

World Bank study⁴ exposes that industry surveys reveal that many businesses do not find technical and vocational training graduates to be qualified workers and as a result, long unemployment periods after graduation is now common among TVET graduates. This is explained by weaker foundations of the TVET students (TVET is not attractive) and by poor program design, insufficient links to the employers and low teaching quality in TVET institutions.

Digitalisation of the TVET system is an important intervention for enhancing access, quality and relevance. Many jobs in Ethiopia today and in the future will require basic digital skills in addition to technical and soft skills. In this connection, TVET policy and strategy 2020 includes a range of strategies such as establishing basic digital infrastructure, developing internal digital guideline and standards, supporting special need trainees with assistive technology and applying digital technology in training, and administration at all levels of the TVET system.

Women are less likely to participate in the labour market and training with worsening trends observed in the recent years in unemployment and labour force participation rates. Only 36 % of the population who have received any training are women⁵ and women enrol and graduate from the lower level courses.

This Action builds on the national policies around the digitalisation and education and training policy. The “Digital Strategy Ethiopia 2025”, Education and Training Policy (2023), the “Education Sector Development Programme (ESDP) VI”, the “Ethiopian Technical and Vocational Education and Training Policy and Strategy”, and the “Digital Skills Country Action Plan (DSCAP) for 2020-2030”.

To build successful and sustainable TVET-System, a TVET Basked Fund ESHI-TSDP (Enhanced Support Holistic Impact – TVET Sustainable Development Program) was created in 2019 and is implemented by Ministry of Labour and Skills. The TVET Basket Fund is currently supported by KfW and follows the result based financing modality. Other partners in the TVET sector are World Bank, South Korea, ILO, Germany, Italy, Finland, Netherlands and Sweden

The action is directly contributing to the EU-Africa Global Gateway Investment Package for Ethiopia, which aims to support the green and digital transformation of the country supporting sustainable growth and job creation and strengthening the education system.

In addition, the action’s core focus on digital skills development is to be seen as part of the EU’s broader political commitment to support an inclusive and human-centric digital transformation in Africa. In this regard, the action feeds into several ongoing and planned regional programmes, such as the Horn of Africa Initiative (HoAI)⁶, the Regional Teacher Programme for Africa⁷ and Africa Connect⁴⁸. The action could potentially also draw upon the work of the EU-funded VET Toolbox programme⁹ and the soon to be launched TEI Opportunity-driven skills and VET in Africa (TEI OP-VET).

The Action is also responding to the “Digital Transformation Strategy for Africa (2020-2030)” that aims to build inclusive digital skills and human capacity across the digital sciences, and education, both technical and vocational, to lead and power digital transformation. The action contributes to SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 5 (Gender equality), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth) and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation & Infrastructure). Furthermore, the action will contribute to the Gender Action Plan III (GAP III),¹⁰ especially to the Key thematic areas of “Promoting economic and social rights and empowering girls and women” and “Addressing the challenges and harnessing the opportunities offered by the digital transformation”.

⁴ Diagnosis of skills training system and employability of youth in Ethiopia, World Bank 2022

⁵ Ethiopia Labour Force Survey, 2021.

⁶ A EUR 4M digital skills component under HoAI is foreseen to be operationalised by EUD Djibouti. In addition, as part of the Communiqué published following the 19th Ministerial Meeting on the HoAI in Brussels (Dec. 24’), the Finance Ministers of the HoAI partner countries mentioned digital and ICT skills as important requirement for regional digital integration.

⁷ The Regional Teacher Programme for Africa specifically addresses teachers’ digital and green competences, with at least one Team Europe implementing partner working on teacher training in Ethiopia.

⁸ Despite having a primary focus on digital connectivity, the AfricaConnect4 programme also provides digital skills trainings for educators in order to address the skills gap and enhance longer-term sustainability.

⁹ <https://vettoolbox.eu/actions/>.

¹⁰ The Gender Action Plan III is a Joint communication by the Commission and the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy which was welcomed through EU Presidency Conclusions of 16 December 2020. Drafting was led by European Commission in close consultation with EU Member States, EEAS, civil society organisations, partner governments, and international organisations (UN entities, International Finance Institutions among others). The different parties contributed to the drafting of the document through meetings and through responses to a survey conducted during the process.