



**PROJECT OPERATIONAL MANUAL FOR THE
IMPLEMENTATION OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT
FUND (SDF) ADDITIONAL FINANCING**

September 2021

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Acronyms

BCC	Budget Call Circular
BDA	Business Development Advisor
BDE	Business Development and Employment
CBA	Competency Based Assessment
CBT	Competency Based Training
CESB	Capacity Development and Employment Services Board
COSO	Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Tread way Commission
DG	Director General
DKWC	District Kora Wigire Centre
DLI	Disbursement Linked Indicators
DLR	Disbursement Linked Results
EDPRS	Economic Growth and Poverty Reduction Strategy
GoR	Government of Rwanda
IBT	Industrial Business Training
ID	Identification
IFMIS	Integrated financial management information and system
IPRCs	Integrated Polytechnic Regional Colleges
IR	Integrated Reporting
LODA	Local administrative entities Development Agency
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MIFOTRA	Ministry of Public Service and Labour
MIGEPROF	Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
MINAFFET	Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and East African Community
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINEDUC	Ministry of Education
MINICOM	Ministry of Trade and Industry
MINIYOUTH	Ministry of Youth
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
MTEF	Medium Term Expenditure Framework
NCPD	National Council of Persons with Disability
NEP	National Employment Programme
OAG	Office of Auditor General
OSY	Out of School Youth
PforR	Performance for Results
PS	Permanent Secretary
PSF	Private Sector Federation
PSG	Priority Skills for Growth (project)
RDB	Rwanda Development Board
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
RPPA	Rwanda Public Procurement Authority
SDF	Skills Development Fund
SPIU	Single Project Implementation Unit

ToR	Terms of Reference
TSS	Technical Secondary School
TVET	Technical Vocational and Education Training
VTC	Vocational Training Centre
WB	World Bank
RTB	Rwanda TVET Board
AF	Additional Finance
NSDEPS	National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy

1. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

1.1. Abstract

The Government of Rwanda is in transition from Vision 2020 to Vision 2050, aiming to secure high standards of living for all Rwandans. To achieve this ambitious goal, Rwanda must build a dynamic and capable workforce, meeting the rising demand for high-skilled jobs.

The National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy (NSDEPS) aims at upskilling Rwanda's workforce for long-term economic transformation by putting private sector at the helm. In doing so, it follows the principles embedded in the National Strategy for Transformation, the Private Sector Development and Youth Employment strategy, and other relevant national documents. Primarily, this strategy builds upon the National Employment Programme (NEP). It seeks to amplify NEP's successes, such as attending the upskilling needs of investing companies through the Skills Development Fund (SDF), while addressing its shortcomings, such as insufficient private sector engagement and weak accountability.

The number of entrants to the labour market is substantially larger than the increase in jobs during the last 15 years. Acknowledging the demographic trends, the ongoing seven-year Government programme, National Strategy for Transformation (NST1) of the Government of Rwanda (GoR) has an ambitious target of creating 214,000 off-farm jobs annually. For off-farm jobs, both the formal and informal sector will be important.

The Priority Skills for Growth programme (PSG) has been initiated through a partnership agreement between World Bank and government of Rwanda to reinforce governance of the skills development system and expand opportunities for the acquisition of quality, market-relevant skills in selected economic sectors through a Programme for Results (PforR) financing model. Having an end line of September 2020, with consideration of achievement and remaining gaps related to the programme, the PSG was given an additional finance (AF) to extend its activities until September 2023. The programme results areas include (i) reinforcing governance of the skills development system, (ii) ensuring provision of quality training programmes with market relevance, (iii) expanding opportunities for continuous upgrading of job-relevant skills for sustained employability; and (iv) capacity building for implementation.

Among the components of PSG include Skills Development Fund II whose objective is to minimize skills gaps experienced by private business operators by rapidly increasing the supply of skills in high demand in the labour market and to ease the entry of new entrants to the labour market by providing them with labour market-relevant skills. The present phase of SDF supported through the PSG additional finance, builds on the experience of the previous SDF.

To ensure effective management of SDF additional finance, it was required to amend the existing operational manual that defines policies and operating principles and provides implementation guidance and brings on board various key stakeholder involved in the implementation of SDF additional finance and clarifies their respective roles and

responsibilities. The manual has been amended in accordance with the Government of Rwanda and the World Bank's policies and procedures. It benefitted from close guidance of the Rwanda TVET Board (RTB) Management Team and the World Bank Team as well as key stakeholders involved in the skills development.

The manual is a dynamic document which can respond to changes of the project implementation. It is structured to be used by the RTB, stakeholders and external auditors to implement the current phase of the SDF.

The SDF additional finance shall be implemented by RTB under the existing structure of SDF with guidelines which shall expand training opportunities for the acquisition of quality, market- relevant skills with more focus in selected economic sectors.

The target sectors were selected on basis of (i) sectors that employ large numbers of the population; (ii) sectors with potential for value addition and improved productivity; (iii) sectors where foreign direct investment is increasing and/or where significant public finances have been directed; and (iv) sectors that will support growth in other sectors.

While the focus is on the above-mentioned priority economic sectors, applications from other sectors are eligible for support provided there is a robust and well-documented justification in terms of employment opportunities for the graduates. The applicant will have to provide the documentation required by the RTB to assess the labour market relevance of the application. This must be in the form of a demand assessment.

The SDF is supposed to:

- ✓ Stimulate competition and delivery of innovative programme offerings.
- ✓ Promote collaboration between enterprises and training centres and institutions.
- ✓ Increase skills acquisition among disadvantaged groups.
- ✓ Improve the efficiency of training provision.

SDF is a challenge fund providing matching grants to institutions eligible for support according to the principles outlined in the manual. Hence, the applications will be evaluated according to their relevance for further development of the Rwandan private sector and providing employment opportunities for youth entering the labour market.

Training areas that are not eligible for SDF include:

- ✓ Literacy training.
- ✓ General education.
- ✓ Higher education (degree programmes).
- ✓ Public administration.

The SDF is referred to in the Project Appraisal Document of the Priority Skills for Growth and the Financial Agreement which was signed on 5th July 2020 between the World Bank and the Government of Rwanda.

1.2. Objective of the SDF

Rwanda is at a key moment in its growth, as the country transitions from Vision 2020 to Vision 2050, aiming to secure high standards of living for all Rwandans. To achieve this ambitious goal, Rwanda must build a dynamic and capable workforce, meeting the rising

demand for high-skilled jobs and guided by the National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy (NSDEPS) which primarily builds upon the National Employment Programme (NEP).

The implementation of SDF will be in line with NSDEPS under its Pillar 1: Skills Development. The Rwanda Development Board (RDB) has been mandated to guide this strategy.

This project will support short-term training in line with Pillar 1 of the NSDEPS including, (a) employer-led short-term vocational training responding to specific skills requirements (Rapid Response Training), (b) provision of labour market relevant skills for out-of-school youth, recognition of skills acquired through informal and non-formal training, and (c) apprenticeships and internships for TVET graduate and unskilled, semiskilled youth and upgrading of the skills of owners and employees of micro enterprises.

The focus will be on short-term, practical, and technical training of employees (including business skills for the informal sector), school-leavers, and unemployed graduates.

The training duration ranges from a few days to nine months; for some cases this period can be extended depending on the area of the training (rear skills). The programme will mainly finance costs associated with development and delivery of the supported training activities.

1.3. Target group

The main target groups to benefit from these trainings include:

- a) Employees (present and prospective) of existing companies and investors.
- b) Workers in the informal sector in need of skills upgrading.
- c) Young adults (not gainfully employed) in need of basic skills training.
- d) Skilled workers in need of certification of their competences (Recognition of Prior Learning).
- e) Students from TVET institutions who need to acquire additional practical skills relevant for their training.

1.4. SDF interventions

The SDF has three windows: (i) 'Rapid Response'; (ii) 'Out-of-school Youth'; and (iii) 'Apprenticeship/internship' catering for different target groups. The beneficiaries will be selected through rigorous selection criteria based on competitiveness and labour market relevance with more focus to the selected economic priority sectors. The procedures for selecting beneficiaries are detailed in the respective SDF windows.

The results framework of SDF to be implemented in three years is tied to disbursement – linked indicators and verification protocols and indicator description.

1.5. SDF Priority sectors

The SDF additional finance shall be implemented by RTB under the existing structure of SDF. The selection of Priority sectors was based on sectors that employ a large number of youth and women with reference to the priority of the government

The selected economic sectors include:

1. Transport and Logistics
2. Energy
3. Manufacturing
4. Hospitality and Tourism
5. ICT and digital skills, e.g., Internet of Things, software development, cell phone repair, digital skills, programming and coding, e-learning
6. Agriculture (specifically horticulture, aquaculture)
7. Mining
8. Construction (specifically training of advanced technology in construction)
9. Other sectors with a demonstrated need for skills upgrading.

The target sectors were selected on basis of (i) sectors that employ large numbers of the population; (ii) sectors with potential for value addition and improved productivity; (iii) sectors where foreign direct investment is increasing and/or where significant public finances have been directed; and (iv) sectors that will support growth in other sectors, (v) sectors which will advance digitalization of things for development of the country.

While the focus is on the above-mentioned priority economic sectors, applications from other sectors are eligible for support provided there is a robust and well-documented justification in terms of employment opportunities for the graduates. The applicant will have to provide the documentation required by the RTB to assess the labour market relevance of the application. This must be in the form of a demand assessment.

The Programme Development Objective is to expand opportunities for the acquisition of quality, market-relevant skills in selected economic sectors. The selected economic sectors include energy, ICT (digital skills), mining and construction, tourism and hospitality, agriculture (with focus on horticulture, epiculture and aquaculture), transport and logistics, and manufacturing (with a focus on 'Made in Rwanda' products such as construction materials, light manufacturing and agro-processing).

1.6. Revisions to the manual

This manual is a dynamic document that can be reviewed when needs arises to improve the skills development. Proposals for change and supplements are welcome, and any changes must be approved by the SDF Grant Committee and the World Bank.

The manual will be made available on the RTB website in a read-only and printable version for all stakeholders to have access and familiarize themselves with its contents.

1.7. Disbursement-Linked Indicators (DLIs)

Project timelines for Additional Financing will start by September 2020 and will end by September 2023.

B) Table 2: DLI verification Protocol Table

A) Table 1: Disbursement-Linked Indicators Matrix

	Total financing allocated DLI (USD Million)	DLI Baseline	DLI Target	Indicative Timeline for DLI achievement			
				Period 1 (March 2021)	Period 2 (December 2021)	Period 3 (March 2022)	Period 4 (December 2022)
DLI 4: Number of graduates of SDF-supported programmes by window		9,000	Total: 13,900 Window 1: 3,150 Window 2: 2,100 Window 3: 8,650	SDF operational manual revised to reflect changes in programme design under each window and training targets	Total: 4,633 Window 1: 1,112 Window 2: 695 Window 3: 2,826	Total: 4,633 Window 1: 1,112 Window 2: 695 Window 3: 2,826	Total: 4,634 Window 1: 788 Window 2: 741 Window 3: 3,105
Allocated Amount	24.5			5.0	6.5	6.5	6.5

DLI	Definition/Description of achievement	Scalability of disbursements (Yes/No)	Protocol to evaluate achievement of the DLI and data/result verification		
			Data source / agency	Verification entity	Procedure
DLI: Number of graduates of skills development fund (SDF) supported programmes by window	<p>DLR 4.3: SDF operational manual revised to reflect changes in program design under each window and training targets</p> <p>DLR 4.4: Achievement of graduate targets by window. Total target of graduates under AF is 13,900. By window:</p> <p>-W1: 3,150 (35% female)</p> <p>-W2: 2,100 (35% female)</p> <p>-W3: 8,650 (35% female)</p> <p>This target is calculated using a baseline of 9,000 graduates of the first phase of the project that was achieved and verified in February 2021.</p> <p>SDF offers grants for technical and vocational short-term training (varying from few days and not exceeding six (6) months).</p>	<p>Yes</p> <p>Disbursement amount is scaled USD 1.5 million for each batch of 1,070 graduates trained for a maximum of 13 batches. A batch is counted if at least 30% is female)</p>	RTB	Office of the Auditor-General (OAG)	<p>Auditor-General will:</p> <p>a) Verify the call for proposals for the grant applications has been advertised.</p> <p>b) On a random sampling basis, verify RTB provided information in the RTB's database and through a combination of phone calls and visits to training beneficiaries.</p>

	<p>Firms, cooperatives, associations and training providers (both public and private) are eligible to apply for grants through competitive process that is defined in the SDF operational manual, which should be revised to reflect changes in program design and targets informed by prior implementation experience.</p> <p>The SDF fund will have three windows: Window 1: Rapid Response Training Window 2: Out-of-School Youth Window 3: Apprenticeships and internships, RPL and the informal sector (microenterprises).</p> <p>RTB should maintain a database on the grant applications and the grants awarded. For each awarded grant, information on the purposes of the grants and graduates from training funded by the grants, will be kept.</p>				
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C) Table 3: Indicator description

Indicator Name (Number)	Description (Clear Definition)	Frequency	Data Source	Methodology for Data Collection	Responsibility for Data Collection	DLIs	
						Responsibility for Data Verification	Scalability of Disbursement (Yes/No)
PDO Indicator: Percentage of SDF supported trainees employed/self-employed 6 months after graduation (% of female graduates)	Numerator is the number of graduates from SDF supported graduates employed or self-employed six months after graduation. Denominator is the total number of graduates from the SDF supported programmes.	Annually	RTB	RTB will hire the consultant to conduct tracer studies on all graduates of SDF supported training programmes.	MINEDUC (SPIU)		

Duration of training: Training will be conducted from few days up to six (6) months.

Modalities of Disbursement of grants: 2 options

50% advance payment, 30% in mid time of training and 20% after training completion for training from few days not exceeding six (6) months

60% advance payment and 40% after training completion for training ranging from few days not exceeding three (3) months. SDF Grant

Committee is reserved the right to propose any change to the disbursement modalities when requested by SDF Secretariat with tangible reasons.

2. SDF PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

2.1. SDF Windows

a. Window 1: Rapid response training (RRT)

The objective of this window is to address skills gaps experienced by companies in the formal sector and to promote their collaborations with training institution. The programme will co-finance short-term training for workers who are in the process of being employed by the applicant or existing workers in the applicant's business that need to be upgraded with skills to improve their productivity.

Window 1 will therefore cater for two targets groups: a) Existing 'formal' enterprises in need of upgrading the skills of the existing labour force, and b) investors planning to establish an enterprise in Rwanda.

In order to be considered for funding, the applicant (enterprise) needs to define the content and duration of the proposed training, to demonstrate how it will benefit the company and how it will lead to increased productivity and competitiveness for the firm. The applicant must also indicate how it intends to continue the upgrading of its staff upon completion of the SDF-supported training.

The training will be provided by a trainer identified by the applicant or a private or public TVET institution with capacity (technological knowledge, skills, experience, facilities, and machines/tools) to provide the specific training asked for by the applicant. The nominated trainer/training provider will be subject to a quality check by the SDF Secretariat. If more convenient, the training may take place at the facilities of the applying enterprise. For skills where no expertise is available in Rwanda, the trainer may be sourced from abroad. Furthermore, in rare cases, training abroad can be financed. The contract regulating the delivery of the training will be a tripartite agreement between the applying enterprise, the training provider and the SDF.

The training duration for this window is ranging from few days to not more than six (6) months.

i. Upgrade of existing labour force

Under this sub-window, existing enterprises can get support to upgrade the skills of the existing labour force. The need for upgrading may be instigated by investment in new equipment or introduction of new products. Due to the relatively small size of the grants to be offered by SDF, it is expected that most applicants will be small and medium-sized enterprises. Interested companies must respond to calls for applications by SDF. Applications will be subject to the regular procedure for grants applications described below.

ii. Short-term training for investors

As part of the effort to make Rwanda an attractive destination for investors, RDB will refer potential investors who are planning to hire new employees to RTB. The investor must

provide a list of persons to be trained, the content and duration of the training, and the preferred training provider. If necessary, SDF may assist with the identification of an adequate provider of the training. In order to fast-track the processing of this category of applications, the applications do not have to await a call by SDF but can be submitted through RDB at any time. The applications will have to follow the standard approval procedure, but SDF will give priority to these. As is the case for other applications, the Grant Committee has the final say on the applications.

iii. Innovative Training initiatives

The objective of this sub-window is to develop new training concepts. It will focus on innovative proposals from training providers that respond to rare skills that are not easily accessed in Rwanda, especially in the priority sector of ICT in terms of digital and professional skills. Under this sub-window, SDF may provide financing to training institutions such as public or private training institutes, higher education institutes, Private companies with partnerships with international accredited organizations offering required skills to Rwandans from different sectors that require digital and professional skills at basic and advanced levels. The above-mentioned eligible organizations/companies may use the funding to provide these new skills to their existing employees, they may use the funding to provide new skills to the employees from other organizations in the formal sector in need of these skills after they have signed a Memorandum of Understanding binding the training organization referred here as Trainer and the organization in need of new skills.

Under this sub-window, relevant local, regional or international firms that are accredited to offer professional and internationally recognized ICT-related courses in the form of coding schools or boot camps will also be encouraged to apply for SDF financing. The coding schools or boot camps will last 8–15 weeks to provide in-depth knowledge and practical skills in fundamental basic concepts including datasets and machine learning. Under this Sub-window, Rwanda TVET Trainer Institute (RTTI) under the coordination of Rwanda Polytechnic, with the interest to build the capacity of teachers from different TVET schools in international certification in ICT, should also be considered under this sub-window.

Government organizations with the ability to build the capacity of the existing labour force in their respective economic sectors with high demand of digital and professional skills will be encouraged and considered under SDF funding.

Under this sub-window too, other innovative trainings from other SDF targeted key sectors will be analyzed by SDF secretariat to find out if new skills brought by the applicants will have positive impact to the organization in particular and the economic sector in general.

b. Window 2: Out-of-School Youth

The objective of this window is to provide out-of-school youth with practical skills for work in labour-intensive trades that align them with local demand and opportunities, the intervention of this window is short-term practical training for Massive Vocational Training (MVT).

Both non-agricultural and agricultural courses are eligible for support. The training may include an introduction to basic entrepreneurial skills. The funds may be used for acquiring basic tools and equipment needed for the training.

Massive Vocational Training (MVT)

The MVT came into existence as a result of high unemployment rate most specifically among youth, women and persons with disability, some of key reasons attributed to this phenomenon include lack of hands-on skills and mismatch between available skills and the skills required on the labour market.

The purpose of these trainings is to equip MVT graduates with hands-on skills that enable them to create their own business or be more competitive on the labour market. Mostly, the implementation of this intervention is implemented in partnership with institutions accredited to implement TVET programmes.

The training duration for this intervention is ranging from 3 months to 6 months with at least 5 hours intensive training per day.

The methodology of dual training will be applied whereby a trainee will be trained in a TVET institution and deployed in companies or industries for internship purpose, the duration of training in a workplace will be at least a half of the total training duration.

The training provider (grantee) must offer the trainees guidance on how to start his or her own business or guidance on how to search for employment.

c. Window 3: Apprenticeship and Internship

This window provides assistance to four types of training interventions, namely apprenticeship and internship, skills upgrading for the informal sector and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL). The purpose of this window is to provide school-leavers without labour market relevant skills an opportunity to acquire such competences, to allow persons who have acquired their competences through informal or non-formal training to get certified through RPL, and to co-finance skills upgrading courses for the self-employed and workers in the informal sector. Applicants are supposed to be companies/industries (for apprenticeships), training institutions (for internships and RPL) and professional associations, federations, cooperatives, and NGOs (for the informal sector sub-window), and trade unions (for RPL).

The training duration for this window is ranging from few days to not more than six months.

i. Apprenticeship

The Industry Based Training (IBT) is organised by a company/industry that is interested in establishing an apprenticeship scheme within its organisation. The training may be fully industrial based if company/Industry has necessary facilities for training or may combine practical training at the workplace with school-based theoretical classes (dual training).

The training duration for this intervention is tentatively six (6) months.

ii. Internship

Internship refers to placement of TVET graduates as interns in an enterprise/company to

gain useful skills and exposure to real world of work environment.

Applying institutions are supposed to be existing TVET institutions in collaboration with companies willing to take on interns.

Applying TVET institutions must show that they have entered an agreement with relevant companies with enough capacity to cater for the number of proposed interns - placement.

The training duration for this intervention is ranging from few days to six (6) months.

iii. Skills upgrading for informal sector

The implementation of skills upgrading for the informal sector will be mainly done by RTB in collaboration with private sector/professional associations/trade unions/federations/NGOs and cooperatives.

Training courses for members of informal sector must be prepared in collaboration with a capable training provider; the training provider must have a demonstrated capacity (knowledge, skill, practical experience, training facilities, and the necessary relevant machines/tools) to provide the proposed training.

The application must indicate how the informal sector operators will benefit from the training. Training providers will be encouraged to collaborate with organizations that can provide follow-up assistance, for example, coaching, to graduates who want to establish their own business.

To maximize the number of informal sector operators who benefit from this opportunity to improve their practical and business skills, public institutions such as MINAGRI, MINICOM, LODA, NAEB and RAB will recommend possible structured groups within the informal sector with the potential to take advantage of such training. Examples of potential beneficiaries include associations or cooperatives of craft persons/artisans, small-scale farmers, and women groups.

The training duration for this intervention is ranging from few days to not more than six (6) months.

iv. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)

Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) is a process of acknowledging prior learning acquired in different contexts especially at work without considering how, when or where the learning occurred. The objective of RPL is to facilitate access to labour market and progression of workers. The RPL procedures provide guidance to all stakeholders to certify informal and non-formal training through recognition of acquired competencies based on the labour market needs.

The implementation of RPL will be mainly done by RTB in collaboration with other stakeholders including private sector, chambers, trade unions, federations, syndicates and formal colleges. Upon successful completion of the RPL process, the applicant will receive an official certificate issued by Rwanda Polytechnic.

Selection of sector/trade is done by RTB in close collaboration with PSF (Professional

Associations) and relevant stakeholders based on priority sectors with more focus on selected economic sectors.

The training duration for this intervention is ranging from few days to not more than four months.

Selection of the assessment sites

- ✓ The assessment sites may be a school, industry/company and should have appropriate facilities, assessment tools and equipment that are accessible and operational
- ✓ The assessment sites must have conducive environment for the competencies to be assessed.

Innovative modes of training delivery

For all three windows, SDF will make a special effort to encourage applications from training providers ready to pilot new modes for training delivery such as online and blended learning. There are already training institutions practicing these modes as part of the regular programmes. SDF can play an important role in introducing these methods within the field of short-term training.

2.2. Awareness campaigns

Awareness campaign should be conducted nationally and internationally by both public and private institutions using all possible communication channels:

- ✓ At international level, MINAFFET and RDB through Embassies and diaspora organisations shall attract potential investors or entrepreneurs willing to invest in Rwanda preferably in selected priority economic sectors.
- ✓ At national level, MINICOM in close collaboration with RDB, LODA, RTB and PSF etc. shall attract all potential Rwandan investors/entrepreneurs willing to invest preferably in selected priority economic sectors.
- ✓ At national level, RTB in collaboration with PSF shall inform existing companies within the priority sectors about the possibility of getting assistance by SDF to upgrade the skills of their workforce as well as the existence of the apprenticeship and internship sub-windows.
- ✓ A special awareness campaign will be conducted targeting micro enterprises and cooperatives to inform about the existence of Window 3. Local government authorities will play an important role in this connection.

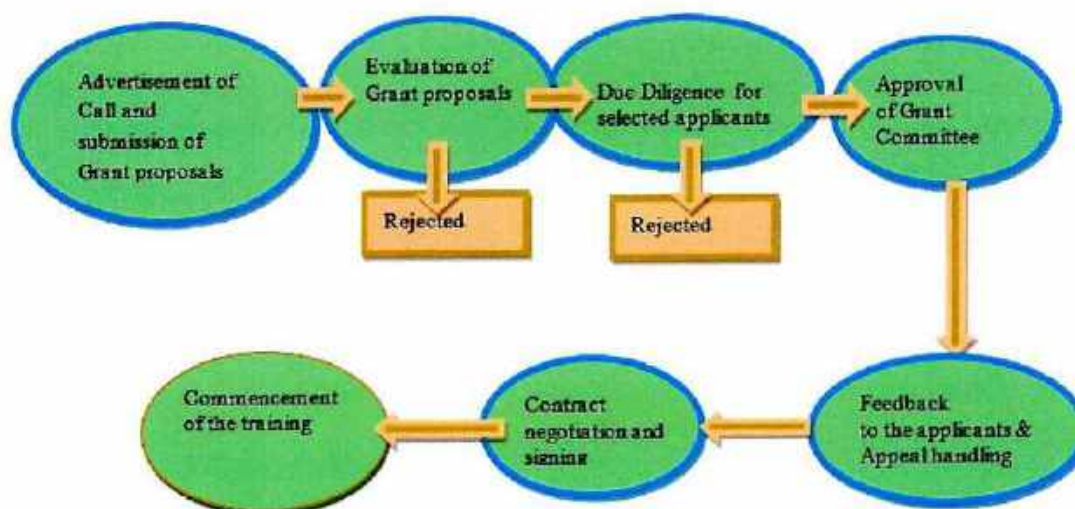
In general, awareness campaign is done through various media channels, or it may be conducted by decentralized outreach for a specific institution recommended by PSF and RDB.

2.3. SDF application process

The application process is essentially the same for all three windows, but the length of each step and the activities involved may vary depending on requirements of a specific window. To smoothen the Grant approval process, the introduction of a paperless

electronic case management system will be part of this exercise but due to the time required to make the system operational. Call 1 under PSG AF will be done by the use of papers.

Once the electronic case management system has been implemented, all applications will take place electronically via the SDF website, and all electronic files stored in the SDF management system. Furthermore, all steps of the grant cycle will to the extent possible be carried out without the use of paper files.



STEPS/ACTIVITIES/ISSUES	RESPONSIBL	DURATION
Advertisement of Call and submission of Grant proposals <i>Concept notes must provide basic information on the application and the project to be funded. SDF will provide standard format. The Grant proposals should provide detailed information on the applicant, the proposed project/activity, a cost estimate, an activity plan, an overview of expected outputs and results and other window-specific information indicated in the application guidelines. Together with the concept note, the applicant must submit relevant legal documents.</i>	RTB & Applicants	2 weeks
Evaluation of Grant proposals <i>All Grant proposals received by the SDF Secretariat will be subjected to an evaluation by a panel of 3 members (one SDF staff, external expert from private sector and external expert from academic sector). The evaluation will assess whether the proposal meets the evaluation criteria for the window within which it falls. The final decision of evaluation decisions and recommendations will be reported to the RTB management. Feedback to the rejected applicants at this level will be done before proceeding to the due diligence.</i>	SDF Secretariat, Private and Academic sector	3 Weeks

<p>Due Diligence for the applicants</p> <p><i>Due diligence is a fiduciary activity carried out to verify, validate, and assess the quality, integrity, and completeness of the key information required to make a well-informed grant funding decision and avoid waste, fraud, and abuse. The verification will be based on the information submitted in the Grant proposal.</i></p> <p><i>The purpose of the due diligence is to verify that the information provided in the Grant proposal is correct and to assess the capacity of the involved organizations. Hence, the due diligence comprises two steps, (i) a verification of the information provided by the applying company and/or training institution, and (ii) an in-depth assessment of the capacity of the involved organizations.</i></p>	RTB	3 Weeks
<p>Approval by Grant Committee</p> <p><i>The Grant Committee will be provided with the summary of each applicant from the Evaluation of Grant proposal to Due Diligence stage for approval.</i></p> <p><i>The Committee may ask for further evidence or a second opinion by a peer reviewer at its own discretion.</i></p>	Grant Committee	2 Weeks
<p>Feedback to the applicants and Appeal handling</p> <p><i>After the approval of the Grant Committee, all applied institutions that were considered for the due diligence will be notified about the results of evaluation of process, the rejected applicants will be informed about the reason for the rejection.</i></p> <p><i>The rejected applicants who are not satisfied by the decision taken will be given a period to appeal.</i></p> <p><i>Complaints concerning the evaluation should be addressed to the Director General, who will forward the complaint to the SDF Secretariat for a review before the complaint is forwarded to the RTB management for a final decision on the matter. The SDF Secretariat will make all relevant documentation available for the RTB Management. The RTB Director General will conclude whether the grievance is warranted and possible consequences of the complaint. RTB should maintain a register of complaints received and how these have been addressed.</i></p>	RTB & Applicants	2 Weeks
<p>Contract negotiation and signing</p> <p><i>The successful applicants will be invited for contract negotiation in terms and conditions of project execution.</i></p> <p><i>The contract negotiation is conducted by a panel of three (3) members from SDF secretariat.</i></p> <p><i>Before signing of the grant agreement, all successful applicants</i></p>		

<p><i>must attend a one-day orientation meeting with RTB/SDF. The purpose of the meeting is to inform the grantee about their legal obligation, reporting procedures and other formalities. A standardized reporting template will be shared.</i></p> <p><i>Based on the approved Grant proposal, a grant agreement will be presented to the applicants. The agreement will specify all legal, managerial and financial details concerning the implementation of the proposed activity.</i></p>	SDF secretariat and successful applicants	2 Weeks
<p>Implementation of the project</p> <p><i>The project will be implemented as per the signed contract; SDF secretariat will frequently conduct Monitoring of the project execution.</i></p> <p><i>The SDF Grantees will prepare and submit reports as articulated in the signed contracts.</i></p>	RTB and SDF Grantees	Ranging from few days to not more than 6 months for each call

2.4. Responsibility of key stakeholders

This project consists of different key stakeholders, each and every stake holder will have its responsibility for the sake of better implementation of the project.

Responsibilities of RTB (SDF Secretariat)

- ✓ Follow all provided process of application
- ✓ SDF Grant Committee shall decide which grant applications to be funded by SDF
- ✓ Facilitate the organization of SDF trainings and practices activities
- ✓ Monitor and Evaluate the progress of training
- ✓ Ensure the quality and setting standards of training activities
- ✓ Facilitate all training related fees as identified in the training budget
- ✓ Facilitate in certification of the graduated beneficiaries in all interventions
- ✓ Facilitate in conducting the impact assessment after training (6 months after training)
- ✓ Maintain database of beneficiaries and report the progress of the project to RDB.

Responsibilities of the training provider

- ✓ Recruit the beneficiaries by taking into account gender balance and give a particular attention to persons with disabilities
- ✓ Conduct properly the training and assessment of SDF beneficiaries
- ✓ Provide enough rooms and workshops to host the beneficiaries for a specified training period
- ✓ Facilitate Hygienic Facilities at the place of training
- ✓ Recruit and contract with temporary, competent and experienced trainers to facilitate such training if any
- ✓ Deliver the training for the accepted beneficiaries in the agreed training programme
- ✓ Provide a full package of training content as requested and agreed

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- ✓ Maintain the database of beneficiaries and fast track them for impact assessment
- ✓ Facilitate in the activity of the impact assessment after the training through provision of required data
- ✓ Submit timely reports as agreed with the financing entity
- ✓ Ensure efficient and effective management of training funds
- ✓ Sign MoU with another relevant training institution if necessary
- ✓ Adhere to the occupational safety and health (OSH) standards and ensure that all necessary OSH equipment is provided.

Responsibilities of institutional partners

- ✓ Sensitize the youth, women, and persons with disabilities on the available training opportunities
- ✓ Collaborate with districts in the close follow up of the candidate selection exercise
- ✓ Linking the graduates to the existing opportunities on start-up toolkits facility loan
- ✓ Conduct sector needs assessment
- ✓ Identify potential beneficiaries in close collaboration with RTB
- ✓ Provide the list of the beneficiaries to be trained or assessed
- ✓ Maintain a database of beneficiaries and inform beneficiaries about existing employment opportunities
- ✓ Support for job placement/employment
- ✓ Follow up the training activities to ensure effective implementation
- ✓ Mobilize and recommend the potential company/industry.

Responsibilities of grantees

- ✓ Comply with rules and regulations of the training institution
- ✓ Employ a minimum of 70% of the graduates for at least a period of one year after training in rapid response training
- ✓ Contribute in kind at least 30% of the total training cost in rapid response training
- ✓ Provide facilities inhouse or through a training institution such as rooms, workshops and other training related services
- ✓ Support trainees for job placement/employment
- ✓ Conduct training and assess competencies of trainees
- ✓ Inform beneficiary's trainees about existing employment opportunities.

Responsibilities of private sector

- ✓ Participate in development process of the curriculum for new and updated programmes at all levels, including standards setting, as well as developing and approving curricula
- ✓ Mobilize and recommend the potential company/industry
- ✓ Identify potential beneficiaries in close collaboration with RTB
- ✓ Circulating announcements in different sectors and cells calling interested candidates fulfilling the set criteria for registration and informing them about the assessment sites, trades, dates, and other assessment requirements on site
- ✓ Conduct sector needs assessment

- ✓ Register and maintain a database of beneficiaries and report to RTB on a monthly basis.

2.5. Occupational Safety & Health (OSH) and Grievance redressing mechanisms

I. Occupational Safety and Health (OSH)

OSH is an area concerned with protecting the safety, health and welfare of people engaged in work or employment.

The OSH in the SDF project is aimed at providing an enabling environment for the protection and progressive prevention of occupational death, injury and ill-Health of interneers/apprentices and workers for SDF grantees.

To ensure the compliance with Occupational Safety and Health:

- ✓ A company must comply with minimum OSH requirements to be selected at due diligence step
- ✓ SDF Secretariat will conduct a periodic OSH audit/inspection to ensure the compliance of SDF grantees on OSH standards during the whole training period
- ✓ SDF Grantees shall comply with OSH general guidelines which will be shared by RTB
- ✓ Whenever applicable grantees will have to sign contract with closer sanitation facility to intervene
- ✓ SDF grantees shall facilitate established OSH committees to accomplish its responsibilities as stipulated in Labour Law
- ✓ For each batch of SDF training, OSH committees shall be established and trained on their role and responsibilities for effective implementation.

II. Grievance redressing mechanisms (GRM)

Towards a fair and transparent training and working environment:

- ✓ SDF secretariat shall prepare and share a model GRM contract to be signed between SDF grantee and interneers/apprentices
- ✓ The SDF grantee must sign a GRM contract between his/her enterprise and all Interneers/Apprentice, the training will only be valid if model GRM contract is signed between grantees and trainees
- ✓ By the beginning of trainings, the representatives of Interneers/Apprentices shall be elected among the SDF beneficiaries depending on the number of trainees.

Any disputes shall be settled as ordered by the Labour Law of Rwanda.

2.6. SDF support to development of digital skills

The Government of Rwanda through the Ministry of ICT and Innovation has set the mission of digitizing the Rwandan society through an increased usage of ICT as a crosscutting enabler for the development of other sectors "Championing Rwanda's Digital Transformation", where more than 50% of the public services will be digitalized before 2024 in National Strategy for Transformation (NST 1).

Further through NST 1, Digital literacy for all youth (16 to 30 years) will be ensured by 2024 through implementation of a national digital literacy programme with the objective of

achieving digital literacy of at least 60% among adults by 2024. This will be supplemented by initiatives to develop local content and facilitate citizens (including people with disabilities) to access digital devices that will enable them use online services.

To support the above programme, the Skills Development Fund (SDF) will provide the grant for trainings to private and public entities, priority will be accorded to projects that are likely to bring a bigger change in different sector of national economy.

Digital technologies have changed how organizations work, creating new jobs and replacing others. Although digital technologies are not yet widely used in the manufacturing and construction sector in Rwanda, it would make a big difference for the long-term employability of the trainees if they have a basic understanding of digital technologies such as use of engine fault diagnostics tools, use of programmable logic controls (plcs), and auto CAD and CAM. For workers, this means reskilling themselves in order to thrive in a high-tech working environment. For educators, this means integrating ICT in skills development, not just in the course materials but also in course delivery. Technology can make it easier to deliver TVET to more people. In many countries, more than 80% of the youth population are now online. Students can use their own digital devices to access courses through the internet.

Several training institutions already offer *online and blended learning*. However, although these modes of learning are not suitable for all areas of training, it is believed that there is a considerable potential for increasing course offerings in this field as indicated by the fast-increasing popularity of e-learning in many countries. The advantage of utilizing digital technologies in learning is the lower cost compared with conventional training delivery, but digital teaching technologies such as 'smart classrooms' also allows access to knowledge that are beyond the reach of conventional teaching methods.

- Programming, Web and App Development (computer and mobile-based applications): These are applications that can be used in agriculture, tourism, education, health, construction, mechanical Engineering, businesses, logistics and transport
- Digital Design and Data Visualization
- Digital Project and Product Management
- Digital Business Analytics and Marketing
- Social Media
- Data Science and Data Analytics
- Video making.

The COVID-19 pandemic has clearly illustrated that TVET and skills programmes do not easily migrate to distance and online learning. Despite these challenges, in some contexts, the crisis also provides an opportunity for the development of more flexible learning solutions that make better use of distance learning and digital tools. However, the shift to online or distance learning in TVET and skills development during the pandemic is first and foremost as an emergency response and not a rapid and permanent migration of

programmes. However, preparedness for situations such as the one caused by COVID-19 is vital for the long-term economic development of Rwanda.

SDF will co-finance a small number of *online and blended learning* pilot initiatives. Activities eligible for support include development of curricula and assessment procedures, development and purchase of learning resources including software, relevant materials/tools /equipment, training of teaching staff and assessors, and essential basic infrastructure.

Twinning arrangement with training institutions in other countries with experience in e-learning is encouraged. SDF will cover the cost of such arrangement.

2.7. Enhancing women's access to short-term skills training

NST1 stipulates that Gender and family will be at the centre of the NST1 agenda.

SDF as one of strategic interventions to respond on NST1 targets in terms of labor market skills provision will ensure that, both men and women are fully benefiting from the programme. To this end, all training programmes that are highly practiced with women at least 50% is the share of women while for other trades at least 30% constitutes the share of women.

To be able to achieve that, a number of strategies will be put into play including but not limited to:

- ❖ Removing age barrier to women beneficiaries,
- ❖ Enhance women's mobilization in partnership with *National Women's Council and Local Government entities to attend SDF trainings;*
- ❖ In close collaboration with relevant stakeholders including public, private and civil society organizations, RTB will ensure that women are fully accessing the programmes through mass mobilization and other motivating factors;
- ❖ To ensure equal access to skills training for women and men, promote flexibility in programme design to allow both women and men to participate.

Regarding access to SDF grant where and whenever applicable women's projects will be highly considered specifically those that are targeting to train and employ women.

2.8. SDF approach to COVID-19 prevention and response measures

SDF Provides short-term training in order to minimize skills gaps observed in labour market, due to COVID-19 pandemic all training has been stopped to avoid spreading of the pandemic.

The use of digital skills to resume training cannot be easily applied as it will require more infrastructure that was not planned for. In general education the Government has introduced E-Learning to facilitate all students to get courses online but for workplace learning it is still difficult to acquire hands-on skills through E-learning.

SDF and its stakeholders will continue to follow the measures already set by World Health Organization (WHO) and the Government of Rwanda to avoid the spread of the pandemic during training. Particularly SDF will cater for basic personal protective equipment, hand

sanitizers to all beneficiaries and conduct regular monitoring to ensure that COVID-19 preventive and response measures are being tightly respected

In case the government will have in place a robust online learning programme, where even TVET may be well positioned, SDF will provide online training countrywide.

3. OPERATIONAL DETAILS

3.1. Outreach and communication

The RTB will conduct a comprehensive outreach campaign prior to the launch of the first call for proposals. This includes utilization of the RTB website, media campaigns, information meetings and TV spots. The SDF Secretariat will take advantage of RTB's close contact to the business community and TVET institutions to reach the potential beneficiaries of the SDF, but the outreach should not be limited to the RTB network only. It is vital for the success of the SDF that it reaches all segments of the private sector and other eligible institutions, both public and private.

3.2. Financial management

It is important to note that this PforR is a funding instrument channelled through budget support and therefore is governed by national systems as detailed below.

The budget process flow of the Rwanda PSG project involves a close interface between the national budgetary framework and the budgets of the different Implementing partners including RTB that will implement SDF. The budget process in general is in three major phases: budget preparation, execution and monitoring and evaluation. Throughout the entire budgeting process, the Finance & and all other departments including SDF Secretariat play a critical role.

3.3. Disbursement Arrangements

Disbursements will be made upon the presentation and verification of evidence of attainment of the Programme's DLIs. Details of DLIs, DLRs and verification protocols herein specified.

Verification of the results will take place annually. Claims for achievement in one 12-month period should be made within six months of the end of the period. No disbursement against DLIs is expected to be made upon achievement of the results prior to the date of the operation's legal agreement.

Following verification of claims, disbursement of funds will be made directly into the programme designated account in the Treasury. MINECOFIN will be responsible for the distribution of funds to RTB as agreed during annual budgeting process and budget review.

3.4. Flow of funds, in terms of paying for results

The budget process flow of PforR focuses on the DLIs and national MTEF. At the national level, the Macro Planning Department and the National Budget Departments of

MINECOFIN prepare national priorities and the MTEF respectively.

The National Budget Department forecasts possible allocations to RTB consistent with the Annual Action Plans in the Project Appraisal Document (PAD). The SDF interventions should be reflected in NEP joint Performance Contract and should be the basis for submission of the budget requests in response to the 2nd BCC, normally issued in early December of each year. The second BCC requires Implementing Institutions to prepare detailed budget submissions for the following financial year.

3.5. Budget Execution

Budgeting execution is spread across the entire year financial year, from 1st July to 30th June. The budget is executed on the basis of the Finance Law and Government procurement processes and Action Plans. No payments shall be made without prior commitment to pay has been established and approved.

In accordance with the authorization issued, RTB shall make commitments and shall request funds for payments. The Chief Budget Manager, Director General of RTB or his delegate, shall ensure that the action plans and the procurement plans being implemented are the updated ones, matching with the approved budget communicated by the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning during the start of each financial year.

It is important that the Chief Budget Manager takes adequate care to ensure that the allocations to budget lines submitted to Parliament are the ones planned for implementation. In general, the budget is executed as follows:

SDF responsible department prepares the request for payment to Finance unit based on approved concept notes and signed agreement for acquisition of goods and services according to the approved budget.

The Finance Unit will be responsible for ensuring that all relevant supporting documents or copies thereof for the payments have been obtained from the relevant department before commitment stage.

The Accountant or Budget Officer establishes commitment of requested funds matching with the budget planned for that activity and its availability.

The Finance unit submits payment order generated from IFMIS to the Chief Budget Manager for expenditure approval. This Payment should be provided to MINECOFIN for transfer or be immediately transferred to beneficiary's respective accounts through Special Account which should be opened in National Bank of Rwanda either use the existing RTB Operating Fund Account. The second option should be highlighted and taken into consideration as is the best for smooth and quick running of projects activities.

Finance unit is responsible for any accounting activities. Any accounting records and documents are properly and securely maintained for further and audit reference.

3.6. Integrated Financial Management System (IFMIS)

Smart-IFMIS is the Integrated Financial Management Information System (IFMIS) used throughout Government for budget execution. During budget preparation, budget

data are entered into the System, and during execution, spending commitments, are recorded in Smart IFMIS to track Execution.

3.7. Managing Cash and Transfers

RTB as Implementing Institution is permitted to operate bank accounts into which the SDF grant is kept.

Treasury transfers funds from time to time. The procedure below is followed to transfer cash to the implementing institutions:

Article 16 of the Financial Regulations requires Implementing Institutions to submit, on a monthly basis, rolling cash-flow Projections covering three consecutive months. Following the approval of the monthly cash flow projections by the Treasury Management Committee, the Treasury informs the budget agency about approved quarterly spending limits.

Following receipt of the approved spending limits, the Budget Officer/Accountant at RTB prepares a Requisition for Cash Transfer (Form 5 in Manual of Government Policies and Procedures Volume 3) and forwards it to the Chief Budget Manager for approval and authorization.

The requisition is then forwarded to MINECOFIN (Treasury) for processing. The requisition is assessed based on the Treasury liquidity status and whether the implementing institution has submitted up to date financial reports.

Upon confirmation of the matters in the above, the accountant at the treasury prepares a Payment Order for the cash transfer and secures a copy for the implementing institution to assist in tracking the cash through the banking system.

The cash transfer is recognized in the books of implementing institution by debiting bank a/c and crediting the Central Treasury a/c upon receipt of the credit advice from Implementing Institution's bank.

3.8. Assets and Inventory Management

Fixed Assets (e.g., equipment, infrastructure) purchased from project funds is administered by the beneficiary institution in a register of assets, which is available upon request. All assets should be codified. The asset register should show the date of acquisition, acquisition value of an asset, its life span, asset code, the depreciation rate and the net book value. Costs directly related to acquisitions and other investments, such as the costs of transport, insurance and installation may also be included in the cost of the asset.

Any equipment and/or goods purchased become the property of the requesting organization or the implementing partner(s) that have received them. All equipment and/or goods purchased from the project budget will be held at the exclusive disposal of the project until the project is terminated.

Investments purchased from project funds will be administered separately by the Implementing Institution in a register of assets, which is available upon request. A physical

Inventory verification and update of fixed asset register should be done on annual basis.

3.9. Financial Reporting and Review Budget Process

All implementing institutions are required to prepare an annual financial report covering the transactions for the concluded financial year and submit the financial report to the Minister of Finance and Economic Planning by 31st July and to the Auditor General by 30th September. Article 21 of the Organic Law N° 37/2006 and Article 9 and Article 11 of Ministerial Order N°002/07 of 9 February 2007 further stipulates the responsibilities of the Chief Budget Manager in regard to financial reporting.

Article 70 of the Organic Law No 37/2006 of 12/09/2006 on State Finances and Property requires Implementing Institutions to submit annual reports which include revenues collected or received and allowances expenditures made during the fiscal year, as well as a statement of allowances outstanding receipts and payments before the end of the fiscal year.

The financial statements are submitted to the Accountant General on behalf of the Minister. The statements are accompanied by reconciliation statements of the bank accounts operated by Implementing Institutions.

The accountant will prepare the following monthly/quarterly/annual financial reports that will have the following components as per the Government of Rwanda Financial Reporting Format:

- ✓ Background of implementing institution
- ✓ Statement of responsibilities
- ✓ Statement of Revenue and Expenditure
- ✓ Statement of Financial Position (balance sheet showing financial assets and liabilities)
- ✓ Statement of cash flow
- ✓ Budget execution report
- ✓ Cash Book reports for each account
- ✓ Designated bank account reconciliation statement
- ✓ Statement of Accounting policies and explanatory notes adopted by implementing institution.

Reporting timelines

The financial statements are submitted to the MINECOFIN Accountant General for consolidation Purposes with the following timelines:

- ✓ Monthly financial statements: 15 days after the reporting month
- ✓ Quarterly financial statements: 15 days after the reporting quarter
- ✓ Annual financial statements: 30 days after the reporting fiscal year.

The budget master

This shows budget performance over MTEF period by showing financial projections, budget tracking in relation with associated non-financial performance targets, supplementary budgets, budget re-allocations and budget execution reports including

variance analysis for each budget cycle.

The budget master also shows the commitment of funds and commitment control – indicated in this function is the authorization levels, tracking authorizations, fixing budget ceilings and restrictions on commitment beyond budget ceilings, procurement functionalities such as tracking purchase requisitions, tracking purchase orders and delivery of goods/ services, and database of potential suppliers.

The suppliers' book

This keeps details of suppliers in the general ledger. Each supplier account should keep a record of the details of the supplier, details about invoices, delivery of services rendered or goods and associated purchase orders, budget codes to which the expenditure is allocated, payments to the suppliers and running account balance.

The cashbook

All bank and cash transactions will be entered in this book. The bank/cash accounts in the cashbook should be kept in their original currencies. Records of the following should be captured in the cashbook: the number and description of the bank account, the bank in which the account is maintained, the currency of the account, transaction description, the debit entries (receipts), the credit entries (payments), running balance, names and designation of the approved account signatories.

The accounts receivable book

In this book, records of individual ledger accounts of receivables such as vehicle/house loans to government employees or any other loans disbursed. If the individual debtor's is updated with disbursements or recoveries, together with the relevant bank account the associated control account in the general ledger is simultaneously updated.

The general ledger

The general ledger is the 'intersection' of the different modules of the IFMIS. The general ledger is structured in two segments: the first segment is GoR programmes and sub-programmes, while the components of the second segment are classes of GoR service functions on the basis of the United Nations Classification of Functions of Government (COFOG). The structure of the general ledger has a direct relationship with the structure of the chart of accounts.

The general ledger is designed to hold financial data for three consecutive years. All book adjustments by use of journal entries are done via the general ledger.

Supporting documents

Section 2.17 of the Manual of Government Policies and Procedures: Financial Management & Accounting Volume 3 requires that allowances expenditure should be adequately supported by documents which should be sequentially filed and properly referenced.

All transactions in the books of accounts should be supported by source documents. Proper supporting documents should have the following characteristics:

- ✓ Supporting documents should explain the nature and details of the transaction being recorded and the date of the occurrence
- ✓ Should indicate the persons who have authorized the transaction and the dates of authorization. The persons indicated must possess the necessary authority granted in accordance with the established financial authority regulation
- ✓ Show the full budget code, selected from the established uniform chart of accounts to which the transaction is allocable
- ✓ Show evidence that the prices involved were decided on the basis of arms-length negotiation, and as far as possible third-party invoice or cash acknowledgement documents have been obtained and securely filed
- ✓ Show cross-reference numbers to all the related documentation such as cheque numbers and bank accounts, supplier invoices received, purchase orders, delivery notes, invoices issued, tax assessment etc.

The supporting records must be securely kept and protected from unauthorized access or destruction. A specific person must be entrusted with this responsibility, and it is best held by the person who has posted transactions in the books of accounts. Other people may access the records only with prior authorization by the Director General, Accountant General or Secretary to the Treasury.

Accounting records must be properly and securely kept, protecting them from accidental or malicious damage. The Director General of Implementing Institution is responsible for enforcing this regulation. Accounting records shall never be destroyed before the expiry of ten years. Specific written authorization must be obtained from the Accountant General for any accounting records to be destroyed. The approved method of destruction is shredding or burning.

Internal audit process

The internal audit plays an important monitoring role in evaluating the effectiveness of the internal control systems within the Government's operations in meeting its strategic objectives. In performing this role, the internal audit should not be involved in maintaining the controls it is supposed to evaluate. The internal audit should be risk-based audit using the COSO2 framework and concentrating on systemic issues covering the Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) objectives of ensuring (a) conformity to the Government's strategy; (b) effectiveness and efficiency of operations; (c) reliability of financial reporting; and (d) compliance with applicable laws and regulations. The effectiveness of internal audit further depends on how management reacts to its reports.

RTB through its internal audit systems shall regularly check the financial compliance of the SDF implementing institutions in the use of grant provided to them.

External Audit

Under the Rwanda Constitution it is provided that the Auditor General of state finances has the mandate to audit all public expenditures under Law N° 79/2013 of 11/9/2013 determining the mission, organization and functioning of the OAG of State finances. This

Law also governs procedures for auditing state finances. Reports prepared by the Auditor General are submitted to the Parliament and considered by the Committee in charge of public accounts. The Auditor General and Deputy Auditor General are appointed by a Presidential Order and tenure of office is secured by the Auditor General and Deputy Auditor General being appointed for a five (5)-year term renewable only once.

Before any disbursement is made by World Bank, the Auditor General will be required to conduct an audit of SDF activities in relation to Indicative timeline for DLI achievement and verification protocol as herein specified.

3.10. Fraud and Anti-Corruption

This will be in-line with the government of Rwanda anticorruption policy. The Government of Rwanda has agreed to implement the programme in accordance with the WB Anti-Corruption

Guidelines applicable to PforR operations (ACG) as follows:

- Sharing of debarment list of firms and individuals
- Sharing information on fraud and corruption allegations
- Investigations of fraud and corruption allegations.

The Government of Rwanda commits to use the Bank's debarment list to ensure that persons or entities debarred or suspended by the Bank are not awarded a contract under the Programme during the period of such debarment or suspension. The information on the list of debarred and suspended firms is public information in "Clients Connections", and on the Bank's website. Companies and individuals debarred by the Government of Rwanda will be posted and updated regularly on RPPA website (www.rppa.gov.rw). Both entities would take responsibility in ensuring that their websites are updated regularly with information on the list of debarred firms and individuals and share this information with all procuring entities in the Programme. This list will also be used by procurement entities to monitor compliance at all levels of the programme, including at the Lower Level Government Authorities. The Government's compliance with the debarment list will also be monitored through the programme annual assessment.

3.11. Suspension and termination of grants

3.11.1. Grant suspension

If resources provided under grant agreements are not being used according to the agreed conditions and for the intended purposes, the SDF should consider terminating the grant in order to limit losses of resources devoted by SDF or to recover resources already committed to the project. It is the responsibility of the M&E Specialists to inform the SDF Programme Manager when they observe such cases.

The SDF Programme Manager can propose to DG of RTB who can temporarily freeze a grant agreement pending corrective action by the grantee or a decision to terminate the agreement by RTB. Suspension will include, but will not necessarily be limited to, a hold on any disbursements as well as a hold on the grantee's right to use SDF funds already on

hand.

The freeze of any grant will be done in writing to the grantee and copied to the Grant Committee and the SDF Secretariat. In case of any complaints, the DG RTB will task the Grant Committee to analyse the complaints and make recommendations for the final decision to either terminate the grant or take corrective actions.

3.11.2. Grant termination

The DG RTB may terminate a grant agreement for cause, with or without preliminary suspension, when it is determined that the grantee has:

- ✓ materially breached or failed to perform one or more provision of the agreement in a manner significantly affecting the achievement of its goals and objectives
- ✓ fraudulently misrepresented material facts during the application or project development process, or
- ✓ Use funds for purposes other than those stipulated in the grant agreement with SDF's consent.

Final decision on termination will be taken by the Director General and the grantee will be informed in writing. The termination notice represents the RTB final decision that will not be subjected to further administrative appeal.

3.11.3. Grant closure

The closure process will begin immediately prior to the scheduled expiration or termination of the grant and may continue up to thirty days.

The grantee is responsible for working with the SDF secretariat to prepare for closure of the SDF funding, collecting and providing data on performance targets, expending funds in accordance with the SDF grant agreement, preparing and submitting a final report to the SDF Programme Manager, returning to the SDF, in a timely manner, any SDF funds not properly expended on project activities.

SDF representative will conduct a visit to the grantee approximately one month prior to the completion of the project. During this visit, the representative and grantee will:

- ✓ Review the status of the project budget to determine what funds remain, if any
- ✓ Review the project's implementation plan to determine what, if any, project activities remain to be completed
- ✓ Develop a plan for completing of unfinished activities and achieving the project outputs
- ✓ Assess the long-term sustainability of the activities
- ✓ If relevant, prepare a time amendment
- ✓ Identify possible after-project support needs of the grantee.

On the basis of this, the SDF representative will prepare a field visit report to the SDF Programme Manager.

It is anticipated that all expenditures will be completed prior to the expiration date of the grant. In such a case, the grantee should submit a final report within 30 days after

completion of the grant. Final reports should be accompanied by a check, payable to the SDF account of RTB, for the balance of any unused SDF funds.

Upon completion of the funded activities, the grantee will provide a report based on the format provided by the SDF. The report will summarize the activities carried out, the specific benefits of the grant, any deviations from the planned activities and the reasons for these, and an assessment of the prospects for continuing the activities after the completion of the supported activities.

3.11.4. Procurement

All public institutions implementing SDF interventions shall perform the procurement processes in accordance with procurement rules, guidelines and procedures. The programme implementing institutions will follow the "Law n° 12/2007 of 27/03/2017 on public procurement as amended today and Ministerial Order N° 002/20/10/TC of 19/05/2020 establishing regulations on public procurement available on the Rwanda Public Procurement Authority Website (www.rppa.gov.rw).

The public SDF implementing institutions are responsible for the acquisition of supplies, and services in support of SDF. The Procurement Committee is recommended in every implementing Institution manage procurement processes including preparation of tender documents, invitations to bid, bid evaluations, issuing the notifications and award of contracts.

For the effective implementation of procurement processes the implementing institutions will achieve the following objectives:

- ✓ To procure required services, materials, equipment, and construction while ensuring that quality, safety, and cost-effectiveness is achieved
- ✓ To ensure that procurement transactions are conducted in a manner providing full and open competition whenever practicable
- ✓ To comply with procurement rules and applicable laws and regulations as required
- ✓ To solicit the participation of all qualified and responsible contractors and suppliers in the procurement process
- ✓ To enhance accountability of the implementing entities and its participating officers for their procurement decisions and actions
- ✓ To assure equity for all parties involved in the procurement process
- ✓ To obtain the best value for the money spent
- ✓ To eliminate the possibility of corruption or unethical practices in the procurement process.

Private institutions selected to implement SDF shall perform procurement processes in accordance with their respective internal procurement policies, procedures, rules and regulations.

RTB procurement unit will coordinate internal procurements for the secretariat and where required provides technical support to SDF implementing institutions during

preparation of tendering documents, and financial evaluations, contract award and management.

4. GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT OF SDF

Since SDF Additional Financing will be implemented in line with the existing NSDEPS specifically on pillar 1 as it is below:

4.1. National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy (2019-2024)

Rwanda is at a key moment in its growth, as the country transitions from Vision 2020 to Vision 2050, aiming to secure high standards of living for all Rwandans. To achieve this ambitious goal, Rwanda must build a dynamic and capable workforce, meeting the rising demand for high-skilled jobs and adopted the National Skills Development and Employment Promotion Strategy (NSDEPS) which primarily builds upon the National Employment Programme (NEP).

The implementation of SDF will be in line with NSDEPS under its Pillar 1: **Skills Development**, the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) has the mandate to guide this strategy.

NSDEPS Ministerial Steering Committee responsibilities

The Steering Committee is constituted with NSDEPS Pillars' leader Ministers and Heads of Implementing Institutions and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning. Their core responsibilities are the following:

- ✓ Provide strategic guidance to the SDF Grant Committee on priority areas of support for skills development.
- ✓ Receive and approve the progress reports on a quarterly and annual basis, and then provide recommendations and feedback.
- ✓ Consider SDF AF activities and targets as integrated in the final NSDEPS implementation plans and budget.

4.2. High level technical team responsibilities (PSs & DGs level)

The High-Level Technical team is constituted with Permanent Secretaries, DGs and Heads of Institutions Implementing NSDEPS. The team is responsible for providing technical Guidance on NSDEPS joint performance contracts and annual progress reports to be presented to the NSDEPS Ministerial Steering Committee for final approval.

4.3. Employability skills development pillar leader (MINEDUC)

NSDEPS is built on 3 pillars, covering skills development, employment promotion, and matching. The proposed programmes are the product of an in-depth analysis about the current skills development and employment status in Rwanda. This included a review of Rwanda's development plans, and a wide consultation from relevant actors in the public, private and social sectors.

The responsibilities of MINEDUC are the following:

- ✓ Coordinate the planning and budgeting process of SDF interventions
- ✓ Mobilize and support stakeholders under the Pillar to align their interventions with pillar 1 Priorities
- ✓ Report to the RDB Chief Skills Office (RDB-CSO) on budget execution, implementation of plans on quarterly basis.

4.4. NSDEPS Technical Working Group

This strategy is built on 3 pillars, covering skills development, employment promotion, and matching. The proposed programmes are the product of an in-depth analysis about the current skills development and employment status in Rwanda. This included a review of Rwanda's development plans, and a wide consultation from relevant actors in the public, private and social sectors.

Each Implementing Institution at Central Level delegate a member of the technical team and the latter has the following responsibilities:

- ✓ Undertake the planning and budgeting process of NSDEPS interventions
- ✓ Close follow up of the implementation progress in the assigned districts and report to the RDB/CSO potential issues hindering the implementation
- ✓ Provide technical support to districts during planning, budgeting and reporting on NSDEPS interventions
- ✓ Identify challenges hindering implementation of NSDEPS and suggest possible solutions and present them to high level technical team
- ✓ Review NSDEPS documents regularly according to new strategic orientations
- ✓ Prepare, review consolidated reports.

4.5. Business development employment unit at district level

In the NEP strategy, most of activities are implemented at decentralized level. The Business Development and Employment (BDE) unit was integrated into District structure as a one stop centre to ensure effective coordination, planning and reporting of NEP interventions.

BDE responsibilities are the following:

- ✓ To elaborate the district business development and employment plans on an annual basis and ensure their integration in Districts' performance contracts
- ✓ To ensure SDF graduates benefit from District Kora Wigire Centres (DKWC) and the Business Development Advisors (BDAs)
- ✓ To ensure that the district provides a timely quarterly report on the implementation of NSDEPS interventions to the RDB-CSO
- ✓ Gather data and information required to monitor business development and employment generation under NEP implementation at the district level
- ✓ Oversee the selection of beneficiaries and training providers of skills development interventions.

4.6. RTB responsibilities

RTB has the following responsibilities:

- ✓ Carry out planning, budgeting and implementation of SDF interventions
- ✓ Follow-up the budget execution, implementation of planned activities and regular monitoring as well as audit of implementing institutions
- ✓ Provide all the logistical, administrative and legal support required for the SDF to fulfil its mandate
- ✓ In its capacity as the legal host of the SDF, all claims against the SDF will be handled by the RTB.

The Director General of RTB will report progress of the implementation of SDF in the NSDEPS Steering Committee meeting and also provide a quarterly report to RDB-CSO that is coordinating the NSDEPS.

4.7. The SDF Grant Committee

To make sure the skills development is demand driven it is essential the operations of the SDF are overseen by a grant committee appointed by the RTB Board. The committee's main function is to decide on grant applications to be funded by SDF, allocate funds, and verify reports from SDF Secretariat to be forwarded to the DG RTB for approval. The Grant Committee approves the SDF Operations Manual and any changes to it.

The members of the SDF Grant Committee will be appointed by the RTB Board based on consultation with relevant stakeholders (PSF, RTB, MINICOM, RDB). Since the main focus is the government selected priority sectors, the members from Public Sector should represent these sectors and the Deputy to the chairperson will be elected among them. Preferably the chairperson could be drawn from the private sector to reinforce the labour market orientation of the SDF. The Grants Committee will be comprised of not more than seven persons. The DG of RTB is an ex officio member of the SDF Grant Committee and the Programme Manager of SDF an observer.

In addition to providing the required oversight of the implementation of all the activities under the SDF, the Grant Committee will also ensure that the SDF becomes an efficient and acknowledged instrument for strengthening the skills and competence base of the Rwandan labour force, thus making the Rwandan private sector more competitive and improving access to gainful employment.

The Grant Committee may appoint sub-committees with the purpose to conduct in-depth oversight of the work of the SDF Secretariat and the execution of the grants. This will include but not necessarily be limited to technical and audit sub-committees.

The nominated persons for the Grant Committee must have proven commitment, knowledge and experience relevant to skills development and innovative training approaches and are supposed to undertake their responsibility with due care and integrity.

The specific functions of the Grant Committee are to:

1. Approve plans and arrangements for dissemination of information regarding the procedures and operation of the SDF, ensuring that all potential target audiences have access to the required information
2. Ensure that proposals for funding are approved based on provided procedures and eligibility criteria in this manual
3. Oversee the progress of the Fund's operations
4. Regularly evaluate the relevance and quality of the skills training supported by the SDF
5. Recommend to the RTB Management possible changes of the scope and operation of the SDF
6. Investigate and act on complaints received from learners, employers and other stakeholders regarding the quality of training, assessment and the award of qualifications of training initiatives supported by the SDF
7. Approve reallocation of funds to different windows and decide on projects to benefit from more than on grants based on the national needs and employment potential.

The Grant Committee will meet at least once every three months, unless otherwise may be requested to meet for an urgent approval to facilitate the implementation of the project.

The general rules and procedures of RTB apply to tenure of office for the members as per government guidelines.

Members of the Committee, DG RTB, and Programme Manager of SDF Secretariat as minutes taker will be paid allowances according to the Government of Rwanda guidelines. Head of SDF secretariat may appoint any other staff to serve as the minute-taker to the Grant Committee.

The Grant Committee, the RTB Management and the RDB will conduct an annual joint meeting to discuss issues of common interest such as the SDF's achievements and focus areas calling for special attention.

4.8. SDF Secretariat

Day-to-day management of the project execution including oversight of the implementation of training programmes to ensure they are to the appropriate standards and following the correct procedures including abiding by the OSH rules and regulations, taking decisions that may arise during implementation will be done by secretariat established under the RTB Management.

The Secretariat will consist of the following staff and their duties:

1. SDF Programme Manager (1): Coordinates implementation of SDF interventions and report to the Director General.
2. Internship and Apprenticeship specialist (1): Coordinates internship/apprenticeship programmes for workplace learning.
3. M&E specialists (2): Conduct monitoring and evaluation of SDF interventions.

4. Sector Specialists (5): Facilitate the analysis of SDF project proposal in the priority sectors.
5. Occupational Health & Safety Specialist (1): Ensures implementation of the occupational Safety and Health standards at the workplace.

Additional staff

Since SDF operates under RTB SPIU and other staff on RTB structure, the respective staff will be in charge for support of SDF implementation.

1. Director of Finance (1) Coordinate SDF financial activities including review of financial statements, disbursement, and consolidation of financial reports to be shared to the SDF Programme Manager who forward them to RTB senior management
2. Procurement officer (1) Coordinate internal procurements for the secretariat and where required provides technical support to training providers during preparation of tendering documents, and financial evaluations, contract award and management
3. An SPIU administrative assistant (1) responsible for filing, orientation of documents, receives correspondences and provide feedback and organise meetings.

Capacity Building for the SDF Staff

- Building the capacity of SDF Additional Financing, the SDF Secretariat is an essential part of programme implementation. Basic training for all staff should cover guiding principles, goals and daily activities due to responsibilities; inform staff members about specific methods for working within the partners' and stakeholders; and encourage staff members to reflect on their own attitudes and beliefs related to the development of skills
- In addition to basic trainings for all SDF Additional Financing staff, specialized staff should receive targeted training to meet their key responsibilities (e.g. training on grant management, monitoring and evaluation, project management etc.).
- When planning trainings, organizations as RTB in collaboration with RDB should focus on:
 - Building the skills needed to carry out the job specifications, not only through preliminary training, but also through on-going refresher training.
- **Some SDF Staff Capacity challenge**
 - ✓ Lack of skills in methodology for designing and conducting Tracer study
 - ✓ Lack of skills in Electronic case management system for the SDF project
 - ✓ Lack of skills in Occupational Health and Safety and Grievance Redress Mechanism
 - ✓ Need to enhance proficiency in project planning management, monitoring and evaluation and contract, procurement & financial management.
- **SDF Staff Capacity Building Action**
 - ✓ Train SDF staff in methodology for designing and conducting Tracer Study
 - ✓ Train SDF staff in electronic case management system for SDF project

- ✓ Train SDF staff in Occupational Health and Safety and Grievance Redress Mechanism (OHS standard, hazard identification & control and first aid services, grievance redress mechanism)
- ✓ Train Staff in Project Management Professional (PMP):
 - ❖ staff in PMP
 - ❖ staff in M&E
 - ❖ staff in contract management and procurement
 - ❖ staff in financial management.

Peer learning (other countries) where SDF is successful

In order to share experience on implementation of SDF, the study tour and field visits for SDF Secretariat and Grant Committee should be conducted in the other countries that are implementing the same project.

4.9. Conflict of interest

Refers to any case where an employee's personal interest might contradict the interest of the project they work for. This is unwanted circumstance as it may have heavy implications on the employees' judgment and commitment to the project implementation.

Conflict of interest may occur whenever an SDF employee and grant committee member interest in a particular subject may lead them to actions, activities or relationship that undermine the project and may place it to disadvantage.

Scope of conflict of interest

The situation may take many different forms that include, but not limited to:

- Ability to use position held in the project to the personal advantage
- Engaging in activities that will bring direct or indirect profit to the competitors
- Owning shares of the competitors
- Using connections obtained from project for your own private purposes
- Acting any way that may compromise the project legality (e.g. taking bribes or bribing representative of legal authorities)

Disciplinary measures

- a) The possibility that a conflict of interest may occur can be addressed and resolved before any actual damage is done. The responsibility of resolving conflict of interest starts from the immediate supervisor and may reach to the senior management. All conflict of interest will be resolved as fairly as possible and senior management has the responsibility of final decision when the solution cannot be found
- b) Members of the Grant Committee (where family members apply the particular member will be excluded from the approval and review processes that are specific to the particular grants application); members with interest in an enterprise that applies will be treated similarly
- c) RTB Board members and staff or their immediate family members (parents, spouse and children).

5. MONITORING & EVALUATION

The primary responsibilities for monitoring and evaluation of the activities funded by the SDF will be done with the SDF Secretariat.

5.1. Monitoring

The purpose of the SDF monitoring system is twofold:

- (i) To ensure that implementation of the SDF is on course and desired outcomes are likely to be achieved, and
- (ii) To ensure that the support by the SDF to applicants is used for the purpose intended. The monitoring and evaluation will be conducted at two levels:
 - a) Activity/output monitoring is intended to validate that the beneficiary grantee/institutions use the funds received from the SDF in accordance with the objectives and principles stipulated in the contract. The activity/output monitoring has two elements:
 - ✓ Control of planned and implemented activities, and
 - ✓ Control of the use of allocated funds.

Furthermore, output monitoring is a way to confirm that annual work plans prepared by the SDF Team have been carried out as envisaged.

- b) Results measurement aimed at assessing whether the implementation of the SDF is on track and the expected results likely to be achieved. The basis for the results measurement is the PSG Programme Results Framework and the indicators stated herein.

The results measurement will be achieved through the following activities:

- ✓ Baseline data on employment, turnover, output, revenue, and profit – to the extent possible
- ✓ End of implementation data on employment, turnover, output, revenue, and profit – to the extent possible
- ✓ Employer satisfaction surveys.

The RTB will prepare separate M&E Guidelines to set the direction of the M&E Specialists' daily work routines and reporting procedures.

5.2. Evaluations

Evaluation studies and analytical documentation will be conducted as and when considered necessary.

The purpose will be to assess the impact of the project activities, usually with focus on specific topical issues. It is expected that impact studies will be commissioned in connection with the mid-term review and completion of the PSG. The SDF Secretariat will prepare the ToR for the studies, subject to no-objection by the World Bank.

5.3. Monitoring and evaluation system

The system is designed to improve the organisational capabilities, responsiveness, and

efficiency of the implementation of SDF activities. It also facilitates the collection, collation and reporting of implementation progress and achievement. The system that integrates the organisational, functional and operational information provides information that will support evidence-based decision making and knowledge sharing.

Focusing on the operational and organisation needs, the system captures the following:

- ✓ **Operational performance** – Support tracking of project/programme implementation and systematic collection, collation, analysis and reporting of project level performance information based on agreed indicators (these are from projects Results Management Frameworks and M&E Plans);
- ✓ **Organizational performance** – Support the corporate level data collection and reporting, including tracking and measurement of the delivery levels of the Strategic Plan. It should also facilitate the assessment and demonstration of the levels of efficiency and effectiveness of SDF and its interventions.
- ✓ **Documentation and communication of results to partners/stakeholders accountability** – The system is intended to provide a comprehensive, consistent, and verifiable way of documenting and communicating results and learning from SDF's interventions in timely and accurate and manner.
- ✓ **Data Analysis, modelling and reporting** – The system should enable SDF to carry out pre-defined and ad-hoc data analysis, modelling and reporting to respond to the varying analytical and statistical information requirements of stakeholders/partners.

6. TRACER STUDY

The SDF training will contribute to the achievement of the ongoing seven-year Government programme, National Strategy for Transformation (NST1). The Government has an ambitious target of creating 214,000 off-farm jobs annually. For off-farm jobs, both the formal and informal sector will be important.

The impact of the SDF to the community will be measured with reference to the outcome of the Tracer Study. The tracer study will reflect to the target of the project as well as the achievement.

A tracer study will be conducted for each 'call' of SDF, at least 6 months after the training completion. It will follow both graduate and self-employed beneficiaries. Furthermore, the tracer study will seek the employers' opinion about the effect of the training. The sample must be representative at the urban and rural levels and include a gender balance.

The tracer study will be conducted by an external consultant working under the supervision of the tracer study advisory committee, which comprises of key people from the SDF Secretariat and the World Bank. The consultancy firm must have and demonstrate international experience from similar studies.

The tracer study will mainly assess the following:

General issues to be addressed:	
a) Number of the graduates who have found the employment related to the training. b) Number of the graduates who have found employment outside of the areas of training. c) Number of the graduates who have continued their education. d) Number of graduates who are still looking for job. e) Number of graduates who have started their own business. f) Provide an overview of opinions of graduates (and their employers when relevant) on their training in light of their employment experiences with suggestions on how to improve SDF. g) Assess the consideration of gender balance for employment. h) Identify areas of possible improvement for SDF.	
Window-specific issues	
Window 1	
Rapid Response Training	a) Assess the extent to which grantees have lived up to the obligation to employ 70% of trained people b) Assess the change in productivity and turnover for SDF training providers
Skills Upgrading	c) Assess the change in productivity and turnover for SDF training providers d) Assess the increase of income for beneficiaries
Window 2	
Out of school youth	a) Assess the extent at which has been linked to employment b) Assess whether the trainees have been assisted to find a job or start their own business
Window 3	
Internship	a) Determine how many beneficiaries have got employment.
Apprenticeship	
Informal Sector	b) Assess the change in productivity and turnover for SDF training providers c) Assess the increase of income for members
RPL	d) Assess the increase of income for beneficiaries e) Assess the added value to the beneficiaries regarding employment

6.1. Qualification of the consultant to conduct the tracer study

The Consultant will be a renowned firm or consortium of firms with extensive experience in conducting tracer studies – meaning studies measuring employment outcomes among

graduates of training programmes - with emphasis on research design, data collection, analysis and report writing.

The firm should be an international or local that is be able to demonstrate experience in conducting research in both remote rural and urban areas of Rwanda.

6.2. Reporting Arrangements

The Consultant will coordinate all activities closely with the RTB, but with the inputs of the tracer study team, including the SDF secretariat and the World Bank. The Consultant will report directly and send all deliverables to RTB. RTB will then send relevant information to MINECOFIN

Done at Kigali, September 2th, 2021



Dipl.-Ing. Paul UMUKUNZI
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