



United Nations  
Educational, Scientific and  
Cultural Organization



# **Strategy** for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (2016-2021)

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# UNESCO Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) 2016-2021

The strategy aims to:

- support the efforts of Member States to enhance the relevance of their TVET systems and to equip all youth and adults with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning, and
- contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole.

## Did you know that...



Rising youth unemployment is one of the most significant problems facing economies and societies in today's world, for developed and developing countries alike.

Over the next decade, at least **475** million new jobs need to be created to absorb the

**73** million youth currently unemployed and the

**40** million new annual entrants to the labour market.<sup>1</sup>

**1.44** billion workers worldwide are in vulnerable employment.<sup>2</sup>

“Attaining decent work is a significant challenge for youth.”

“Despite progress and economic growth, inequalities and poverty persist in many parts of the world.”

On average, for countries in which data is available, the wealthiest 10% earn **30-40%** of the country's total income.



By contrast, the poorest 10% earn around **2%** of the total income.<sup>3</sup>



The global unemployment rate (%)	<b>6.4</b>	vs	<b>5.7</b>
The global labour force participation rate (%)	<b>68.7</b>		<b>81.7</b>

For all countries, **climate change** represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat.

**15-60** million new jobs could be generated globally over the next two decades through the transition to a **greener economy**.<sup>4</sup>

“All Member States have priorities for transition to green economies and climate resilient societies.”

## 3 Pillars of Priority Areas

### Fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship



UNESCO will support Member States to conduct Policy reviews and TVET reforms



UNESCO will mobilize cooperation of different stakeholders



UNESCO will support Member States to design efficient and effective TVET funding strategies



### Promoting equity and gender equality



UNESCO will conduct policy advice and capacity-building programmes



UNESCO will encourage exchange and dissemination of knowledge



UNESCO will promote targeted policy measures for disadvantaged groups



UNESCO will support measures enhancing women's and girls' access to relevant TVET programmes and providing equal opportunities in the world of work



### Facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies



UNESCO will promote green skills for a smooth transition to greening economies



UNESCO will foster cross-sectoral approaches of TVET



UNESCO will support Member States to leverage digital technologies and close the digital divide



## To maximise the outcomes of the Strategy's priority areas, UNESCO will help Member States:



to identify and anticipate skills requirements to inform TVET policies, strategies and programmes and to create multi-level and multi-sectoral stakeholder platforms



by facilitating the debate on recognition of skills and qualifications, including across borders, as well as building learning pathways in a lifelong learning perspective



in monitoring progress towards SDG4 and related TVET targets with a framework of key indicators

# Strategy for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) (2016-2021)

## I. CONTEXT

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1. The international community has set an ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. It calls for an integrated approach to development which recognises that eradicating poverty in all its forms and dimensions; combating inequality within and among countries; preserving the planet; creating inclusive and sustainable economic growth; achieving full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men; and ensuring full gender equality and fostering social inclusion, are interdependent.
2. Education and training are central to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The vision of the Incheon Declaration: Education 2030 is fully captured by Sustainable Development Goal 4 “Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all”. Education 2030 devotes considerable attention to technical and vocational skills development, specifically regarding access to affordable quality Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET); the acquisition of technical and vocational skills for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship; the elimination of gender disparity and ensuring access for the vulnerable. In this context, TVET is expected to address the multiple demands of an economic, social and environmental nature by helping youth and adults develop the skills they need for employment, decent work and entrepreneurship, promoting equitable, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, and supporting transitions to green economies and environmental sustainability.
3. In the last six years, UNESCO implemented a Strategy for TVET<sup>1</sup> (2010-2015) which aimed at strengthening support to Member States to improve their TVET policies and systems. The Shanghai Consensus,<sup>2</sup> adopted in 2012 at the Third International Congress on TVET, provided a vision to connect the analysis of TVET systems with intended development outcomes, and indicated key recommendations for TVET system reform and policy development.

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1 See: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0018/001833/183317e.pdf>

2 See: <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/fileadmin/up/217683e.pdf>

4. The vision and policy areas of the Shanghai Consensus helped to inspire the revision and drafting of the Recommendation concerning Technical and Vocational Education and Training (2015), which was developed in close coordination and synergy with the newly revised Recommendation on Adult Learning and Education (2015). Both Recommendations provide impetus for work in the field of lifelong learning and are crucial to accompany the implementation of Education 2030.
5. An evaluation of the Strategy<sup>3</sup> was conducted in 2014-2015. UNESCO's work was found to be widely appreciated. UNESCO's expertise in providing policy advice, capacity-building and conducting policy reviews is valued at the national level, while its conceptual and normative work constitute a specific added value that helps Member States to set up and improve their TVET policies and systems. The evaluation further highlighted UNESCO's global leadership role in positioning TVET as a learning path that contributes to equity, social justice, lifelong learning and sustainable development. The evaluation further acknowledged the uniqueness of the global UNEVOC Network<sup>4</sup> of TVET institutions as well as UNESCO's convening power in bringing together international organizations that are active in TVET. A number of challenges were also identified regarding the effectiveness and sustainability of UNESCO's activities at the country level, including the absence of a longer-term strategic approach. Despite the acknowledged advances, achieved through the revamping of the UNEVOC Network since 2010, the evaluation concluded that the Network's potential needs to be more fully realized.
6. The development of this new Strategy for TVET has taken into account the 2030 Agenda, the Education 2030 Framework for Action, the evaluation of the Strategy for TVET (2010-2015), the Recommendation concerning TVET (2015), UNESCO's analysis of global trends in TVET<sup>5</sup>, and various consultations, such as a virtual conference on the new Strategy organized by the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre and meetings of the Inter-Agency Group on TVET on skills in the 2030 Agenda. The consultation and drafting process took place in coordination with the development of the Education 2030 Framework for Action (FFA). This is intended to ensure that the implementation of the Strategy for TVET and the FFA will mutually address key TVET policy issues, in particular youth employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning.

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3 See: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002344/234442E.pdf>

4 See: <http://www.unevoc.unesco.org/go.php>

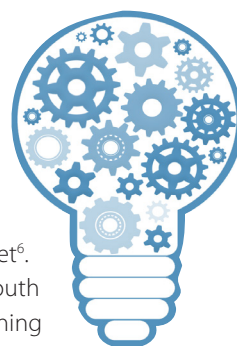
5 See: <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0023/002330/233030e.pdf>

## II. OBJECTIVE AND PRIORITY AREAS

7. The Strategy sets out key policy areas and actions for the period 2016 to 2021 within the framework of the Medium Term Strategy (37 C/4). It contributes to UNESCO's strategic objectives, the Organization's global priorities for gender equality and Africa, the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development and the Operational Strategy on Youth.
8. Within this context and in full alignment with SDG4 to "Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all", the Strategy aims to support the efforts of Member States to enhance the relevance of their TVET systems and to equip all youth and adults with the skills required for employment, decent work, entrepreneurship and lifelong learning, and to contribute to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development as a whole.
9. The Strategy has three priority areas:
  - (1) Fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship;
  - (2) Promoting equity and gender equality;
  - (3) Facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies.

### 1. Fostering youth employment and entrepreneurship

10. Rising youth unemployment is one of the most significant problems facing economies and societies in today's world, for developed and developing countries alike. At least 475 million new jobs need to be created over the next decade to absorb the 73 million youth currently unemployed and the 40 million new annual entrants to the labour market<sup>6</sup>. At the same time, OECD surveys<sup>7</sup> suggest that both employers and youth consider that many graduates are ill-prepared for the world of work. Attaining decent work is a significant challenge. In many countries, the informal sector and traditional rural sector remains a major source of employment. The number of workers in vulnerable employment currently stands at 1.44 billion worldwide<sup>8</sup>. Workers in sub-saharan Africa and South Asia account for more than half this number, with three out of four workers in these regions subject to vulnerable employment conditions.



6 See: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_337069.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/---publ/documents/publication/wcms_337069.pdf)

7 See: <http://www.enterprisesurveys.org/>; <http://www.oecd.org/edu/oecd-skills-outlook-2015-9789264234178-en.htm>

8 See: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms\\_346619.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---inst/documents/publication/wcms_346619.pdf)

11. TVET can equip youth with the skills required to access the world of work, including skills for self-employment. TVET can also improve responsiveness to changing skill-demands by companies and communities, increase productivity and increase wage levels. TVET can reduce access barriers to the world of work, for example through work-based learning, and ensuring that skills gained are recognised and certified. TVET can also offer skills development opportunities for low-skilled people who are under- or unemployed, out-of-school youth and individuals not in education, employment and training (NEETs).
12. UNESCO will continue providing evidence-based and impact-oriented advice for interventions at the national level, and through regional and global initiatives where appropriate. At the national level, UNESCO will support TVET policy reviews and policy development and in-depth analysis of specific priority areas, including funding. Additionally, UNESCO will support capacity-building initiatives of national decision-makers and institutions responsible for the training of teaching of staff and managers. At the regional level, UNESCO will support the emergence of regional TVET agendas, peer learning and knowledge sharing. At the global level, UNESCO will encourage and support multilateral initiatives and collaborative activities that promote the transformation and attractiveness of TVET worldwide as a contribution to youth employment, decent work and entrepreneurship.

### ***Supporting policy reviews and policy development***

13. UNESCO will promote a whole-of-government approach to TVET transformations that foster youth employment and better connect and align relevant policy areas, including but not limited to education, employment, industrial and economic development, agriculture and rural development, health, and social policy. Interventions will be demand-driven, and will be planned, designed, implemented and evaluated in full alignment with the development context and policy priorities in the beneficiary countries.
14. Support to TVET policy reviews and policy development will be based upon key policy lines, indicated in the Recommendation concerning TVET (2015) which include, among others, institutional arrangements, governance and regulatory frameworks, funding, equity and access (particularly for marginalised groups and women), quality and relevance, curricula reform, qualification frameworks and quality assurance, the professional development of teaching staff, and the monitoring and evaluation of TVET strategies and programmes.
15. UNESCO will support Member States to ensure their TVET policies promote the development of entrepreneurial skills, through strategies such as incorporating courses in entrepreneurship into formal curricula and certification, supporting small businesses in providing workplace training and stimulating the creation of incubators and co-operative projects with the private sector and communities.





- UNESCO's policy reviews and support will be provided through the regular programme budget to 30 countries across the world. These countries will be selected on a needs basis, in accordance with specific requests for assistance, and with appropriate attention to UNESCO's priorities and geographical distribution. The expansion of the number of beneficiary countries will be subject to extrabudgetary funding and partnerships.



- To ensure the availability of stable and sustainable resources for TVET, UNESCO's work is expected to support Member States to design efficient and effective funding strategies and target TVET investments in projects and programmes that are cost-effective for individuals, enterprises and society at large. This will include identifying good practices in the design, governance and management of TVET funding mechanisms and options for financing TVET expansion, equity and quality.
- UNESCO will provide support, through the regular programme budget, to some 10 countries across the world to develop a TVET funding strategy which includes private sector contributions. The Organization will seek partnerships and extrabudgetary resources to expand the number of beneficiary countries.

### ***Promoting collaborative approaches and capacity-building***

- Countries that have developed TVET policies and strategies experienced mixed success in implementation. A lack of capacity and a lack of partnerships is a major problem for many countries. To support implementation, UNESCO will focus on ways to create effective institutions and partnerships across governments and between agents and institutions involved in TVET at the national and local levels. UNESCO will strengthen its support to Member States through dedicated extrabudgetary initiatives.



- UNESCO will also focus support on the development of TVET leaders in ministries, agencies and TVET institutions. To this effect, UNESCO, through the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre, will initiate a TVET Leadership Programme aimed at capacity-building of TVET institutional leaders and heads of TVET teacher training institutions. The TVET Leadership Programme will benefit some 100 UNEVOC centres across the world.

## **2. Promoting equity and gender equality**

- Despite technological progress and economic growth, inequalities and poverty persist in many parts of the world. On average, for countries in which data is available, the wealthiest 10 per cent earn 30-40 per cent of the country's total income. By contrast, the poorest 10 per cent earn around 2 per cent of the total income<sup>9</sup>. Too many people, in particular



9 Source: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_337069.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/publ/documents/publication/wcms_337069.pdf)



women, lack opportunities for skills development and decent work. Overall, women continue to suffer from higher rates of unemployment, are less likely to participate in the labour force and face higher risks of vulnerable employment, e.g. being self-employed or a contributing family worker. In 2014, the global unemployment rate for women stood at 6.4% (versus 5.7% for men) and the global labour force participation rate of women stood at 68.7% (versus 81.7% for men)<sup>10</sup>.

22. As a result of wider gender inequalities and stereotypes, TVET programmes are often gender-biased, affecting the access to and participation of women in specific occupational areas. For instance, at the upper secondary level (ISCED 3) where the data is most complete and vocational programmes in formal education are well defined, the UNESCO Institute for Statistics estimates the percentage of female students worldwide in “general” programmes to be 48%, and in vocational programmes to be 44%. In turn, this participation issue contributes to the perpetuation of gender inequalities at work and in society at large, including for countries that have achieved parity of access.
23. UNESCO will aim to shed light on these issues and identify the most cost-effective policies to tackle them. The Organization will support Member States to define appropriate policy measures to promote equity in and through TVET; to ensure all youth and adults, women and men, have equal opportunities to learn, develop and enhance their knowledge, skills and competencies; and to address the great diversity of learning and training needs.



### **Promoting targeted policy measures for disadvantaged groups**



24. To support countries that are facing difficulties integrating disadvantaged groups in their TVET systems, UNESCO will develop guidelines and collect and share promising policy measures and solutions. UNESCO will also provide policy advice and capacity development to Member States to make TVET more accessible to all disadvantaged and vulnerable groups, including through investment in Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) as innovative means to widen access and participation rates.
25. UNESCO will work with concerned Member States in improving skills development in the informal sector and rural areas. Particular focus will be given to increasing Member States understanding of the world of work and of the value TVET provides in meeting the skills needs of employers, individuals and communities. To achieve greater skills development in the informal sector and rural areas, UNESCO will support Member States in the provision of quality and relevant training in the workplace and in rural communities, including through traditional apprenticeships, and encouraging industry associations, local authorities and communities to play a greater role in governance and funding.



10 Source: [http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/publ/documents/publication/wcms\\_233953.pdf](http://www.ilo.org/wcmsp5/groups/public/---dgreports/---dcomm/publ/documents/publication/wcms_233953.pdf)

## ***Enhancing women's and girls' access to relevant TVET programmes and providing equal opportunities in the world of work***



26. To promote gender equality in and through TVET, UNESCO will seek to fill knowledge gaps in understanding the issue in various economic and cultural contexts, promoting policy learning and providing policy support and capacity-building services. Particular focus will be placed on developing strategies to promote women's access to occupational areas that offer better employment prospects; identifying relevant international promising practices, including improving the monitoring and evaluation of gender equality in TVET; and facilitating policy dialogue, capacity-building and advocacy which targets key partners, including labour market stakeholders. In addition to promoting targeted measures, UNESCO will support Member States in mainstreaming gender equality when reviewing and developing TVET policies, strategies and activities, so that gender equality considerations positively influence policy priorities and spending patterns.

### **3. Facilitating the transition to green economies and sustainable societies**

27. Across all development sectors there are tremendous and dynamic skills needs. Each country will need to set context-specific approaches and priorities to ensure a sustainable national development path. However, for all countries, climate change represents an urgent and potentially irreversible threat. All Member States have priorities for the transition to green economies and climate resilient societies. Such transitions will positively affect employment and transform consumption and production patterns. The transformation to a greener economy could generate 15 to 60 million additional jobs globally over the next two decades and lift tens of millions of workers out of poverty<sup>11</sup>.



28. Digital technologies have spread rapidly in much of the world impacting all disciplines, economies, industries and the world of work. Despite this, 60 per cent of the world's population are still offline and unable to participate fully in the digital economy<sup>12</sup>. Member States and the international community need to work together to close the digital divide and reduce inequalities of access and quality to these services to ensure wider sustainable development benefit.

11 Source: [http://www.unep.org/PDF/Workingtowards\\_full.pdf](http://www.unep.org/PDF/Workingtowards_full.pdf)

12 Source: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/publication/wdr2016>

29. Such developments will require creative solutions, new TVET programmes and capacity-building efforts in regards to skills development. Achieving this will require context-specific policy solutions and a process of building a broad agreement among national stakeholders. To this effect, UNESCO will foster cross-sectoral approaches that connect TVET and the other SDGs in order to support Member States in achieving a smooth transition to sustainable development.

### ***Fostering cross-sectoral approaches of TVET***

30. UNESCO will develop practical tools to assist Member States in designing and implementing appropriate and effective strategies regarding the requirement, supply and use of skills to achieve the expected development outcomes in priority areas such as health, water, sustainable industrialisation and energy, agriculture and food safety and security. To this end, a framework will be developed to identify the components and action points for the concerned SDG skills strategies, a set of principles to guide the development and review of these strategies and concrete examples of good practice in the design, implementation and evaluation of these strategies. To support the implementation, UNESCO will focus on ways to create effective partnerships across governments and between agents and institutions concerned at the national and local levels.



31. UNESCO will also support Member States to leverage digital technologies to ensure a lack of skills do not prevent countries advancing toward digital transformation, and also ensure that the benefits are widely shared. UNESCO will support countries in identifying the set of skills required including advanced information and communication technologies (ICTs) and science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) skills. UNESCO will also support Member States efforts in modernizing qualifications and curricula; training teaching staff; and reinforcing the learning and recognition of these skills in workplace settings.
32. At the global level, UNESCO will work with the ILO and other concerned United Nations agencies such as FAO, UNEP, UNFCCC, UNIDO, and WHO, to explore the complex interrelationships between the SDGs, and identify implications for TVET.

### ***Promoting green skills for the smooth transition to greening economies***

33. UNESCO will support Member States in achieving a smooth transition to green economies and increase their capacities to meet their commitments to the Paris Agreement on Climate Change, adopted in December 2015. In this context, UNESCO will foster timely and targeted support to Member States by facilitating partnerships and synergies with different stakeholders for greening skills including enterprises, community and developmental partners.



34. In line with the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development, UNESCO's work on institutional and professional capacity development will support Member States in greening TVET by adopting a whole-institutional transformation which entails capacity-building of leaders, education managers and teachers to implement systemic reforms for embedding sustainability concepts in TVET. The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre will develop appropriate training courses within its TVET leadership programme.
35. At the global level, UNESCO will ensure knowledge development and sharing in the field of greening skills especially through the UNESCO-UNEVOC Network. The UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre will strengthen cooperation with the Inter-Agency Working Group (IAWG) on Greening TVET and Skills Development and will create opportunities for developing joint activities for taking forward the UNESCO Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development.

### III. CROSS-CUTTING INTERVENTIONS

36. To maximise the outcomes of the Strategy's priority areas, UNESCO will support Member States to conduct integrated analysis of their changing economic, social and environmental contexts and to identify and anticipate skills requirements to inform TVET policies, strategies and programmes. Furthermore, UNESCO will support Member States in creating national, regional and sectoral stakeholder platforms to facilitate private sector participation and communication between the world of education and the world of work.



37. UNESCO will also conduct research and support Member States to collect and analyse data on TVET programmes' outcomes and harness the promise of the ICT revolution, including big data and open data. A framework of key indicators will be developed with the UNESCO Institute for Statistics (UIS) to improve Member States' ability to monitor progress towards SDG4 and related technical and vocational skills targets<sup>13</sup>. Guidelines will be developed for reporting on the implementation of the normative instruments.



<sup>13</sup> Specifically by 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university (4.3); substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship (4.4); and eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations (4.5).

38. UNESCO will strengthen international and regional cooperation and foster the UNEVOC Network and inter-agency collaboration. Furthermore, UNESCO will facilitate the debate on cross-border recognition of qualifications by exploring the potential development of international guidelines on quality assurance for the recognition of qualifications, based on learning outcomes and, identifying a set of world reference levels to facilitate international comparison and recognition of TVET qualifications, with particular reference to the needs of migrants and refugees.



## IV. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

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39. With a view to render this Strategy more effective and facilitate its implementation, monitoring and evaluation, UNESCO will apply a results-based programming, management and monitoring approach, consistent with the Organization's rules and procedures.
40. UNESCO will develop an accountability and results matrix, including specific indicators to allow tracking of progress in the implementation of the Strategy on a continuing basis.
41. A mid-term review will be conducted in 2019 to assess progress and to adapt the Strategy as required and in accordance with the situation and operating context. The mid-term evaluation will be also informed by the monitoring of the Recommendation concerning TVET (2015).
42. An evaluation of the Strategy will be conducted during the last year of its implementation in 2021. The evaluation of the Strategy will take into account the findings of an independent study on the impact of the Recommendation concerning TVET (2015).
43. A Fourth International Congress on TVET will be used to share progress and chart a new strategy beyond 2021.

## V. ORGANIZATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

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44. UNESCO's work on TVET will proceed according to the Organization's functions, taking into account the division of responsibilities between Headquarters, Regional Bureaux, Field Offices and Institutes. The TVET Unit at Headquarters will lead the implementation of this strategy, with the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre functioning as the hub of the UNESCO-UNEVOC Network and as a resource centre for research and innovation, knowledge-sharing and capacity development. The UNESCO TVET Community will be further enhanced through the establishment of a 'community of practice' and through the implementation of training activities for relevant UNESCO staff by the UNESCO-UNEVOC International Centre.
45. The UNEVOC Network will be the key driver for mutual learning, capacity-building and advancing international cooperation in TVET.
46. As well as UNESCO and its networks, there are a wide range of development stakeholders and networks, active in the field of TVET. Members of the Inter-Agency Group on TVET will continue to conduct collective initiatives and work jointly on issues such as TVET indicators and statistics, green skills and work-based learning. Given the importance of the 2030 Agenda and the scale of the challenges, UNESCO will work with the members of the Inter-Agency Group on TVET to expand and involve other United Nations agencies, Development Banks and bilateral organizations, with the view to enhance and expand international cooperation, advocacy and mobilization of other organizations and partners.
47. The regional level engagement of UNESCO will involve close collaboration with secretariats of Regional Economic Communities (RECs) and other relevant regional organizations, within their areas of focus. In particular, UNESCO will continue to support the development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of regional TVET strategies, through peer learning, capacity development and knowledge-sharing initiatives, with a focus on regional qualifications frameworks, indicators for monitoring and evaluation and the development of regional guidelines and tools.
48. At national level, UNESCO will also establish and/or enhance close collaboration with technical and financial stakeholders, notably through the Local Education Group (LEG) and the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) mechanisms, and enhance Member States donors' coordination capacities, where necessary.



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