance**, and **prudent financial management**. To achieve this, the following principles should guide the design and implementation of such a strategy:

- **Plan for long-term sustainability from the outset**.
- **Adopt hybrid funding models** that combine public funding (e.g. government budgets, training levies) with private sector contributions (e.g. membership fees, paid services), donor funding and income generation to ensure financial resilience and stakeholder ownership.
- **Design levy systems carefully** to institutionalize employer co-investment, with transparent management and clear value propositions to encourage compliance and trust.
- **Safeguard the SSB's public mission** by avoiding over-commercialization and ensuring income-generating activities do not conflict with regulatory or coordination roles.
- **Ensure strong, tripartite governance** involving government, employers, and workers to maintain transparency, accountability, and impartiality in the use of funds.
- **Maximize efficiency and reduce costs** through shared services, lean operations, and in-kind contributions, allowing more resources to be directed toward core functions.

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A factory worker wears hearing protection during a shift in a footwear manufacturing plant in Cambodia. © Marcel Crozet/ILO

7 Establishing and operating SSBs

7.1. Introduction

This chapter explains the processes to establish and operate SSBs. It also provides examples from various countries and tools that can be used for implementing core roles.

7.2. Process for establishing and operating a Sector Skills Body (SSB)

Although the process for establishing and operating SSBs varies across countries, it generally unfolds in three main phases: planning and design, institutional setup, and operationalization. Each phase comprises a series of key steps, mentioned below and explained in the sections that follow.

▶ **Figure 24. Process of establishing and operating Sector Skills Body**

Source: authors' own elaboration

Phase 1: Planning and design

1. **Establish a steering committee**
   Form a steering committee to engage and secure commitment from tripartite partners (government, employers, and workers) and other relevant stakeholders.
2. **Develop guidelines**
   Draft comprehensive guidelines outlining the roles, responsibilities, governance structures, funding mechanisms, and the scope of the SSB within the broader education and training ecosystem.
3. **Identify priority sectors**
   Use labour market data and stakeholder consultations to select sectors of strategic importance.

Phase 2: Institutional setup

4. **Establish an oversight mechanism**
   Designate or create a body responsible for oversight, coordination, and strategic guidance of the SSB.
5. **Secure sustainable funding**
   Identify and mobilize financial resources to support the establishment and ongoing operations of the SSB.
6. **Develop an operational manual**
   Prepare a manual detailing rules, procedures, and accountability frameworks for management, operations, monitoring, and evaluation.
7. **Set up infrastructure**
   Establish the physical and administrative infrastructure required for the SSB's operations.
8. **Form governance structures and secretariat**
   Constitute a governing board, secretariat, and relevant sub-committees. Appoint members and recruit qualified staff.

Phase 3: Operationalization

9. **Formulate a sector skills strategy and plan**
   Develop a strategy that outlines both short-term actions and long-term goals aligned with sectoral needs.
10. **Implement SSB's strategy and plan**
    Execute the SSB strategy and plan.

7.3. Phase 1: Planning and design phase

7.3.1. Set up a steering committee

The government may establish a **Multi-Stakeholder Steering Committee (MSSC)** to assess the current situation and co-design a suitable model, guidelines, strategy, and action plan for setting up Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs). The MSSC can enhance legitimacy, foster early buy-in, and help identify overlapping mandates, capacity gaps, and political economy risks before formalizing institutional structures.

The MSSC should function as a **taskforce to develop SSB model**. It should operate with a clear, time-bound mandate, typically six to nine months, to develop proposals and build consensus on the SSB's mandate, governance, financing, and piloting. This work lays the foundation for a credible and effective SSB.

The MSSC should be **compact and tripartite at its core**, with balanced representation across gender, regions, and enterprises (including MSMEs). Members may include line ministries, regulators, employer and worker organizations, training providers, independent experts, and civil society.

7.3.2. Develop remit and guidelines

Situating SSBs in the national context

As discussed in Chapter 2, countries typically establish Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) to strengthen national skills systems, whether by addressing persistent challenges such as mismatches, graduate unemployment, and weak employer engagement, or by tackling emerging pressures from green and digital transitions potentially leading to skills obsolescence.

Clarify the strategic focus

The first step in establishing an SSB is to clearly define the key challenges it aims to address. These challenges provide the rationale for its creation and shape its strategic focus. A well-defined remit ensures that the SSB remains relevant, targeted, and responsive to sectoral needs.

Develop guidelines for establishing SSBs

The ministry or national coordinating agency should lead the development of comprehensive guidelines to support the establishment of SSBs. These guidelines should be developed through inclusive consultations with relevant government departments, employers' and workers' organizations, sectoral industry associations, skills regulatory bodies, training providers, and civil society organizations.

Key elements to include in the guidelines:

- **Define sectoral coverage** using national classifications and value-chain logic.
- **Map stakeholders** and establish consultation protocols to ensure inclusive engagement.
- **Draft the SSB mandate**, outlining the functions needed to address identified challenges (see Chapter 3 for potential functions).
- **Design governance structures**, including the composition of the board, secretariat, and committees, and clarify the nature of autonomy and accountability.
- **Plan the evidence base**, including commissioning or validating a Sector Skills Anticipation Study.
- **Recommend financing options**, such as government grants, levies, donor support, or a blended approach.
- **Chart the legal pathway**, identifying enabling instruments and steps toward formal recognition.
- **Carry out a feasibility study** and revise guidelines based on the outcome of the study.

In addition to these deliverables, governance safeguards should be clearly built into the guidelines, particularly measures to ensure transparent decision-making and balanced participation of stakeholders.

Align the SSB's Remit with the TVET System

The SSB's remit must align with the broader skills ecosystem. This requires a thorough review of its proposed terms of reference and meaningful stakeholder consultations to build a shared understanding of its mandate and operational expectations, particularly regarding integration and collaboration with existing institutions.

Clarity in the remit is essential. Overlapping or vague mandates can lead to duplication, reduced cooperation, and diminished effectiveness. The SSB should have a clearly defined role that complements existing structures and contributes to a coherent and coordinated skills development system.

For example, in New Zealand, duties of **Workforce Development Councils (WDC), specifically require** a WDC to the extent that is necessary or desirable in the circumstances, work collaboratively with:

(i) providers and take all reasonable steps to avoid any adverse impact on its relationship with a provider or providers;

(ii) other WDCs, particularly on matters of common interest;

(iii) New Zealand Qualification Authority, in relation to qualifications development, programme endorsement, or developing, setting, or maintaining skill standards or national curricula; and

(iv) any relevant regulatory body that performs or exercises any functions, duties, or powers under an enactment in relation to entry to an occupation in any of the specified industries covered by the WDC (Tertiary Education Commission. n.d.).

Establish a legal framework and institutionalize the SSB

Formal recognition is essential for SSBs to function effectively. Embedding their mandate in legislation, regulations, or other binding instruments clarifies roles, legitimizes activities, and provides a stable foundation for sustained engagement.

Countries such as New Zealand, Ghana, and Jordan have successfully integrated SSBs into their legal frameworks, ensuring clearly defined mandates and ministerial support. In contexts where legislation is not yet in place, policymakers may seek endorsement from relevant ministries and institutions. These arrangements can evolve and eventually be formalized to ensure long-term sustainability and institutional coherence.

Balance sectoral and geographic approaches

While SSBs typically operate at the national level, regional engagement is increasingly important. This may involve:

- Establishing regional committees with local stakeholders;
- Deploying secretariat staff in specific regions to align with local strategies and needs.

National-level activities should incorporate geographic considerations, including disaggregated data and inclusive stakeholder engagement across regions. Expanding geographic responsibilities increases resource demands and requires attention to sub-national TVET structures and linguistic diversity.

For example, Ethiopia is piloting agro-processing SSBs at both federal and state levels, demonstrating a multi-tiered approach to sectoral development.

7.3.3. Select priority sectors

Governments and social partners should identify and prioritize sectors for establishing SSBs. Countries may use standard classifications, such as the International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC), to define sectors (see section 1.1.3.1 for details). However, given national priorities, available resources, and stakeholder capacity and commitment, countries typically begin by establishing SSBs in a few priority sectors.

To prioritize sectors, countries can apply the following criteria:

- National development priorities
- Sector size and economic significance
- Skills gaps and labour market needs

National development priorities

Governments often select sectors based on national development, industrial, and employment strategies. These strategies identify sectors that are critical for economic transformation, social progress, and job creation. By establishing SSBs in these areas, countries can build a skilled workforce aligned with sectors that offer high growth and employment potential. This targeted approach helps achieve national development goals and improves labour market outcomes.

For example, Chile prioritized mining and agriculture, while Ghana focused on agro-processing and manufacturing.

In addition to growth potential, some countries also prioritize sectors for their social impact, such as creating opportunities for women, youth, or rural communities.

If countries have not yet identified strategic sectors, or if existing priorities are outdated, stakeholders can conduct economic and labour market analyses to determine which sectors are most critical for employment, growth, and skills development. Evidence-based approaches, such as the ILO's *Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED)* methodology, support sector-level skills anticipation and help identify priority sectors and their skill needs (ILO 2015).

Sector size and economic significance

The size of a sector, measured by employment levels and the number of enterprises, helps determine whether it can support a standalone SSB. Small sectors with limited workforce or enterprise representation may lack the critical mass needed to sustain an independent body. In such cases, countries can group related sectors into broader clusters to form a viable SSB.

In contrast, large sectors with significant employment and economic impact, such as agriculture or manufacturing, often require dedicated SSBs to address their specific challenges and opportunities.

Skills gaps and labour market needs

Countries should prioritize sectors that face significant skills shortages, rapid technological change, or urgent upskilling needs. Labour market intelligence, employer surveys, and policy analysis can help identify these sectors. Establishing SSBs in such areas enables targeted interventions that not only build workforce capacity but also enhance sectoral competitiveness and resilience.

Countries may also prioritize sectors with emerging or evolving skill demands, such as information and communication technology or renewable energy, to future-proof the economy and support innovation-driven growth.

Regardless of the criteria, sector prioritization must be transparent and evidence-based, with safeguards against political bias or dominance by powerful stakeholders

7.3.3.1. International Standard Industrial Classification of all economic activities (ISIC)

To ensure consistency in defining and selecting sectors, many countries use standard international classifications such as ISIC. The United Nations developed ISIC to classify economic activities in a structured and consistent way. Based on internationally agreed principles, ISIC offers a unified framework for collecting, reporting, and analysing economic data across countries and sectors.

ISIC plays a key role in supporting economic research, policymaking, and strategic planning. By organizing complex economic information into clearly defined categories, it enables stakeholders to monitor trends, compare data, and design targeted interventions.

ISIC Revision 4, the most widely used version, groups economic activities into **21 broad sections**, labelled **A through U (see below for coding of sectors)**. Using ISIC also enables international comparability, facilitates donor and partner engagement, and supports cross-country benchmarking

The International Standard Industrial Classification of All Economic Activities (ISIC) organizes economic activities into broad categories called "sections". As per ISIC Revision 4, the most widely used and referenced version, these sections are as follows:

- A: Agriculture, forestry, and fishing
- B: Mining and quarrying
- C: Manufacturing
- D: Electricity, gas, steam, and air conditioning supply
- E: Water supply; sewerage, waste management, and remediation activities
- F: Construction
- G: Wholesale and retail trade; repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles
- H: Transportation and storage
- I: Accommodation and food service activities
- J: Information and communication
- K: Financial and insurance activities
- L: Real estate activities
- M: Professional, scientific, and technical activities
- N: Administrative and support service activities
- O: Public administration and defence; compulsory social security
- P: Education
- Q: Human health and social work activities
- R: Arts, entertainment, and recreation
- S: Other service activities
- T: Activities of households as employers; undifferentiated goods- and services-producing activities of households for own use
- U: Activities of extraterritorial organizations and bodies

Source: United Nations 2008

Each section is further divided into **divisions, groups, and classes**, allowing for detailed and precise categorization. This hierarchical structure helps governments, researchers, and organizations analyse economic patterns at various levels, from broad sectoral trends to specific industry insights. For example, **Mining and Quarrying** sector has five divisions (box).

▶ **Table 10.** Mining and Quarrying divisions and groups

Division code	Division name	Example groups/classes
05	Mining of coal and lignite	• 0510 Mining of hard coal • 0520 Mining of lignite
06	Extraction of crude petroleum and natural gas	• 0610 Extraction of crude petroleum • 0620 Extraction of natural gas
07	Mining of metal ores	• 0710 Mining of iron ores • 0721 Mining of uranium and thorium ores • 0729 Mining of other non-ferrous metal ores
08	Other mining and quarrying	• 0810 Quarrying of stone, sand and clay • 0891 Mining of chemical and fertiliser minerals • 0892 Extraction of peat • 0893 Extraction of salt • 0899 Other mining and quarrying n.e.c.
09	Mining support service activities	• 0910 Support activities for petroleum and natural gas extraction • 0990 Support activities for other mining and quarrying

Beyond using classifications, the actual process of sector selection can follow different approaches, depending on governance traditions and policy priorities.

7.3.3.2. Approaches to sector selection

Countries typically use one or more of the following approaches to identify sectors for establishing Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs):

- **Top-down nomination**: Policymakers propose priority sectors based on labour market analysis, economic strategies, and policy objectives. This approach ensures strategic alignment and efficiency but requires thorough preparation and consultation with stakeholders.
- **Stakeholder recommendations**: An expert committee – comprizing representatives from government, employers' and workers' organizations, chambers of commerce and industry, skills regulatory bodies, private sector associations, and subject matter experts – advises policymakers on sector selection. This inclusive process strengthens legitimacy and relevance.
- **Expressions of interest**: Industry sectors or coalitions submit formal proposals to establish SSBs. This bottom-up approach promotes transparency and engagement but may be resource-intensive. It can also lead to fragmented coverage if sub-sectors apply independently. Policymakers may need to encourage collaboration among applicants to ensure coherence.

Regardless of the approach, countries should only establish SSBs where employers and worker representatives demonstrate clear and sustained support. Broad ownership is essential for effective functioning and long-term impact.

In practice, countries often combine approaches, for example, using top-down nomination to define broad priorities, followed by stakeholder consultations to refine and validate sector choices.

7.3.3.3. Country examples for sector selection

The following examples illustrate how Australia and South Africa approach sector selection.

Australia

Australia used the following criteria to establish Jobs and Skills Councils (JSCs):

- **Alignment with national classifications and training packages**: Each JSC was mapped to the Australian and New Zealand Standard Industrial Classification (ANZSIC) and linked to national vocational training packages. The ANZSIC framework guided the definition of industry sectors (Australian Bureau of Statistics 2013).
- **Coverage across the economy, including emerging industries**: The JSCs span key sectors such as manufacturing, agribusiness, construction, public safety, and health services. They also include emerging industries like hydrogen, cybersecurity, artificial intelligence, and air/space logistics (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations 2023)
- **Formal establishment and governance**: The Australian Government announced the ten JSCs and defined their scope through the Jobs and Skills Councils Program Guidelines. The councils operate in a tripartite manner and collaborate with Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) to align workforce planning and respond to skills needs (Jobs and Skills Australia n.d.).
- **Flexible policy framework**: Governance and coverage are maintained through DEWR grant agreements and performance frameworks. The Program Guidelines allow for adjustments over time to respond to changing needs. (Department of Employment and Workplace Relations 2023)

South Africa

South Africa established 21 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), which broadly align with the 21 ISIC categories (Sections A to U). Table 10 presents a high-level comparison of how the SETAs align with the ISIC broad categories. Most SETAs map well to the major ISIC categories, especially the core economic sectors like agriculture, mining, manufacturing, construction, transport, and education. Some SETAs combine several ISIC sections under one authority to reflect national priorities and practical administrative boundaries (e.g., Services SETA covers multiple service-oriented ISIC sections). Certain ISIC sections – such as Real Estate, Activities of Households, and Extraterritorial Organizations – do not have direct SETA equivalents.

Table 11. Comparison of ISIC broad categories with South African SETAs

ISIC Section	ISIC Broad Category	Related South African SETA(s)	Comments
A	Agriculture, forestry and fishing	Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries SETA (AgriSETA)	Direct alignment with ISIC Section A
B	Mining and quarrying	Mining Qualifications Authority (MQA)	Direct alignment with ISIC Section B
C	Manufacturing	Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority (CHIETA), Fibre Processing and Manufacturing SETA (FP&M SETA), Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (MERSETA)	Manufacturing spread across several SETAs

ISIC Section	ISIC Broad Category	Related South African SETA(s)	Comments
D	Electricity, gas, steam, air conditioning supply	Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority (EWSETA)	Direct alignment
E	Water supply; sewerage, waste management	Energy and Water Sector Education and Training Authority (EWSETA)	Water supply included under EWSETA
F	Construction	Construction Education and Training Authority (CETA)	Direct alignment
G	Wholesale and retail trade; repair	Wholesale and Retail SETA (W&RSETA)	Direct alignment
H	Transportation and storage	Transport Education and Training Authority (TETA)	Direct alignment
I	Accommodation and food service	Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport SETA (CATHSSETA)	Hospitality and tourism included here
J	Information and communication	Media, Information and Communication Technologies SETA (MICT SETA)	Direct alignment
K	Financial and insurance activities	Banking Sector Education and Training Authority (BankSETA) Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority (INSETA)	Banking and insurance split into two SETAs
L	Real estate activities	No direct SETA; may fall under Services SETA	Real estate not specifically covered
M	Professional, scientific and technical activities	Services SETA	Covers a broad range of professional services
N	Administrative and support service	Services SETA	Includes administrative and other support services
O	Public administration and defence	Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA)	Covers public service sector
P	Education	Education, Training and Development Practices SETA (ETDP SETA)	Direct alignment
Q	Human health and social work	Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority (HWSETA)	Direct alignment
R	Arts, entertainment and recreation	Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sport SETA (CATHSSETA)	Culture, arts, sports included here
S	Other service activities	Services SETA	Covers various other services
T	Activities of households as employers	Not specifically covered by a SETA	Informal sector activities typically not covered
U	Activities of extraterritorial organizations	Not applicable	Not relevant for SETAs

Source: (Services SETA 2019)

Other country examples

- **Chile**: The government prioritized high-growth sectors such as mining and agriculture. It piloted SSBs to test the model and assess feasibility before scaling up. (Bravo 2021)
- **Ghana**: Authorities focused on agro-processing and manufacturing. They embedded SSBs within legal frameworks to ensure sustainability and institutional support). (NEPAD n.d.)
- **Brazil**: Policymakers initiated broader sector clusters to allow flexible engagement with stakeholders. This approach enabled inclusive participation and adaptability. (Powell 2016)
- **New Zealand**: The country grouped related sectors to pool resources and promote cross-sector collaboration. This clustering approach supported efficient use of capacity and fostered innovation (Powell 2016)
- **Denmark and Spain**: Both countries leveraged strong traditions of social dialogue and existing industry bodies to advance sectoral skills agendas. They achieved progress without establishing formal SSBs, relying instead on well-established partnerships and institutional mechanisms. (Cedefop 2008)

7.3.4. Pilot the SSBs in a limited number of sectors

A common challenge in establishing Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) is the tendency to introduce them across many – or even all – sectors simultaneously, without adequate piloting. When the model is not sufficiently tested, countries miss the opportunity to identify potential challenges, refine governance arrangements, and validate the effectiveness of the approach before scaling up. Critically, premature large-scale rollout can overstretch the capacities of oversight bodies and industry partners, risking a loss of confidence in the SSB model and eventual disengagement from key stakeholders.

Funding constraints further compound this challenge. In many cases, the financial resources allocated for establishing SSBs are limited and time-bound, prompting governments to launch several SSBs at once to utilize available funds before they lapse. This approach often weakens implementation. A more effective strategy is to invest in a small number of well-designed pilots that can demonstrate tangible results and provide a proof of concept for broader adoption.

Robust pilots should be maintained until they generate clear outputs – such as updated curricula, newly developed occupational standards, or strengthened labour market intelligence systems. They should also assess the resource requirements and capacity needs of the oversight body to ensure readiness for future expansion.

Importantly, a phased approach does not imply that every sector must eventually have its own SSB. Following successful pilots, countries may choose to focus on a select number of priority sectors while engaging the wider economy through complementary mechanisms (see Section 2.4).

Explore!

- For more information on choosing sectors go to section 7.2.
- For more information on putting in place SSBs go to section chapter 7.
- For an example of a country that piloted SSBs in a number of sectors go to Box 21: Ghana *chapter/section (4.2.3.)*

Box 27. Piloting Sector Skills Bodies in Ghana

Through its SKILLS UP Ghana project, the ILO played a leading role in designing and piloting Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) in in agriculture, construction, and tourism & hospitality. The process unfolded in three phases:

1. Sector selection & mandate development

- Collaborated with COTVET (now CTVET) and tripartite partners to identify three pilot sectors.
- Drafted and finalized Terms of Reference outlining each SSB's composition and core functions.

2. Skills diagnostics & strategy design

- Organized a benchmarking study tour to India (in partnership with GIZ) to explore sector-specific best practices.
- Facilitated Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED) workshops, bringing together employers, trainers, and policymakers to assess current competencies and forecast future skills needs.
- Synthesized insights into draft Sector Skills Strategies, which were reviewed and formally adopted by each SSB and endorsed by CTVET.

3. Capacity building & scale-up

- Delivered targeted training to SSB members and CTVET staff on applying the STED methodology.
- Supported CTVET in replicating the approach across additional sectors, establishing a sustainable, country-led model for sectoral skills planning.

Source: (ILO n.d.)

Box 28. Piloting SSC in The Gambia (2019–2021)

In 2019, the International Trade Centre (ITC) supported The Gambia in launching three pilot Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) – in agro-processing, construction, and ICT – to test a scalable model for formal apprenticeships. Guided by labour market analyses, national priorities, and broad stakeholder consultations, ITC collaborated with employers, worker representatives, TVET institutions, and line ministries to:

- Select high-impact sectors based on employment potential, growth trends, and trade alignment.
- Convene inaugural SSC meetings, facilitated by NAQAA.
- Define SSC membership (~20 members) and agree on Terms of Reference (ToR).

In 2021, a fourth SSC – fashion & garment making – was added to support a tailored apprenticeship model.

Core process steps

1. **Sector diagnostics & ToR development**
   - Analyzed labour market data and trade priorities.
   - Drafted and ratified SSC mandates in collaboration with tripartite stakeholders.
2. **Benchmarking & skills mapping**
   - Conducted study visits and peer learning to identify best practices.
   - Held STED workshops to assess current competencies and forecast future skills needs.
3. **Strategy & apprenticeship design**
   - Developed sector skills plans and occupational standards.

- Piloted 18-month apprenticeship programmes in each sector.

4. Adoption & roll-out
- Finalized Sector Skills Strategies, endorsed by SSCs and NAQAA/CTVET.
- Strengthened SSC and NAQAA capacity to replicate the STED methodology in new sectors.

SSC governance structure

- **Composition**: ~20 members from employers, workers, industry associations, TVET providers, and relevant ministries.
- **Leadership**: Chaired by an employer representative.
- **Meetings**: Held quarterly, with flexibility to revise ToRs as priorities evolve.

Key responsibilities

- Identify current and future sectoral skills and labour market needs.
- Establish occupational competence standards.
- Develop and monitor sector skills plans.
- Maintain sector qualifications frameworks.
- Oversee and formalize apprenticeship programmes.

Early outcomes

- **Construction**: Piloted a mason apprenticeship – over 75 apprentices gained employment post-completion.
- **Agro processing**: Tested an apprenticeship for food processors.
- **ICT**: Launched a junior app developer course aligned with industry standards.
- **Fashion & Garment**: Developed and piloted a tailoring apprenticeship.

Enabling environment & challenges

The SSC rollout aligned with major TVET infrastructure investments under the 2021 TVET Transformation Policy – a six-pillar reform aimed at expanding access nationwide, beyond Greater Banjul.

NAQAA plans to expand SSC coverage and assume sector-wide assessment responsibilities. However, sustained financing remains a critical challenge for managing and scaling SSC operations.

7.4. Phase 2: Institutional Setup

7.4.1. Establish oversight mechanisms

Governments should establish oversight mechanisms, consistent with national guidelines, to support both the creation and effective functioning of Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs). Such mechanisms are central to ensuring legitimacy, guiding institutional design, and embedding SSBs within the broader sectoral skills development framework.

Depending on the national context and institutional capacity, the oversight body may function as:

- a dedicated unit within an existing institution, or

- a newly established independent entity.

The oversight body should:

- monitor SSB performance and ensure compliance with national standards,
- coordinate stakeholder engagement while promoting transparent decision-making,
- validate occupational standards and endorse training curricula to ensure quality and relevance, and
- periodically review sectoral priorities to keep pace with evolving labour market needs.

Chapter 4 of this publication provides detailed guidance on designing oversight structures. It includes examples of tripartite governance models, advisory boards, and regulatory commissions tailored to different levels of institutional maturity and sectoral needs.

Box 29. Workforce Development Councils in New Zealand

New Zealand formally established six Workforce Development Councils (WDCs) on **4 October 2021**, following extensive consultation with industry and vocational education stakeholders.

Interim Establishment Boards (iEBs) – composed of industry representatives, many of whom later joined the permanent WDCs – led the establishment process. Their main responsibility was to oversee the legal creation of WDCs through the **Orders in Council (OiC)** process.

Each iEB consulted with industry stakeholders and drafted an OiC that defined the WDC's:

- name
- represented industries
- governance structure
- other core elements

More than **200 individuals and organizations** provided feedback on the draft OiCs, ensuring that the WDCs reflected industry needs and priorities.

After receiving ministerial approval, the **Governor-General, Her Excellency Patsy Reddy**, signed the OiCs into law on **10 May 2021**. The legislation came into effect on **11 June 2021**, officially establishing the six WDCs:

- **Waihanga Ara Rau – Construction and infrastructure WDC**: Covers construction, concrete, plumbing, infrastructure, water, gas, electricity, telecommunications, and roading.
- **Toi Mai – Creative, cultural, recreation and technology WDC**: Includes creative industries, technology, entertainment, hairdressing and barbering, makeup artistry, skincare, journalism, broadcasting, gambling, and sports and recreation.
- **Toitū te Waiora – Community, health, education and social services WDC**: Encompasses care services, disability services, education and support, funeral services, health services, public safety, regulatory services, skin and nail therapy, social services, and urban pest control.
- **Hanga-Aro-Rau – Manufacturing, engineering and logistics WDC**: Covers manufacturing, processing, extractives and drilling, transport, postal services, and warehousing.
- **Muka Tangata – People, food and fibre WDC**: Represents dairy, sheep and beef, arable farming, horticulture, fishing, seafood processing, winemaking, aquaculture, sports turf management, and forestry.
- **Ringa Hora – Services WDC**: Includes advisory services, aviation, cleaning, business services, contact centres, financial services, hospitality, local government, real estate, retail, security services, state sector, tourism, and travel.

> This structured and consultative approach ensured that the WDCs were grounded in industry realities, while also securing legitimacy and readiness to support workforce planning and skills development across New Zealand's economy
>
> Source: (Ohu Ahumahi n.d.; Tertiary Education Commission n.d.)

7.4.2. Secure funding

Governments must secure **predictable and sustainable funding** to operationalize the institutional framework for sectoral skills development. Adequate and well-structured financing enables the oversight body to establish Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs), guide implementation, and ensure that sectoral initiatives remain responsive, inclusive, and aligned with national priorities.

Chapter 5 of this publication outlines cost structures and financing options for SSBs and oversight bodies. It presents examples of funding models, cost-sharing arrangements, and mechanisms to ensure financial accountability.

The Steering Committee should develop clear guidelines that define funding mechanisms. These may include a mix of public financing, donor support, private sector contributions and revenue generation schemes.

Budget allocations should comprehensively cover initial infrastructure, staffing, capacity building, research and data systems, as well as the implementation and coordination activities.

7.4.3. Develop an operational manual

An operations manual serves as a foundational governance tool that enables board members and staff to clearly understand the governance framework, operational procedures, meeting protocols, and their roles and responsibilities. It also defines the scope of work, outlines decision-making protocols and reporting obligations, and clarifies the respective functions of the board and the secretariat. By documenting procedures for budgeting, procurement, and performance reporting, the manual promotes transparency and accountability. The SSB should provide this manual at the outset to ensure clarity and consistency in roles and processes.

Operational manual may cover the following topics:

Legal basis and mandate

- Reference to legislation, regulations, or ministerial orders establishing the SSB.
- Statement of purpose, mission, and objectives.
- Scope within the education and training ecosystem.

Governance structure

- **Board composition and selection**: Membership categories (employers, unions, government, education providers, independent experts), representational balance (e.g., firm size, subsectors, regions), and term lengths.
- **Roles and responsibilities**: Duties of the chairperson, vice-chair, members, sub-committees, and working groups.

- **Meeting procedures**: Frequency, quorum, agenda setting, document circulation, decision-making rules, and minute-taking.
- **Induction and training:** Orientation for new members on governance and operations.

Secretariat operations

- Staffing structure and roles (executive director, researchers, standards specialists, policy officers, communications, finance, and administration).
- Recruitment, performance management, and professional development procedures.
- Collaboration arrangements with research institutions and universities.

Core functions

- **Labour market research and skills anticipation**: Methodologies for sector analysis, employer surveys, focus groups, and validation processes.
- **Development of occupational standards and qualifications**: Mapping occupations, drafting standards, industry consultation, and coordination with qualifications authorities.
- **Workforce development planning**: Sector strategies, action plans, priority interventions, and alignment with national frameworks.
- TVET responsiveness: Engagement with training providers, curriculum updates, apprenticeship models, and recognition of prior learning.

Financial management

- Funding sources (government, levies, donors, cost-recovery).
- Budgeting, approval, accounting, and auditing procedures.
- Remuneration and reimbursement policies for board members.

Stakeholder engagement and communication

- Stakeholder mapping and consultation protocols.
- Communication strategies (newsletters, websites, social media, events).
- Feedback and grievance mechanisms.

Monitoring, evaluation, and reporting

- Key performance indicators (e.g., standards developed, employer participation, training uptake).
- Annual reporting templates and publication requirements.
- Procedures for periodic review and revision of the manual.

Cross-cutting considerations

- Integration of gender equality, youth inclusion, disability accessibility, and environmental sustainability.
- Risk management, ethics, and anti-corruption measures.

7.4.4. Establish office infrastructure for SSBs

Adequate office infrastructure is essential to enabling Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) to perform their core functions effectively and efficiently. Depending on the national context, the office may be located within the oversight body or operate from an independent site. It must include both physical and digital systems that facilitate inclusive participation, efficient data management, and transparent decision-making. The design should also allow for future expansion to accommodate evolving sectoral needs.

7.4.5. Set up governance structure and secretariat

The oversight body should initiate the establishment of a governance framework in line with the approved guidelines and operational manual, ensuring both clarity and consistency from the outset. As outlined in Chapter 3, SSBs may function either as autonomous organizations or as committees.

For autonomous organizations, the governance structure should include a governing body, technical and advisory committees, and a professional secretariat. Board members are responsible for both governance and the execution of core functions, as defined in the organization's mandate.

When drafting the operational manual, the steering committee and oversight body should refer to the key governance components, membership, board composition, committees, and secretariat, outlined in Chapter 3. The governing body must ensure a transparent and inclusive appointment process that reflects the representational balance specified in the guidelines. The secretariat serves as the operational arm, managing daily activities, coordinating stakeholders, and implementing board decisions. Recruitment and appointments should follow merit-based procedures and uphold principles of gender equality, transparency, and inclusivity.

▸ 7.5. Phase 3: Operationalization

7.5.1. Formulate sector skills strategy and plan

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) play a central role in aligning skills development with economic priorities and labour market needs. A core function of SSBs is the formulation and implementation of sector-specific skills strategy and plan. These strategies identify both current and emerging skills gaps and ensure training systems remain responsive to industry needs. By linking workforce development to national and sectoral priorities, SSBs contribute to a more agile and inclusive skills ecosystem by strengthening labour market relevance, fostering inclusivity, and enhancing economic resilience.

Country examples

▷ **Ghana's Oil and Gas Sector Skills Strategy**[5]

Ghana's Oil and Gas Sector Skills Body (SSB), operating under the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CTVET), developed the **Oil and Gas Sector Skills Strategy (2021)** using the ILO's **Skills for Trade and Economic Diversification (STED)** approach. The strategy aims to align technical and vocational education and training (TVET) with the sector's current and future labour market needs.

It envisions a competitive and sustainable oil and gas sector supported by skilled Ghanaian workers, high-quality services delivered safely, robust infrastructure, and strong environmental safeguards. The strategy addresses persistent shortages in specialized occupations, such as petroleum and reservoir engineers, subsea engineers, instrumentation and control technicians, welders, fabricators, and production technicians, as well as hard-to-fill managerial and technical roles often held by expatriates.

At the system level, the strategy prioritizes:

5 The structure of the strategy is in Annex C and full report is at https://www.skillsforemployment.org/sites/default/files/2024-01/WEB_254_303_02.pdf

- Policy alignment and strengthened governance led by the SSB;
- Sustainable funding for practical, hands-on training;
- Curriculum, standards, and assessment reforms that promote work-based learning and clear occupational pathways;
- Broader access to upskilling and lifelong learning, supported by improved labour market information.
- The strategy also highlights the downstream segment as the sector's largest employer, emphasizing the importance of front-of-house and technical service skills.

Implementation is reinforced by Ghana's **Petroleum (Local Content and Local Participation) Regulations, 2013 (L.I. 2204)**, which require companies to submit Local Content Plans, including Employment and Training sub-plans, prioritize qualified Ghanaians for employment, and file succession plans for roles held by non-Ghanaians. These provisions embed training, technology transfer, and workforce localization into sector operations. (ILO n.d; Business Regulatory Reforms, Ghana n.d)

▷ **Sector Skills Plan of merSETA, South Africa**

The **merSETA Sector Skills Plan (SSP) 2024–2025**, aligned with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) SSP Framework, positions manufacturing as a key driver of GDP and competitiveness. It also acknowledges systemic challenges, including global tensions, the war in Ukraine, domestic energy disruptions, and rapid technological change.

Box 30. Vision and mission of merSETA

Vision of merSETA: To be recognized as leaders in closing South Africa's skills gap.

Mission of merSETA:. To expand access to high-quality, relevant skills development and training opportunities, reduce inequalities and unemployment, and promote employability and economic participation

Source: (merSETA 2023)

The SSP calls for inclusive skills development, particularly for youth, women, and persons with disabilities. It is guided by evidence on hard-to-fill occupations, strengthened system partnerships, and a commitment to rigorous monitoring and evaluation. Priority actions focus on localization, industrialization, adoption of new technologies, inclusiveness, and work-based learning.

Key chapters include:

- **Chapter 1 – Context and inclusion**: Situates manufacturing within the national economy and links rising unemployment to external shocks and energy constraints.
- **Chapter 2 – Skills planning agenda**: Aligns with national strategies such as the Reconstruction and Recovery Plan and the National Youth Policy. It identifies sector trends and outlines upskilling and reskilling pathways to support workforce transitions.
- **Chapter 3 – Shortages, gaps, and pipeline**: Analyses hard-to-fill occupations and major skills gaps across occupational levels.
- **Chapter 4 – Partnerships**: Reviews existing and planned partnerships and commits to monitoring their effectiveness.
- **Chapter 5 – Monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement**: Emphasizes the importance of evidence-based planning and adaptive learning.

7.5.2. Implement SSB's strategy and plan

The Secretariat of an SSB should execute the Strategy and plan under the guidance of its board and stakeholders. The execution of the plan would involve implementing a number of functions, which may vary significantly across countries and sectors, as outlined in Chapter 3. SSBs apply a range of methodologies, tools, and external expertise to fulfil their mandates. Given the diversity of approaches and the breadth of potential functions, it is not feasible for this publication to provide detailed guidance on every possible activity. Instead, this section focuses on providing implementation guidance for the following key functions:

1. Identifying skills needs
2. Developing standards, qualifications, and programmes
3. Quality assurance and monitoring
4. Engaging stakeholders
5. Promoting strategic partnerships
6. Business development services.

▶ **Figure 25. Identifying skills needs**

Source: Adapted from E-TVET Council, 2023 and ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeship Vol 2

7.5.2.1. Identifying skills needs

The development of training programmes and curricula typically follows a structured four-step process. Stakeholders first identify skills demand and gaps, then define occupational profiles. These profiles are translated into competency-based standards, which provide the basis for curriculum design. The next steps involve developing learning materials and assessment tools, followed by programme delivery, monitoring, and continuous improvement. This process ensures that training remains relevant, inclusive, and responsive to evolving labour market demands. Skills needs assessment and anticipation exercises enable countries to identify current and emerging labour market demands, helping them adapt to economic and technological change (ILO, 2015; OECD, 2016). These exercises are essential for aligning skills development programmes with labour market needs and ensuring that training systems remain relevant and responsive.

Stakeholders use a variety of methods to collect and analyse data on skills demand, including:

- **Quantitative employment forecasts**: Sector and occupation-specific projections based on macroeconomic modelling;
- **Qualitative approaches**: Focus groups, expert interviews, round tables, foresight exercises, and scenario planning;
- **Employer surveys**: Data collected directly from enterprises;
- **Graduate tracer studies and school-to-work transition surveys**: Insights into education-to-employment pathways.

No single method works in every context. To generate reliable and actionable insights, ILO recommends combining quantitative and qualitative approaches and ensuring continuous stakeholder validation throughout the process (ILO, 2015).

The table below summarizes key methods used in skills anticipation **and forecasting. It outlines their data requirements, strengths and limitations.**

▶ **Table 12.** Key methods used in skills anticipation and forecasting

Instrument	Data requirement	Technical expertise	Advantages	Disadvantages
Focus groups, round tables, expert workshops, expert opinion surveys, Delphi methods	No specific data requirements.	Expertise in qualitative methods, structured interviews, Delphi techniques, and synthesis of outcomes.	Holistic; direct user involvement; in-depth problem analysis; useful for exchanging views.	May be non-systematic, inconsistent, subjective, non-representative, anecdotal.
Sector studies	Sector-based data from statistical surveys, employer-employee surveys, etc.	Understanding of sectoral labour markets, occupations, skills; data analysis; survey methodology.	Holistic for the sector; detailed insights into capabilities, competencies, and skills.	Partial beyond sector; potential bias; inconsistency across sectors.
Employer-employee skills surveys; enterprise/ establishment skills surveys	Firm registry for sampling; no additional data needed for primary survey.	Survey design and execution; representativeness; questionnaire design; interviewer training; data analysis.	Direct user involvement; factual behaviour data; enables direct skills measurement.	Low response rates; large samples needed; expensive; may be subjective and inconsistent.
Quantitative forecasting models	Reliable time series on labour markets and population demographics.	Modelling expertise; statistical and programming skills; experience with model development.	Comprehensive; consistent; transparent; measurable.	Data-intensive; costly; not all aspects are quantifiable; may falsely imply precision.

▶ **Table 12.** Key methods used in skills anticipation and forecasting

Instrument	Data requirement	Technical expertise	Advantages	Disadvantages
Foresights and scenario development	May use various input data (e.g., forecasts, labour market info, sector studies), but not compulsory.	Skilled moderation; compiling diverse qualitative data; stakeholder engagement expertise.	Holistic; direct user involvement; in-depth problem analysis; considers future uncertainties.	May be non-systematic, inconsistent, subjective.
Graduate surveys / Tracer studies	Primary data collection; contact details of recent graduates; administrative data from institutions.	Survey design and execution; representativeness; questionnaire design; data analysis.	Useful for improving training quality; relatively low cost; easy to execute.	Difficult to form sample; limited to early career experiences; may be biased and subjective.
Vacancy surveys	Primary data collection; may use administrative data or employer surveys; consistency and representativeness needed.	Survey design and conduct; analysis of administrative and survey data; ensuring representativeness.	Direct user involvement; reflects actual job demand; objective.	Partial coverage; short-term focus; time-consuming data processing; vacancies may be filled before analysis.

The joint ILO-OECD report *Approaches to Anticipating Skills for the Future of Work* outlines key principles for building effective skills assessment systems. Prepared for the G20 Employment Working Group, the report reviews various anticipation and forecasting methods, describing their data requirements, strengths and limitations.

It also showcases ILO tools for analysing skills needs, including six methodological guides that the ILO developed in collaboration with ETF and Cedefop (see box below). These guides combine qualitative and quantitative approaches and underscore the importance of strong social dialogue and robust institutional frameworks to better understand future skills needs.

▶ **Table 13.** ILO tools for skills needs analysis and anticipation

Title	Description
Skills for trade and economic diversification: A practical guide	Addresses anticipation of skills needs in promoting trade strategies and in exporting industries.
Anticipating skill needs for green jobs: A practical guide	Addresses approach to analysing and anticipating skills needs for the green economy and sustainable development.
Guide to anticipating and matching skills and jobs:	A compendium of tools for guidance and assistance in designing methods, instruments and institutional solutions to meet the challenge of matching current and future skills and jobs:
• Volume 1: *Using labour market information*	Provides guidance on the principal types of data, data sources and indicators that can answer key policy questions related to overcoming or preventing skills mismatch.
• Volume 2: *Developing skills foresights, scenarios and forecasts*	Addresses quantitative and qualitative methods of anticipation and forecasting of future skills needs at a macroeconomic level.
• Volume 3: *Working at sector level*	Addresses methods, processes and institutional mechanisms of skills identification and anticipation at sectoral level.
• Volume 4: *The role of employment service providers*	Addresses the role of public employment services and private employment agencies in skills anticipation and matching, including the collection and use of relevant labour market information.
• Volume 5: *Developing and running an establishment skills survey*	Provides guidance on the implementation of surveys among employers (establishments) on skills shortages and gaps, recruitment difficulties and training measures.
• Volume 6: *Carrying out tracer studies*	Assists training providers and analysts in designing and implementing surveys among their graduates on their employability, how their skills are used, and how those skills relate to gaps in the labour market.
• Skills for Future Technologies Guide	Anticipates skill needs to steer experts and practitioners in defining future technological change and related changes in employment, job tasks and skill needs.

These resources can be combined flexibly to design country-specific skills anticipation systems that balance rigour with practicality.

Readers can also refer to Section 2.2 of Volume 2 of the ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships**,** which presents a step-by-step process, practical tips, and tools used by practitioners at national, sectoral and enterprise levels across various countries.

Box 31. Singapore's Green Skills Committee (GSC): Preparing for the future of work

As industries transition toward sustainability, Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) must ensure that workforce training aligns with emerging green job opportunities. Singapore's **Green Skills Committee (GSC)** offers a national model for integrating sustainability and future skills into workforce development.

Established in 2021 under the **SkillsFuture** initiative, the GSC is tasked with identifying green job roles, forecasting industry skills needs, and guiding workforce transitions into low-carbon careers. Unlike traditional SSBs focused on existing occupational frameworks, the GSC proactively maps future job roles and engages industry stakeholders to promote early adoption of green skills.

Key features of the GSC model

- **Proactive green workforce planning**: Identifies emerging roles in renewable energy, waste management, and carbon accounting.
- **Sector-wide green skills mapping**: Collaborates with Industry Work Groups (IWGs) to embed sustainability into existing training programmes.
- **Public-private partnerships**: Engages government agencies, businesses, and training providers to co-develop industry-relevant curricula.
- **Funding for green training**: Supports upskilling and reskilling initiatives in climate-related fields through SkillsFuture Singapore.
- **Alignment with national strategy**: Ensures workforce planning supports Singapore's **Green Plan 2030** and long-term sustainability goals.

How the GSC future-proofs Singapore's workforce

Unlike conventional SSBs that respond to market shifts, the GSC operates as a **foresight-driven body**, aligning skills policies with long-term environmental and economic objectives.

Examples include:

- The **Renewable Energy Training Initiative**, which ensures solar and wind power firms have access to a skilled technician pipeline.
- The **Circular Economy Workforce Strategy**, which partners with waste management companies to upskill workers in sustainable resource management.

Lessons for other countries

Singapore's GSC model illustrates how SSBs can integrate sustainability into workforce planning – ensuring economies remain competitive and resilient in the transition to green industries.

Example: SENAI Brazil's Labour Market Intelligence & Skills Mapping

SENAI uses a robust, data-driven approach to identify training needs:

- **Employer consultation**: Engages industry associations, trade unions, and employers to assess current and future skills demand.
- **Labour market research**: Tracks trends, employment projections, and skills gaps.
- **Occupational skills mapping**: Conducts job task analyses and competency mapping to inform course design.
- **Technology monitoring**: Analyzes the impact of automation and digitalization on skills requirements.

- **Feedback loops**: Collects feedback from students, graduates, and employers to evaluate training effectiveness.
- **Policy alignment**: Ensures training supports national goals such as job creation, poverty reduction, and inclusive growth.

7.5.2.2. Developing standards, qualifications, and programmes

After identifying skills needs, stakeholders should develop occupational standards – also known as occupational profiles in some countries. These standards provide the foundation for designing competency-based or outcome-based curricula.

Occupational standards (OSs) link directly to the competencies required for specific jobs. Employers' representatives typically collaborate in developing these standards. As a result, competency-based curricula (CBC) derived from OSs align closely with labour market needs.

The main steps in developing an occupational standard include:

- Step 1: Identifying and defining the occupation
- Step 2: Determining key groups of tasks, functions and skills relevant to the occupation
- Step 3: Identifying and analysing learning outcomes (knowledge, skills and attitudes) for each task group
- Step 4: Drafting the complete OS using a standardized format
- Step 5: Validating the OS through consultation with sector experts and incorporating their feedback.

Once stakeholders reach consensus, the TVET agency or another competent authority should review, finalize and publish the occupational standard.

Developing occupational standards can take time. However, countries can speed up the process by adapting existing standards from other contexts to suit their own needs. While adapting existing standards can accelerate development, localization is essential to ensure relevance to national labour markets.

For example, Kenya, with the support from ILO, successfully applied this approach to develop occupational standards within a short timeframe.

Box 32. Content of an occupational standard, Jordan

OS format in Jordan includes the following components:

- Cover page: occupation title, occupational level, ASCO code, ISCO code, names of the OS development team, endorsement and approval authorities, approval and review dates.
- Occupational summary: occupational definition, main knowledge, skills and attitudes required, occupational hazards, work environment, possible jobs, career pathways, future trends and concerns, special legal provisions.
- Employability competencies.
- Occupational/technical competencies.
- Performance criteria.
- Equipment, tools and materials list.

Source: (ILO 2020a)

Readers can also refer to Section 2.3 of Volume 2 of the *ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships*, which outlines a step-by-step process, practical tips and tools used by practitioners at national, sectoral and enterprise levels in various countries.

▶ **Table 14.** Resources on developing occupational standards

Title	Link
Guidelines for the development, maintenance and dissemination of occupational standards	https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2019-12/os_guidelines_validated_en.pdf
Guide to Developing National Occupational Standards	https://www.ukstandards.org.uk/media/c3pdfe0w/guide-to-developing-nos-1.pdf
Examples of occupational standards from the United Kingdom, Germany, Canada and Australia	https://innovativeapprenticeship.org/occupational-standards/
Guidelines for Development, Approval & Usage of National Occupational Standards (NOS) & Micro Credentials (MC), India	https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/07/Guidelines-for-Development-Approval-Usage-of-National-Occupational-Standards-NOS-Micro-Credentials-MC.pdf
A guide to developing and implementing qualifications that meet industry needs, British Council	https://vettoolbox.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/07/Dev-Impl-Qual-Guide-Spread-v5.pdf
ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships (Volume 2)	https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40ed_emp/%40ifp_skills/documents/publication/wcms_748751.pdf

Establishing a training programme/ curriculum

A designated body – such as the working group that developed the occupational standard (OS) or a competent authority like the TVET agency – takes the lead in developing the curriculum based on the OS. Figure 26 illustrates the key steps in this process.

The curriculum should clearly define both on-the-job learning (in the workplace) and off-the-job learning (delivered by the TVET provider). In some systems, such as Germany's, this may require two separate but coordinated curricula for each learning setting.

In some cases, an intermediary organization, such as a training centre or industry association, may also deliver training. The curriculum should clearly specify this arrangement.

Box 33. What does a training regulation stipulate in Germany

In Germany, a training regulation (akin to the term "national curricula" in some countries) for each occupation determines:

- the designation of the training occupation
- the duration of the training – which shall be not less than two and not more than three years (most programmes are of three years' duration but some programmes run for two years or three-and-a-half years)
- the description of the training occupation – the typical "skills, knowledge and capabilities" of the profession in summary form
- the framework training curriculum – a guide to how the teaching of skills, knowledge and capabilities is to be structured in terms of content and time
- the examination requirements.

The curricula formulated in the training regulations represent minimum standards. Each enterprise therefore has the option to include other topics in its training and to offer apprentices additional qualifications.

Source: (BIBB 2014)

▶ Figure 26. Developing curricula based on occupational standards

Review OSs

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Analyse the competencies and performance criteria in OSs

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Identify the sequence of learning outcomes (LOs) for each competency

↓

Cluster/group related LOs into modules and define each module's purpose

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Balance sizes and determine the duration/credit value and level of each module

↓

Sequence and allocate modules to semesters/terms

↓

Identify and sequence practical learning and assessment tasks/activities

↓

Conduct quality check and consistency check (review of overall design against OS)

Source: Adapted from E-TVET Council, 2015.

Readers can also refer to Section 2.4 of Volume 2 of the *ILO Toolkit for Quality Apprenticeships*, which outlines a step-by-step process, practical tips and tools used by practitioners at national, sectoral and enterprise levels across various countries.

▶ **Table 15.** Resources on developing qualifications and programmes

Title	Link
European Handbook: Defining, Writing and Applying Learning Outcomes	https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/files/4156_en.pdf
A guide to developing and implementing qualifications that meet industry needs, VET Toolbox, British Council	https://vettoolbox.eu/publications/a-guide-to-developing-and-implementing-qualifications-that-meet-industry-needs/
Competency-Based Training (CBT): An Introductory Manual for Practitioners by ILO and UNICEF	https://www.ilo.org/sites/default/files/wcmsp5/groups/public/%40arabstates/%40ro-beirut/documents/publication/wcms_757836.pdf
NZQA – Guidelines for programme approval and accreditation	https://www2.nzqa.govt.nz/assets/Tertiary/Approval-accreditation-and-registration/Guidelines/Guidelines-for-programme-approval-and-accreditation-L1-7-2023.pdf

This publication links to reliable, official portals where you can download competency-based qualifications, training programmes, curricula, and the underlying standards. Resources are grouped by country or region for easy reference.

- Philippines – TESDA: official Training Regulations (TR) by qualification – each TR includes competency standards, curriculum parameters, and assessment guidance. (TESDA n.d.)
- India – NSQF/NQR & NSDC: the National Qualifications Register lists NSQF-aligned qualifications; NSDC pages provide QP/NOS and Model Curricula by sector. (National Qualifications Register India n.d.)
- Australia – training.gov.au: the national register for training packages, qualifications and units of competency (specs are downloadable; companion implementation guides often linked). (Training.gov.au n.d.)
- South Africa – QCTO (Occupational Qualifications Sub-Framework): database of registered occupational qualifications; many entries link to Curriculum and External Assessment Specification documents. (Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) n.d.)
- Kenya – TVET CDACC: downloads page with approved occupational standards and CBET curricula plus sector learning guides. (TVET CDACC Kenya n.d.)

7.5.2.3. Quality assurance and monitoring

Quality assurance is not a one-off exercise but a continuous cycle of setting standards, monitoring compliance, and improving provision. Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) strengthen the quality and relevance of skills training in their sectors. To fulfil this role, SSBs adopt a structured, transparent approach to quality assurance that reflects labour market needs and supports continuous improvement.

Developing sector-specific quality assurance frameworks

SSBs collaborate with national qualification authorities and quality assurance agencies to embed industry-defined standards into qualifications and ensure quality in training and assessment. Key actions include:

- Defining accreditation criteria for training institutions, assessors, and courses.
- Setting minimum facility requirements for effective training.
- Establishing qualification standards for instructors and training staff.
- Designing consistent and credible assessment and certification mechanisms.

Accrediting and evaluating training provision

SSBs may accredit training providers, programmes, and assessors, depending on their national mandate. To do this effectively, they:

- Develop transparent accreditation procedures in consultation with national authorities.
- Maintain and update a public database of accredited providers, programmes, and assessors.
- Monitor training quality through regular reviews, audits, and feedback mechanisms.

Reporting and communicating quality outcomes

SSBs report on training quality and compliance to oversight bodies, industry stakeholders, and the public. To support transparency and learning, they:

- Compile annual performance reports with sectoral outcomes, compliance levels, and improvement recommendations.
- Share findings and guidance with employers and training institutions.
- Publish lists or ratings of approved providers to help learners and employers identify quality programmes.

Digital dashboards or online portals can enhance transparency by giving stakeholders real-time access to accreditation and performance data.

Aligning training with labour market needs

To keep training relevant, SSBs monitor labour market trends and skill demands. This involves:

- Engaging employers and industry representatives in developing and reviewing occupational standards.
- Using assessment and evaluation feedback to refine training programmes.
- Identifying gaps in provision and supporting providers to address them.

▶ **Table 16.** Resources on quality assurance and monitoring

Title	Link
Guidelines For Recognition and Regulation of Awarding Bodies 2025, India	https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Guidelines-For-Recognition-and-Regulation-of-Awarding-Bodies-2025.pdf
Guidelines for Recognition and Regulation of Assessment Agencies – 2025	https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2025/07/Guidelines-for-Recognition-and-Regulation-of-AAs-2025.pdf
Guidelines for Establishment and Operation of Academic Bank of Credits In Vocational Education, Training and Skilling (VETS)	https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/05/Guidelines-for-Establishment-and-Operation-of-Academic-Bank-of-Credit-in-VETS-May-2024.pdf
Guidelines on Blended Learning for Vocational Education & Training and Skilling developed by NCVET, India	https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2023/01/Guidelines-for-Blended-Learning-for-Vocational-Education-Training-Skilling.pdf
Guidelines for Training of Trainers	https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/ToT-Guidelines.pdf
Guidelines For Training of Assessors	https://ncvet.gov.in/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/ToA-Guidelines_final.pdf
Tracer studies for VET: supporting their creation and implementation	https://vettoolbox.eu/publications/tracer-studies-for-vet-supporting-their-creation-and-implementation/
Monitoring and evaluating work-based learning in vocational education and training	https://www.etf.europa.eu/sites/default/files/2021-12/monitoring_and_evaluating_wbl.pdf

7.5.2.4. Engaging stakeholders

Engagement and communication are the lifeblood of a Sector Skills Body (SSB). Even a technically strong SSB will struggle to sustain its mandate if its role, services and results are poorly understood or rarely used. Stakeholder engagement and business development services are therefore core functions, not addons.

Purpose of stakeholder engagement

An SSB's primary engagement role is to facilitate twoway dialogue between the sector and government on skills development. This requires building strong networks across sectors and subsectors so that consultations, feedback processes and implementation strategies reflect real labour market needs. Engagement must work in both directions: listening to stakeholder views and clearly explaining new developments, policies and opportunities.

Key engagement activities

Typical engagement between an SSB and sector stakeholders includes:

- Providing accurate, relevant and objective information and advice on skills development.
- Gathering highquality information on current and future skill needs.
- Seeking feedback and recommendations on products such as occupational standards, sector skills strategies and workbased learning models.
- Consulting on and agreeing priority areas for SSB projects and investments.
- Building strong, trustbased relationships with employers, worker representatives and other key actors.
- Raising awareness of the importance of skilled workers for productivity and competitiveness.
- Ensuring stakeholders have clear channels to provide feedback, raise issues and express concerns.

The SSB should bring together a balanced mix of stakeholders from the relevant sector so that its positions and products reflect a genuinely representative view.

Business development services for enterprises

In addition to skills-related functions, SSBs can offer business development services that help enterprises translate skills into better performance. These may include:

- Advising firms on workforce planning, skills utilization and productivity improvement.
- Supporting adoption of new technologies and work processes (for example digital, AI or green technologies) through sector-specific guidance and tools.
- Facilitating access to management and entrepreneurship training, especially for SMEs.
- Brokering partnerships, clusters or networks that connect enterprises with training providers, innovation actors and finance.

By providing such services, SSBs deepen employer engagement, demonstrate tangible value to enterprises and diversify their own revenue base, which supports longterm sustainability.

Consultation processes

Consultations should inform all major SSB outputs: sector strategies, products, subsector priorities and the design and implementation of projects and services (including business development offers). They are also essential for reviewing the SSB's performance against sector and subsector needs. Where resources allow, consultation workshops, meetings and information sessions should be organized in locations that mirror the geographic spread of the sector, to surface regional perspectives and issues.

Communication strategies and channels

Effective engagement depends on sustained twoway communication, longterm relationshipbuilding and visible responsiveness to stakeholder advice and feedback. Welldesigned communication strategies strengthen relationships with employers and worker representatives and help keep training and business development services relevant and trusted.

The SSB should therefore use a mix of channels, such as newsletters, online platforms (ideally its own website), and presentations at industry conferences or network meetings. It should also maintain an uptodate contact and issues database to enable rapid, targeted outreach to individuals and organizations across different subsectors.

Benefits of effective communication and services

Clear, consistent communication and a coherent service offer for both skills and business development can:

- Build a positive reputation for the SSB.
- Strengthen networks and relationships across the sector.
- Generate sector support for, and participation in, SSB initiatives.
- Improve stakeholder satisfaction with SSB services.
- Increase stakeholder interest and investment in TVET, skills upgrading and enterprise development.

7.5.2.5. Promoting strategic partnerships: extending reach and enhancing impact

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) build strategic partnerships at national and international levels to share resources, strengthen capacity, and improve outcomes. They pool expertise, exchange labour market intelligence (LMI), and co-develop occupational standards to reduce duplication and enhance quality.

SSBs adopt proven approaches from other sectors and countries. For example, multi-stakeholder initiatives in Canada generate LMI and innovative workforce solutions. SSBs also collaborate with regulatory and quality assurance bodies to align sector strategies, standards, and qualifications with national TVET systems. In Jordan, SSBs work with the TVSDC to ensure coherence between sectoral and national frameworks. In Ghana, public–private partnerships link sector plans with national TVET development efforts.

The governing board sets the policy direction for partnerships. Guided by this framework, the secretariat identifies potential partners, designs partnership models, formalizes agreements, and manages collaboration efforts.

To establish effective partnerships, SSBs should:

- **Map potential partners**: Identify relevant actors across government, industry, training institutions, academia, and development cooperation.
- **Define objectives and benefits**: Clarify the purpose of collaboration, such as joint standards development or data sharing, and formalize arrangements through memoranda of understanding (MOUs).
- **Engage oversight bodies**: Facilitate cross-sectoral partnerships and ensure alignment with national strategies.
- **Promote knowledge exchange**: Organize joint workshops, study tours, secondments, and online forums to foster learning and innovation.
- **Monitor and Evaluate**: Track partnership outcomes and adjust strategies to respond to evolving sectoral needs.

7.5.2.6. Business development services

Sector Skills Bodies can draw on a wide range of ILO tools and programmes to offer concrete business development services to enterprises and industry. The tools presented below cover entrepreneurship, management, productivity, digitalization and performance measurement, and can be adapted and branded as services delivered via SSBs.

ILO Tools for Sector Skills Bodies

1. Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB)

Start and Improve Your Business (SIYB): Implementation Guide – a global entrepreneurship training package to help potential and existing entrepreneurs start, manage and grow small enterprises, combining modular training with counselling and follow-up (ILO, 2014). International Labour Organization

How SSBs can use it as BDS

- Partner with accredited SIYB providers to offer sector-specific SIYB courses (e.g. "Start Your Business in the automotive repair sector") to MSMEs in their sector and to trainees graduating from TVET programmes.
- Integrate SIYB into incubation or accelerator schemes run jointly with business associations or chambers in priority value chains.

2. Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE)

Sustaining Competitive and Responsible Enterprises (SCORE) Programme and the **SCORE Programme brochure** – a practical training and in-factory consulting programme that improves productivity, quality, and working conditions in SMEs and helps them integrate into responsible supply chains (ILO 2023). International Labour Organization+2International Labour Organization+2

How SSBs can use it as BDS

- Work with national SCORE partners to roll out SCORE training in firms in priority sectors, using SSBs to help identify participating enterprises and sector trainers.
- Use SCORE modules (e.g. on workplace cooperation, quality, productivity, OSH) to complement sectoral skills standards and promote continuous improvement at firm level.

3. Value Chain Development for Decent Work (VCD4DW) and guidance tools

Value chain development for decent work: A systems approach to creating more and better jobs (3rd edition) – a flagship guide on value chain and market-systems development with a strong decent work focus (ILO, 2021). International Labour Organization+1

Value Chain Development Guidance Material compiles complementary tools such as *Guidelines for value chain selection*, *Market systems analysis for decent work*, *Business models for decent work*, *Action toolkit: Building back with better jobs*, and the *SME Measurement Toolkit* (ILO, 2017). International Labour Organization+2International Labour Organization+2

How SSBs can use them as BDS

- Conduct sector and value-chain analysis with employers and unions to identify bottlenecks, skills gaps and leverage points for upgrading and job creation.
- Offer advisory services to business associations and clusters on sector strategies, supplier upgrading, and business models that link skills development with competitiveness and decent work.
- Use the SME Measurement Toolkit to help industry associations and training providers track productivity, jobs and job-quality outcomes of BDS and skills interventions.

4. Value Chain Development (VCD) and Business Development Services (BDS) Resource Guide

Value Chain development (VCD) and Business Development Services (BDS) Resource Guide – a resource compiling key concepts, tools and references for combining value chain development with BDS approaches (ILO 2010). International Labour Organization+1

How SSBs can use it as BDS

- Use it to design integrated "sector competitiveness + skills + BDS" programmes with clear roles for SSBs, BDS providers, training institutions and business membership organizations.
- Train SSB staff and sector partners on how to structure BDS offers (information, training, consultancy, coaching, networking services) along sector value chains.

5. Gender-inclusive service provision for BDS providers

Gender-inclusive service provision: A quick guide for financial and business development services providers – a guide to help BDS and financial service providers better serve women-led and women-owned MSMEs (ILO 2022). Ande Global+3International Labour Organization+3International Labour Organization+3

How SSBs can use it as BDS

- Review existing sector services (training, advisory, information) through a gender lens and redesign them to improve access and relevance for women-owned firms and women workers.
- Train staff of SSBs, TVET institutions and partner BDS providers in gender-inclusive outreach, service design and communication in priority sectors.

6. Market Systems Development (MSD) and Systems Change resources

The ILO's **Systems Change Initiative** portal includes multiple tools and guides on market systems development for decent work, such as *Sector selection for decent work*, *Market systems analysis for decent work*, *Guidelines for value chain selection*, and *A rough guide to measuring job quality in market systems development* (ILO 2025). These are accessible via the MSD knowledge page: **"What are the foundations of the market systems development approach and how to apply it at different project stages?"**. International Labour Organization+1

How SSBs can use them as BDS

- Apply sector-selection and market-systems analysis tools to prioritize sectors, sub-sectors and occupations where SSB interventions and BDS can have the greatest impact.
- Provide higher-level advisory services to government and social partners on sector strategies, incentives and reforms that strengthen the "ecosystem" for enterprise growth and decent work.

7. Inclusive entrepreneurship ecosystems and BDS

Inclusive Entrepreneurship Ecosystems Development – an ILO framework that highlights how policy, finance, BDS, human capital and culture interact to support entrepreneurs (ILO, 2023). International Labour Organization+2International Labour Organization+2

How SSBs can use it as BDS

- Map sector-specific entrepreneurship ecosystems (actors, services, finance, rules) and identify gaps in BDS for micro, small and medium enterprises.
- Convene sector actors (banks, accelerators, incubators, training providers) and coordinate a more coherent BDS offer aligned with sector skills strategies.

7.5.3. Key messages

- SSBs are a key governance tool to make skills systems more demand-led and industry-responsive.
- Establishing SSBs should follow a phased approach: planning and design, institutional setup, and operationalization.
- Avoid "big bang" rollouts across many sectors; start with a few strategic sectors and robust pilots.
- Pilots should be sustained until they deliver tangible results (e.g. standards, curricula, labour market intelligence) and generate lessons for scale-up.
- Sufficient and predictable funding is essential; short-term or fragmented financing undermines effectiveness.
- Not every sector needs its own SSB; a right-sized, high-quality network is better than universal but weak coverage.
- Clear mandates, strong governance, and committed stakeholder participation are critical for SSB credibility and impact.
- Regular monitoring and evaluation should inform adjustments, justify investment, and maintain trust among partners.

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A garment employee is seen standing in one of the different manufacturing departments of a clothing plant in Lesotho. © Marcel Crozet/ILO

8 Challenges and success factors

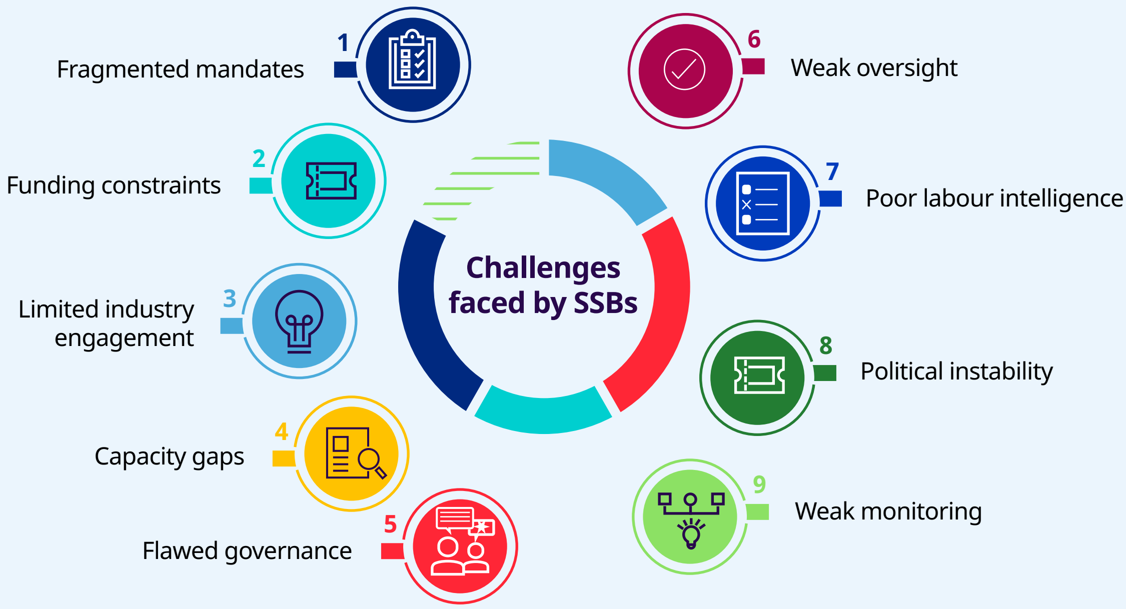
8.1. Introduction

This chapter reflects on the experiences of countries that have implemented Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs). It analyses the key challenges encountered in establishing and operating these institutions and highlights the lessons learned from diverse contexts. Building on these insights, the chapter identifies critical success factors that contribute to the development of wellfunctioning and sustainable SSBs.

8.2. Challenges faced by SSBs

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) play a pivotal role in aligning education and training systems with labour market demand, promoting productivity, decent work and inclusive growth. Yet, in many countries – particularly those with evolving skills ecosystems – SSBs face a range of systemic and operational challenges that hinder their effectiveness and sustainability. Addressing these challenges is essential to ensure that SSBs can fulfil their mandates and contribute meaningfully to national development strategies.

▶ **Figure 27. Key challenges**



Source: Adapted from E-TVET Council, 2015.

8.2.1. Fragmented mandates and ineffective coordination

SSBs often operate alongside multiple regulatory bodies, industry associations, and sub-national institutions, but without an effective mechanism for coordination between them in some countries. This fragmentation leads to duplicated efforts, inconsistent standards, limited recognition of qualifications, and inefficient use of resources.

8.2.2. Funding constraints and weak sustainability

Many SSBs rely heavily on government or donor funding, that could be short-term, project-linked or unpredictable. Without diversified and sustainable financing, they struggle to retain skilled staff, invest in digital systems, or carry out long-term planning.

8.2.3. Limited industry engagement

Although intended to be industry-led, some SSBs struggle to secure meaningful employer participation. Contributing factors include limited perceived autonomy, unclear roles and value for employers, and the capacity and resource constraints of SMEs

8.2.4. Internal capacity gaps

Weak technical and institutional capacity undermine the effectiveness of SSBs. Challenges include limited expertise in curriculum design, standards development, and labour market intelligence (LMI); weak governance and leadership structures. These gaps hinder SSBs from fulfilling their mandates and engaging stakeholders effectively.

8.2.5. Inadequate mandate and governance structures

Many SSBs replicate models from other contexts without adaptation. This results in vague or overlapping mandates, unclear governance structures, and unsustainable financing models.

8.2.6. Political instability and bureaucratic pressure

Frequent government changes, shifting policy priorities, and ministerial interference undermine autonomy and disrupt long-term planning. This erodes continuity and weakens stakeholder trust.

8.2.7. Weak oversight capacity

Oversight bodies may lack the capacity, resources, or infrastructure to monitor and regulate SSBs effectively.

8.2.8. Challenges in labor market analysis

Effective skills planning depends on robust labour market intelligence (LMI), yet many Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) face persistent challenges. These include inadequate or outdated LMI systems; lack of disaggregated data by region, gender, and age; rapid technological changes such as artificial intelligence, automation, and green technologies; and limited analytical capacity to forecast future skills needs. These constraints hinder evidence-based decision-making and strategic planning.

8.2.9. Inadequate Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E)

Few SSBs systematically track outcome and impact of their operations. Weak M&E frameworks limit performance improvement, evidence-based decision-making, and the ability to demonstrate value to funders.

8.3. Key success factors for a Sector Skills Body

Unlocking the potential of SSBs requires reforms in design, financing, and institutional capacity. A coordinated, industry-responsive, and data-driven approach will enhance their credibility and ensure training remains relevant to labour market demand. Strategic investments in governance, digital infrastructure, and LMI systems, combined with safeguards for autonomy against political and bureaucratic pressures, are essential. Strengthened SSBs will drive inclusive economic growth, workforce resilience, and stronger alignment between skills supply and demand.

Drawing together the evidence and country experiences, the ILO recommends the following 10 key success factors for impactful, sustainable SSBs.

▶ **Figure 28. Key success factors for SSBs**

Source: authors' own elaboration

8.3.1. Define strategic purpose and alignment

Policymakers should analyse the problems to be addressed and define the value SSBs will deliver to employers, workers, and the training system, and how will they align and cooperate with existing system and institutions.

- **Justify the establishment**
  Clearly articulate the rationale for creating Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs). Identify the specific challenges they are best suited to address.
- **Ensure sectoral relevance through strategic integration**
  Focus on sectors with high employment potential, strategic importance, or significant skills gaps to align skills development initiatives with broader economic and social development strategies to ensure coherence and maximize impact.
- **Link to national systems**
  Align SSBs with existing education, training, and qualifications system to ensure coherence and recognition of SSB programmes.
- **Deliver value-added services to enterprises**
  Provide business development support that facilitates the adoption of new technologies, drives digital and green transformation, and enhances productivity and competitiveness; and by offering strategic guidance on workforce planning and innovation to strengthen organizational capabilities and future-readiness.

8.3.2. Establish legal and governance framework

Establish a robust legal and governance framework to provide SSBs with the authority, structure, and autonomy needed to fulfil their mandates effectively.

- **Establish a clear legal mandate**
  Provide formal legal recognition to SSBs, clearly defining their roles, responsibilities, authority and accountability.
- **Design fit-for-purpose governance structures**
  Develop an organizational model – whether as an autonomous body, statutory agency, or multi-stakeholder committee – with clearly defined functions, transparent reporting lines, operational autonomy, and embedded principles of tripartism. Ensure the presence of a well-resourced and capacitated secretariat to support implementation and coordination.

8.3.3. Industry leadership and stakeholder engagement

Industry leadership and active participation of all stakeholders is essential for SSB success. This requires:

- **Position industry at the centre**
  Empower industry to lead the functioning of SSB, supported by other stakeholders.
- **Promote inclusive governance and social dialogue**
  Encourage stakeholders to appoint representatives having expertise and commitment to the SSB mandate. Establish mechanisms to foster dialogue among the representatives from employers, trade unions, training providers, government.
- **Build trust and legitimacy**
  Demonstrate responsiveness, use evidence-based decision-making, and maintain consistent communication.

8.3.4. Manage public–private dynamics

Public and private sectors have different working cultures and norms. Understanding and harmonization between the two promotes collaboration.

- **Understand cultural differences**
  Anticipate variations in decision-making pace, risk tolerance, and communication styles between public and private stakeholders.
- **Leverage complementary strengths**
  Raise awareness of public-sector procedures among private actors. Streamline processes, set realistic timelines, and promote shared ownership to sustain engagement.

8.3.5. Sustainable financing models

SSBs must adopt diversified funding approaches to ensure financial sustainability. Successful models feature:

- **Performance-based funding** linked to measurable outcomes and impact
- **Diversify funding sources**
  Hybrid mechanisms that combine government funding, industry levies, donor support, and revenue generating services.

8.3.6. Develop institutional capacity

Strengthen the institutional capacity of SSBs and oversight entities to effectively plan, manage, and deliver on their mandates.

- **Enhance professional and technical capacity**
  Recruit and retain qualified personnel with the expertise required to implement the mandate effectively.
- **Promote continuous learning and development**
  Institutionalize lifelong learning through structured training programmes, peer learning, and study visits tailored to evolving sectoral priorities and strategic functions.
- **Strengthen systems for tools and knowledge management**
  Equip SSBs with modern tools and methodologies, digital infrastructure, and robust knowledge management systems.

8.3.7. Forge strategic partnerships and knowledge sharing

SSBs should forge partnerships at local, national, and international levels to align strategies and strengthen sector capacity. Collaboration with education providers, government agencies, industry associations, and international organizations enhances coherence and innovation.

To maximize impact, SSBs should:

- **Engage across borders** to share knowledge, benchmark practices, and promote innovation through peer learning.
- **Coordinate across sectors** on cross-cutting areas such as digital and green skills.
- **Create collaborative platforms** for sharing good practices, training standards, tools, materials, and data.

These efforts position SSBs as strategic growth partners for enterprises and key actors in national development.

8.3.8. Phased implementation approach

Countries may adopt a phased implementation approach to:

- **Prioritize high-impact sectors**Start with sectors that offer strong employment potential
  and strategic relevance
  and test SSB model.
- **Evaluation and Feedback**
  Assess the pilot project effectiveness and impact.
- **Scaling Up**
  Review and revise SSB model based on lessons learned and expand the scope
  to additional sectors.

8.3.9. Innovation and proactive approaches

SSBs should remain agile and forward-looking to respond effectively to rapid technological, economic, and labour market changes. This requires:

- **Future-oriented planning**
  Anticipate emerging skills needs, technological disruptions, and evolving industry trends through strategic foresight and labour market intelligence.
- **Embedding innovation across the ecosystem**
  Foster a culture of creativity and continuous improvement within SSBs, enterprises, and training institutions. Promote innovative training delivery models using digital technologies, blended learning, and modern pedagogical approaches.
- **Adopting flexible organizational structures**
  Design adaptable governance and operational models that enable SSBs to respond quickly to sectoral shifts, stakeholder needs, and policy priorities.

8.3.10. Implement robust Monitoring and Evaluation system

SSBs should implement comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to:

- **Track performance and demonstrate impact**
  Use key performance indicators to monitor outputs, outcomes and impact.
- Communicate success stories, return on investment for employers, and career outcomes for workers.
- **Establish feedback loops**
  Apply evaluation findings to improve policies, systems, and services.
- **Ensure accountability and transparency**
  Implement mechanisms for access to information and progress reports to stakeholders.

8.4. Looking ahead: the future of Sector Skills Bodies

As skills systems navigate unprecedented challenges and opportunities, Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) play a pivotal role in ensuring workforce development remains responsive, relevant, and inclusive. The convergence of technological disruption, environmental imperatives, and demographic transitions demands coordinated responses that no single institution can deliver alone.

This publication demonstrates that well-designed and effectively implemented SSBs can transform skills systems, strengthen industry engagement, and improve labour market outcomes. However, success depends on sustained commitment, adequate resources, strong governance, and continuous adaptation.

Countries considering the establishment of SSBs should draw on international experience while tailoring models to their specific contexts and capacities. Those with existing SSBs must focus on improving performance, expanding impact, and enhancing sustainability.

Above all, stakeholders must recognize that SSBs are not ends in themselves – they are strategic tools for building inclusive, responsive, and effective skills systems that serve both individual aspirations and societal needs.

The future of work is being shaped today. SSBs can ensure that skills systems lead this transformation. The time to act is now.

▶ 8.5. References

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Annexes

Annex A. Risk management matrix: challenges, actions, and lead actors

Sector Skills Bodies (SSBs) often face practical challenges that can weaken their effectiveness, legitimacy and sustainability if left unaddressed. This table outlines common challenges, highlights the risks of inaction, and proposes practical solutions based on international experience. It also identifies key actors – government agencies, industry bodies, training institutions and social partners – who can lead or collaborate to implement these solutions. The goal is to help policymakers and practitioners design and manage SSBs proactively to achieve meaningful results in skills development.

▶ **Table 17.** Risk management matrix

#	▶ Challenge (Establish/Operate)	▶ Risk if unmanaged	▶ Mitigation – practical actions	▶ Lead(s)/ Partners
1	The SSB does not have a clear legal mandate and role.	This can cause duplication of functions, turf conflicts between agencies, and low legitimacy.	The government and the SSB should draft a legal instrument or memorandum of understanding that maps SSB functions against existing bodies, defines the scope and key performance indicators, and includes a review clause after the first year.	The Ministry of Labour/TVET and the SSB Steering Group should lead.
2	The employer landscape is fragmented, with many SMEs and informal firms.	As a result, representation is weak, large firms dominate decisions, and adoption of SSB outputs is limited.	The SSB should engage sector associations and clusters, reserve seats for SMEs, work through chambers of commerce, and offer nonfinancial incentives such as recognition in procurement or access to pilots.	Employer associations, chambers of commerce, and the SSB Secretariat should partner.
3	Worker and union representation in governance and consultations is limited.	This undermines legitimacy, leads to inequitable outcomes, and can trigger resistance to new standards.	The SSB should reserve seats for workers' organizations, adopt a formal consultation protocol, and provide capacitybuilding for representatives.	Trade unions, the line ministry, and the SSB Board should share responsibility.
4	The financing model is unsustainable.	Activities become stop–start, donor dependence increases, and staff turnover rises.	The SSB should adopt a mixed financing model that combines a levy or earmark, membership fees, paid services, and a multiyear agreement with government, alongside costsharing in projects.	The Ministry of Finance and the Ministry of Labour together with the SSB Board should lead.
5	The SSB secretariat lacks sufficient technical and delivery capacity.	Delivery slows and outputs are of poor quality.	The SSB should hire core profiles – such as a labourmarket intelligence analyst, a standards specialist, and a stakeholderengagement lead – arrange secondments, establish simple operating procedures, and deliver targeted training.	The SSB Board and Secretariat should lead.
6	Baseline data and labourmarket intelligence are weak.	Priorities are misaligned and standards risk becoming irrelevant.	The SSB should conduct a rapid LMI scan, run an employer skills survey, use administrative data, agree a priority occupation list, and set a regular refresh cycle.	The Secretariat, the National Statistics Office, and employer associations should collaborate.

7	The development and updating of occupational standards are slow.	Curricula become outdated and employer trust declines.	The SSB should use an agile development process with expert panels, fasttrack minor updates, run public comment cycles, and maintain version control so changes are transparent.	The SSB Standards Working Group and the NQF/QA agency should lead.
8	SSB standards are not aligned with the national qualifications framework and accreditation processes.	Qualifications may not be recognized and duplicate awards may proliferate.	The SSB should jointly map standards to the NQF, agree a cosignoff workflow, adopt shared qualityassurance rubrics, and train assessors.	The NQF agency, the qualityassurance authority, and the SSB should coordinate.
9	Training providers are not ready and face equipment gaps.	Standards are not implemented and learning outcomes are weak.	The SSB should conduct a provider gap analysis, deliver trainthetrainer programs, publish equipment lists with vendor panels, and broker industry placements and demonstrations.	The TVET authority, training providers, and employers should partner.
10	Political interference occurs and the SSB mandate expands beyond scope.	The SSB suffers mission drift and credibility loss.	The SSB should adopt a board charter and a conflictofinterest policy, publish transparent minutes, appoint an independent chair, and commission an annual external review.	The SSB Board and the line ministry should lead.
11	Inclusion and equity are not systematically addressed.	Access remains unequal and reputational risks increase.	The SSB should set inclusion targets and monitoring, embed accessibility in standards and assessments, and support scholarships or bridge programs, including SMEfriendly assessment models.	The SSB Board, social partners, and relevant ministries should lead.
12	Monitoring and evaluation do not focus on results and impact.	Accountability weakens and stakeholders lose confidence.	The SSB should agree a results framework with a few outcome indicators, conduct learner tracer studies and employersatisfaction surveys, and publish a concise public dashboard to inform decisions.	The Secretariat's monitoring and evaluation function and the National Statistics Office should lead.

Annex B. Comparative Overview of SSB Structures Globally

		▶ Advocacy and advice				▶ Design and maintain				▶ Co-ordinate and support					▶ Quality assure and deliver		
▶ Country	▶ Name	▶ Provide policy advice and feedback	▶ Promote career guidance and counselling services	▶ Promote the benefits of TVET, including apprenticeships and other work based learning	▶ Promote Recognition of Prior Learning	▶ Identify current and future skill needs and gaps	▶ Develop and maintain skills standards	▶ Develop qualifications and TVET pathways	▶ Develop curricula and learning resources	▶ Co-ordinate training delivery and assessment	▶ Support professional development of teachers, trainers and assessors	▶ Co-ordinate government training initiatives and programmes, including apprenticeships	▶ Administer levy funds	▶ Facilitate access to finance	▶ Quality assure training content, delivery and assessment	▶ Contribute to training delivery and assessment	▶ Manage and promote Recognition of Prior Learning
Australia	Jobs and Skills Councils		✓			✓	✓			✓							
Brazil	National Commercial Learning Service (Serviço Nacional de Aprebdizagem Comercial) National Industrial Training Service (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Industrial) National Rural Learning Service (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem Rural) National Transport Learning Service (Serviço Nacional de Aprendizagem do Transporte)	✓				✓				✓							
Canada	Human Resource Development Councils	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓									

▶ Country	Chile	Colombia	Czech Republic	Denmark	Gambia	Ghana	Hungary	India	Jamaica	Jordan	Latvia
▶ Name	Sectoral Organizations of Labour Competences (Organismos Sectoriales de Competencias Laborales) (OSCL)	Sector Tables (Mesas Sectoriales) (SENA)	Sector Councils (Sektorové Rady)	Professional Committees (Faglige Udvalg)	Sector Skills Councils	Sector Skills Bodies	Sector Skills Councils	Sector Skills Councils	Sector Skills Councils	National Sector Skills Councils	Sector Expert Councils (Nozaru Ekspertu Padomes)
▶ Manage and promote Recognition of Prior Learning		■						■			
▶ Contribute to training delivery and assessment								■		■	
▶ Quality assure training content, delivery and assessment		■		■				■		■	■
▶ Facilitate access to finance											
▶ Administer levy funds											
▶ Co-ordinate government training initiatives and programmes, including apprenticeships	■				■			■			
▶ Support professional development of teachers, trainers and assessors											
▶ Co-ordinate training delivery and assessment								■			
▶ Develop curricula and learning resources								■			
▶ Develop qualifications and TVET pathways								■			
▶ Develop and maintain skills standards	■		■		■	■	■	■	■	■	■
▶ Identify current and future skill needs and gaps		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
▶ Promote Recognition of Prior Learning		■						■			
▶ Promote the benefits of TVET, including apprenticeships and other work based learning		■						■			
▶ Promote career guidance and counselling services					■			■			
▶ Provide policy advice and feedback		■	■		■	■		■			■

▶ **Manage and promote Recognition of Prior Learning**							X	
▶ **Contribute to training delivery and assessment**							X	
▶ **Quality assure training content, delivery and assessment**	X	X	X		X	X	X	
▶ **Facilitate access to finance**								
▶ **Administer levy funds**							X	
▶ **Co-ordinate government training initiatives and programmes, including apprenticeships**								
▶ **Support professional development of teachers, trainers and assessors**							X	
▶ **Co-ordinate training delivery and assessment**							X	
▶ **Develop curricula and learning resources**					X			
▶ **Develop qualifications and TVET pathways**					X		X	
▶ **Develop and maintain skills standards**		X	X	X		X	X	X
▶ **Identify current and future skill needs and gaps**	X	X	X	X		X	X	X
▶ **Promote Recognition of Prior Learning**							X	
▶ **Promote the benefits of TVET, including apprenticeships and other work based learning**	X						X	
▶ **Promote career guidance and counselling services**							X	
▶ **Provide policy advice and feedback**			X			X	X	
▶ **Name**	Competency Committees (Comites de Gestion por Competencias)	Sector Competence Councils (Sektorowe Rady Ds. Kompetencji)	Workforce Development Committees	Sector Bodies	Sector Councils (Sektorové Rady)	Sectoral Joint Commissions (Comisiones Paritarias Sectoriales)	Sector Education & Training Authorities	Sector Skills Councils
▶ **Country**	Mexico	Poland	New Zealand	Singapore	Slovakia	Spain	South Africa	Tanzania

Annex C. Example Structure of a Sector Skills Strategy (Ghana)

▶ **1.**	▶ **Introduction**
	1.1 The need for a sector skills strategy
	1.2 Sector definition and scope
	1.3 Sector skills strategy aims and scope
▶ **2.**	▶ **Profile and situation analysis for the sector and sub-sectors**
	2.1 Economic and workforce profile
	2.2 Employment
	2.3 Drivers of change, enablers, major trends and their likely impact on employment
▶ **3.**	▶ **Profile of major occupations in the sector**
▶ **4.**	▶ **The supply of skill**
	4.1 Key institutions, formal programmes and qualifications relevant to the sector
	4.2 Enrolment data
	4.3 Workbased and informal learning
▶ **5.**	▶ **Supply side challenges and constraints**
	5.1 National skills policy and strategy
	5.2 Governance and stakeholder co-ordination
	5.3 Funding
	5.4 Relevance of curriculum and qualifications
	5.5 Delivery and assessment practices
	5.6 Access to training
	5.7 Gender equality
▶ **6.**	▶ **Vision for the future of the sector**
▶ **7.**	▶ **Gaps in the capabilities and skills needed to achieve the vision for the future**
	7.1 Labour shortages
	7.2 Skill shortages
	7.3 Skill gaps
▶ **8.**	▶ **Recommendations on meeting priority sector needs and gaps**
	8.1 What skills are needed and where and who should deliver them

Navigating the Poly-Crisis: A New Blueprint for Skills Governance

The global landscape of work is shifting at breakneck speed. Driven by the convergence of digitalization, the green transition, and demographic change, the gap between the skills industries need and the training systems provide is widening. In this era of “poly-crisis”, traditional, static models of skills governance are no longer sufficient.

It is time for the Next Generation of Sector Skills Bodies.

This publication offers a transformative roadmap for bridging the "broken link" between education and the real economy. Moving beyond the traditional role of skills intelligence and standard-setting, this guide argues that effective SSBs must become strategic engines for both comprehensive skills development and Business Development Services (BDS) — helping skills institutions deliver relevant skills, while helping enterprises improve productivity, adopt new technologies, and upskill their workforce.

What is inside:

- **The Paradigm Shift:** How SSBs Can Transform into the Next Generation?
- **Strategic Impact:** How SSBs deliver value across the “Triple Bottom Line” – economic prosperity, social justice, and environmental sustainability.
- **Operational Roadmap:** A step-by-step guide to planning, piloting, and scaling SSBs, avoiding the common “big bang” pitfalls.
- **Sustainable Financing:** Innovative hybrid funding models that reduce reliance on short-term donor aid.
- **Global Evidence:** Insights and lessons learned from 18 country case studies, including Australia, Ghana, India, South Africa, and Singapore.

This guide is an essential resource for policymakers, employer and worker organizations, and development practitioners who are ready to move beyond theory and build agile, industry-led institutions that deliver measurable impact.

Read this guide to transform your skills system from supply-driven to demand-led.

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