

Concept paper for the meeting of experts responsible for conducting country studies for the 2014 regional event on youth employment in Africa

December 2013

Progress made by the ICQN/TVSD

The Inter-Country Quality Node on Technical and Vocational Skills Development (ICQN/TVSD) was launched in 2010 by the Côte d'Ivoire Ministry for Technical Education and Vocational Training (which has now become the Ministry of State for Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training, or MEEASFP), together with the Association for the Development of Education in Africa (ADEA). Its initial objective was to enable public and private officials involved in TVSD policy reform to share experience, research and evaluations carried out in this field at the regional, sub-regional and continental levels. This would make it possible to develop a coordinated response to common challenges by creating jobs for the large numbers of young people who are excluded from work and by significantly raising the level of skills of the entire workforce in order to promote high value-added growth and job creation.

The ICQN organised two ministerial conferences in Abidjan, in July 2010 and September 2011. 24 French-, English- and Portuguese-speaking countries from the various sub-regions of the continent are now involved in its work. The 2010 conference laid the foundations for inter-country cooperation and defined the ICQN's working methods. The 2011 conference agreed on the broad working priorities, which culminated in the organisation of two meetings of experts from the different countries in 2012 and 2013. These focused on youth employment and the design, creation and/or further development of national qualifications frameworks.

- The first meeting provided an opportunity to analyse the factors that determine the effectiveness of employment schemes in some 10 countries. Recommendations were made on the sharing of experiences and an extensive inter-country study on young people's access to the labour market.
- The second meeting brought together about 15 countries to discuss the recognition and validation of skills acquired through non-formal and informal training. Proposals were made on measures to ensure that national qualifications frameworks provide value and visibility to these new forms and means of skills development.

The 2014 regional event on youth employment in Africa

The ICQN/TVSD is due to organise a big event on youth employment during the third quarter of 2014. This follows on from two previous meetings: the ministerial conference of 2011, which decided that youth employment would be a major strategic and operational priority

for the ICQN; and the working seminar of July 2012 which, in accordance with the decision of the ministers, brought together experts from a dozen countries to analyse the difficulties and obstacles preventing young people from accessing employment and the reforms required to ensure more effective pathways into the world of work.

The event primarily aims to grapple with the problem of youth employment, which is one of the biggest challenges facing the African continent as it struggles to alleviate poverty and fundamentally ensure its sustainable development. Its specific objectives will be to identify and analyse effective training, integration and job creation schemes which the countries have started developing in order to meet the real needs of the world of work and thus develop an action plan on a regional scale that can significantly improve young people's access to the world of work. This needs to be done prior to the meeting.

The process to prepare for the event

The 2014 event will only be successful if it is preceded by a major effort to identify and analyse different countries' experiences and schemes aimed at giving young people the best chance of entering the world of work. A uniform approach to identifying and analysing information should be adopted, in agreement and with the support of each country's training and employment officials and the assistance of one or more national experts appointed for this purpose. Technical and methodological support will be sought from various bilateral and multilateral technical and financial partners. The GIZ and AFD are already fully involved in the process of preparing for the event. Contacts have also been made with the African Development Bank and the Swiss, Dutch and Luxembourg cooperation agencies.

Each designated expert will describe one or more national youth employment schemes and analyse the factors determining the effectiveness, success and recognition of measures taken. A common structure will be adopted for all countries. The ultimate goal is to launch a process for sharing and pooling information on these experiences. This will help the countries to individually and collectively identify successful ways of enabling young people to acquire and develop the skills they need to enter into the job market. It will also enable economic and professional stakeholders to develop their business, thereby creating jobs.

The experts' work will lead to the production of a document or compendium describing the key measures used by each selected country and the criteria determining their effectiveness in helping young people into work. This will be done prior to the event.

The agenda of the meeting of national experts to be held in December 2013

National experts are currently being identified. There should be a list of at least twenty experts. The appointment of these experts, which will be done with the help and support of the technical and financial partners mentioned above, will be approved by the employment and vocational training ministers of the countries invited to participate in the 2014 event, namely: South Africa, Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burundi, Burkina Faso, Cape Verde, Côte d' Ivoire, Ethiopia, Egypt, Ghana, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Mali, Morocco, Mauritius,

Mozambique, Niger, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Togo and Tunisia.

Each expert appointed will be invited to participate in the Abidjan meeting and present their project or the preliminary results of their work. The purpose of the inter-country meeting will be to:

- discuss the objectives and the expected results of the 2014 event on African youth employment and the experts' vital role in the preparatory process of the event;
- present and if necessary clarify the common structure proposed for writing country reports;
- pre-select schemes that could be included in the country reports;
- agree on the common framework for analysing different countries' schemes and the ways of involving experts in all stages of the preparatory process for the 2014 event ;
- establish a joint schedule for drawing up the reports and the final compendium, which will serve as a basis for discussion and analysis by ministers and experts at the plenary meeting .

Those invited to the meeting will include technical experts and financial partners who have agreed to provide technical and/or financial support for the implementation of country reports, such as the GIZ, the AFD, LuxDev , the SDC , CINOP, GRET, etc.

Proposed schedule

The meeting of experts should take place on 16 and 17 December 2013. The Côte d'Ivoire Ministry of State for Employment, Social Affairs and Vocational Training will host the meeting in partnership with ADEA. The preparatory process for the meeting will be as follows:

- End October 2013: invitations to the ministers of participating countries will be sent out, asking them to appoint a country expert by 16 November;
- Week of 18-22 November: invitations will be sent to the experts along with the agenda of the meeting;
- Week of 2-6 December: the list of participants will be drawn up and, if necessary, the countries and technical and financial partners will be contacted again in order to finalise it;
- 16 and 17 December: meeting of the experts at the IVOTEL.