



THE EUROPEAN UNION'S FRAMEWORK CONTRACT:
FWC SIEA 2018, REQUEST NO. 2019/408043

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS FOR AFRICA PLATFORM IN UGANDA

WORK READINESS PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

JUNE 2020

This project is funded by:

The European Union



Project implemented by:

Sweco Danmark A/S

Lot 2: Infrastructure,
sustainable growth and
jobs

Report of the Consortium led by Sweco Danmark A/S
For an assignment implemented by the Consortium:
Sweco Danmark A/S, GFA Consulting Group, CESO, Quidgest Management Consultants, and
Framatome

LOT 2: Infrastructure, Sustainable Growth and Jobs
FRAMEWORK CONTRACT SIEA 2018
EuropeAid/138778/SER/MULTI

SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS FOR UGANDA PUBLIC PRIVATE DIALOGUE PLATFORM

WORK READINESS PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

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ABBREVIATIONS

Enable	Enabel (former Belgium Technical Cooperation)
EU	European Union
GOU	Government of Uganda
HC	Host Company
HEI	Higher Education Institution
IO	Implementing Organisation
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
OHS	Occupational Health and Safety
SB4U	Sustainable Business for Uganda
PSFU	Private Sector Foundation Uganda
WRP	Work Readiness Programme

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This Work Readiness Programme Framework is part of the outputs of a project on developing a roadmap for Sustainable Business for Uganda (SB4U).

Funding and support provided by the EU for the project and development of this Framework is thankfully acknowledged, in addition to the effort and technical inputs provided by the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) and Enabel, who both played a key role in initiating and implementing this collaborative effort.

Special appreciation in this regard is given to Francis Kisirinya, Executive Director PSFU, Ruth Biyinzika Musoke, Deputy Director PSFU, Christelle Jocquet, Resident Representative Enabel and Bart Horemans, Country Portfolio Manager Enabel for their advice, guidance and support throughout the development process.

1 BACKGROUND: THE SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS FOR UGANDA PLATFORM AND THE GREENUP PROGRAMME

The Government of Uganda (GoU), the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) and the European Union (EU) have partnered to promote private sector investment in order to spur sustainable economic growth and generate decent jobs, in line with the Africa-EU Alliance for Sustainable Investment and Jobs.

To this end, the project “Promoting EU and Uganda Private Sector Investments” initiated a public-private dialogue in December 2018, which brought together over 200 European and Ugandan businesses and public entities to discuss priority investment issues. The stakeholders prioritised “Skills and Attitude”, “Access to Finance” and “Governance and Corruption” as critical investment hurdles in Uganda and proposed specific remedial measures. The dialogue led to the launch of the “EU-Uganda Roadmap to Improved Investment Climate” with the aim of achieving concrete results within a two-year period.

The Government of Uganda, PSFU, the EU and selected European companies also created a “Sustainable Business for Uganda Platform” at the end of the first ever Uganda-Europe Business Forum held in March 2020. The aim of the Platform is to continue the dialogue between public and private actors in order to improve the investment climate, strengthen trade and investment links between the EU and Uganda, and support implementation of the Roadmap.

‘Skills and Attitude’ was prioritized as a major area of concern by both EU and local companies and the Government of Uganda. Actions to improve the matching between skills and attitude with jobs sought by companies are embedded in the first edition of the EU-Uganda Roadmap to Improved Investment Climate. This includes helping public authorities in charge of education service delivery to work alongside the private sector to improve the soft skills of graduates to better prepare them to successfully enter the workforce.

Under the ‘Skills and Attitude’ component of the Roadmap, a Skills Needs Assessment was conducted in late 2019 to understand critical skill gaps in the current labour force that are hindering private sector development and investment. Skills in this context are defined as the abilities and capacities acquired through deliberate, systematic, and sustained efforts to smoothly and adaptively carry out complex economic activities or job functions involving: 1) ideas (cognitive skills); 2) things (technical skills); and 3) people (interpersonal skills).

The findings of this assessment fed into the design and completion of an audit of existing higher education institution and company-based training programmes to define and evaluate the current training inputs provided by educational institutions and businesses to close skill gaps for employees in four job-intensive sectors: manufacturing and agro processing, tourism and hospitality, construction and digitisation.

The findings from the training programme audit, which are detailed in this document, will be used to inform the formulation of a ‘Work Readiness Programme’ that will be offered by the private sector and implemented under a new initiative, the GreenUP programme, funded by the EU and implemented by Enabel and PSFU.

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The design of the Work Readiness Programme is detailed in this framework document.

2 BACKGROUND: THE YOUTH LABOUR FORCE GAP AND EXISTING SKILLING PROGRAMMES IN UGANDA

2.1 Addressing the Skills Gap

The coexistence of high unemployment and unfilled vacancies in Uganda today is indicative of declining matching efficiencies in the labour market between the skills of youth entering the workforce and the needs of potential employers. Many studies have attributed these inefficiencies to a skill mismatch, which arises primarily due to lack of work experience on the part of graduates and from a lack of appropriate work-related skills (or employability skills) among these, often younger, individuals. To tackle these skill mismatches, the EU and its partners have strongly promoted the development of work-based learning systems.

Evidence finds that closer stakeholder collaboration between the worlds of education and work is a recipe for success, leading to greater employer satisfaction with the skills of new recruits and a greater ability for them to successfully transition into the world of work. Tackling employee skill shortages requires the public sector to fully engage enterprises in this skill formation process.

To encounter fewer difficulties in finding and retaining a skilled workforce, companies must commit to offering high-quality traineeships alongside the provision of good quality entry-level jobs and take a long-term perspective to hiring and managing talent. This talent-management approach is dependent on widening the potential applicant pool and strengthening internal talent pipelines, as well as providing ample learning opportunities for new employees when they begin their careers.

Interaction between education and training providers and labour market actors is crucial to this process, as they must each provide the right incentives and institutional frameworks for fostering employee education and training, including relevant and recognised certification, to ensure new employees are embraced and accepted by their employers.

2.2 Existing Skilling Programmes

Since October 2016, PSFU, in partnership with the GoU and with funding from the World Bank, has implemented an employer-led short-term training initiative, the Uganda **Skills Development Facility**, to address skill imbalances and shortages in Uganda. The Facility provides subsidies to private companies to provide short-term, practical technical and soft skills training to interns for a duration of up to four months. Youth enrolled in or recently graduated from formal and non-formal vocational training programmes are targeted under the initiative.

Enabel is also piloting a specific **Skills Development Fund** in the Albertine and Rwenzori, Northern Uganda and Karamoja regions that compliments the work being done by PSFU. The learning and experience from both the Fund and Facility will feed into the development of a future national Skills Development Fund for the country. The aim of the current Enabel-led component is to stimulate bottom-up initiatives and partnerships between vocational institutions and the private sector by supporting a series of joint ventures between training providers and the labour market to help facilitate youth transitions from the world of school to the world of work.

To date in Uganda, the majority of initiatives such as these which are geared towards tackling skill mismatches and youth employability have focused primarily on apprenticeships and short-term internships for youth in the vocational training sector under the GoU's Skilling Uganda Policy.

Youth graduating from Higher Education Institutions have been largely excluded from these initiatives, despite the fact that all courses in public tertiary institutions have mandated internship components built into their programmes. These models, however, are often implemented via semi- or unstructured frameworks over short-term after school or holiday programmes.

3 CLOSING THE GAP: POSITIONING THE WORK READINESS PROGRAMME IN THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE

While all of these initiatives are critical to helping Ugandan youth transition from school to work, none of the existing programmes target degree-holding graduates from tertiary institutions to support their successful entry into employment. Moreover, few – if any – have standardised a framework for delivering employability, or soft skills, to participants and ensuring youth are certified in acquiring these critical competencies. Such a programme and framework are important to not only target a bracket of youth often overlooked by current investments, but also to provide a model for soft skills training and recognition that can be taken up by the private sector and other work readiness initiatives.

4 OVERVIEW OF THE WORK READINESS PROGRAMME

4.1 Foundational Principles

Existing school to work readiness schemes both within and without Uganda vary widely in type, focus, duration, terms and regulations. There is also great diversity with respect to how they are designed and linked to educational systems, businesses and labour market structures. A full knowledge and understanding of appropriate and contextualised programme components is fundamental for the establishment and development of effective, successful and sustainable work readiness programmes that provide quality working experiences for recent graduates.

When selecting the components for a programme such as this, special attention should be paid to the organisational capacity and resources available at implementing institutions, notably the intermediary organisations managing the programme, and the range of companies hosting temporary employees. This document presents a framework and a set of basic recommendations regarding the main components that will be considered in the design and implementation of the private-section led post-graduate Work Readiness Programme, based on the Ugandan context and the needs and outcomes established by the GreenUP initiative and consultations with stakeholders.

4.2 Defining Employment Under the Work Readiness Programme

Globally, internships are defined differently depending on their type, duration, content, scope and formality.

The International Labour Organisation defines internships as a short-term work experience during which the learner (intern) receives training and gains experience in a specific field or career area in preparation for their later entry into the workforce.

The European Training Foundation defines internships as traineeships, which are a limited period of work practice spent at a business, public body or non-profit institution by young people having recently completed their education, in order to gain valuable hands-on work experience ahead of taking up regular employment.

Internships or traineeships, as a form of instruction, refer mostly to the acquisition of practical skills for participating youth. From the point of view of the intern or apprentice, an internship is seen as a means of getting first applicable skills which will give them a head start on the market segment they intend to work in. For the employer, this is a screening method for possible future employees and (often) a mechanism for getting certain types of work done which are not highly sophisticated or firm specific. For both sides, it is a process that hopes to achieve a better match between the skills of the graduate and the requirements of the workplace.

For the sake of this framework, we define this period of traineeship as a work-based learning experience led by the private sector for recently graduated university students that provides them with the opportunity to gain the practical experience, knowledge and skills needed to facilitate their successful transition into the job market in their professional field.

In order to ensure a graduate's successful entry into the workforce and transition to employment, it is not enough to simply provide them with a structured internship programme, as there is no commitment on the part of the private sector or the intern to remain employed following completion of the training period. Instead, this framework supports the setup and implementation of a private sector-led post-graduation Work-Readiness Programme (WRP). This WRP is distinguished from the more traditional Work-Based Learning programmes described above, such as internships, apprenticeships, traineeships, etc.

At its core, a work readiness programme aims to support a graduate during the first months of their transition to full employment. It facilitates the shift from learning to work and targets the development of remaining skill gaps in graduates that are critical to successful, sustained employment. Under a work readiness programme, participating graduates are considered employees of the companies where they work, although with a special status, as they are enrolled in a full-time employment programme that requires close supervision, professional training inputs and follow-up by their employer, who co-designs, with other implementing organisations, a tailor-made in-company learning programme for their new employee(s) that focuses on the development of critical technical skills in their sector and within their specific workplace while on the job.

Under this model, the new employee is given a temporary employment status akin to a junior associate within the company, and is able to enjoy the basic rights and responsibilities ascribed to a functioning member of the company's staff – including regarding remuneration at a minimal acceptable wage within their sector. This distinction of graduate trainee as temporary employee is critical, as it ensures that private sector employers are responsible for contracting temporary employees for a specified period of time and ensuring they are paid a basic remuneration that is not directly dependent upon the revenue of the unit for which they work, but is rather akin to a starting salary for a new employee in their industry. Arrangement regarding statutory requirements (National Social Security Fund and Pay As You Earn) for temporary employees will be negotiated by implementing partners and the GoU at the start of the WRP.

In parallel, a soft skills training programme will be provided under the work readiness programme to complement the technical on-the-job training inputs provided by employers. This off-the-job component of the training programme will focus on the development of workplace readiness, transferrable skills and competences that are critical to a workers' overall employability, and which align to the needs of today's employers and work places. Examples of these skills include critical and creative thinking, communication, problem-solving, teamwork, integrity, work ethic, professionalism, time management, initiative and self-direction, customer service, career and life management, continuous learning and adaptability, etc.

The soft skills training programme can be organised by either a specialised training provider or by the company itself, and takes place within the company one day per week or another suitable training venue. This off-the-job training component will represent 20% of the total working time of the temporary employee, and will be closely linked with their on-the-job training through an interactive system of learning loops that allows for continuous monitoring, regular assessment and timely feedback mechanisms between employee, employer and trainer. Through this process, the temporary employee will gain relevant certifications in the hard and soft skills needed for the workplace.

4.3 Objectives of the Work Readiness Programme

The principle objectives of the Work Readiness Programme, in relation to each of the key players and institutions involved, include the following:

For University Graduates

- To apply knowledge acquired in their course of study in a real work environment.
- To discover, confirm or rule out an interest in a particular career.
- To acquire the skills and competences demanded by employers.
- To gain practical and professional experience in a given field.
- To improve employability and an easier transition to employment.
- To build a broader professional network.

For Host Companies/Associations (HCs)

- To reduce the existing skill shortage amongst recent graduates in industry-specific technical skills.
- To improve graduate recruitment strategies (talent acquisition and growth) and promote early career development policies (talent management).
- To strengthen the commitment and visibility of business engagement in traineeships as part of a sound human capital development strategy.
- To benefit from a net profit on the investment made, either during the traineeship or soon after, by employing a fully trained, competent worker.
- To enrich Corporate Social Responsibility strategies and actions.
- To increase diversity in the workplace.

For Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

- To offer graduates from higher education institutions the opportunity to acquire the personal and professional skills required by the job market in their sector, thus increasing their employability and employment readiness.
- To attain a closer alignment between higher education institutions and employers with regards to graduate employment and professional development, strengthening cooperation with the private, public and non-governmental sectors.

For Specialised Soft Skills Training Providers

- To reduce the existing skill shortage amongst recent graduates in soft and workplace readiness skills.
- To develop competency-based, sector-specific curricula for soft and workplace readiness skills that align with international standards.
- To develop an assessment and certification framework for soft and workplace readiness skills that is recognised and validated by sector actors.

For Implementing Organisations (IOs)

- To serve as the principle catalyst for the achievement of the abovementioned objectives for higher education institutions, host companies and graduates.
- To facilitate the development of effective employment schemes in all phases of their life-cycle (from design through evaluation and follow-up), relieving higher education institutions and host companies of the responsibility for tasks such as: day-to-day operations, legal, administrative and financial management; programme marketing and promotion; recruitment, selection, validation and engagement of host companies; graduate candidate recruitment, short-listing and pre-selection; programme monitoring and measurement of impact.
- To become a key observatory for youth employability and employment readiness trends, providing useful and critical information to policymakers and stakeholders to expand and grow the programme.
- Respond to the specific goals and needs of various business sectors, particular companies, graduates with a specific academic profile, graduates with special needs and ensuring gender equality in access to the employee traineeship programme.

5 TARGET GROUP DESCRIPTIONS AND CRITERIA FOR INCLUSION

The following section describes each target group under the WRP and outlines the criteria for their inclusion in the programme.

5.1 Graduates from Higher Education Institutions

The direct beneficiaries of the WRP are degree-holders from universities and other higher education institutions in Uganda who have graduated in a relevant discipline targeted by the programme. They must be:

- Not more than 2 years after graduation;
- Seeking work in the targeted sectors (in the pilot programme, this includes manufacturing/agro-processing, construction, tourism and hospitality, and digitisation); and
- Willing to commit to a 6-month work readiness programme.

Implementing organisations will define additional criteria during the WRP to further refine participant selection criteria that takes into account equity in terms of gender, origin, ability, motivation, etc. Additionally, it is important to note that the target group of graduates for the programme should not be senior workers of a very mature age; rather, the programme seeks to engage youth graduates from universities and other higher education institutions.

5.2 Host Companies and Associations

In order to apply for, and participate in, the WRP, Host Companies or Associations (HCs) must:

- Be an officially registered company that adheres to decent work principles, including for-profit companies, industry associations, social companies and cooperatives;
- Operate in the targeted sectors (manufacturing/agro-processing, construction, tourism and hospitality, digitisation);
- Have the financial capacity or going concern to operate beyond their current and next fiscal period using their existing assets to execute planned operations and meet their financial obligations;
- Be seeking new employees in targeted sectors and/or be a company leader in their industry whose reputation is well known and respected;
- Have a strong interest and buy-in to the programme;
- Have an absorptive capacity for new employees;
- Be able to contribute increasingly over time to absorb the costs of temporary employees (e.g. stipends/salaries, insurance, transportation fees);
- Have training/mentoring capacity within their company among the staff managing temporary employees, and must be willing to engage in upskilling for their staff to provide improved facilitation and mentoring support to temporary employees¹; and
- Demonstrate a firm commitment to hire graduates following their participation in the programme (evidenced by signing an MOU with the implementing organisations, which details their commitment to employing a portion of their temporary employees after the programme).

¹ This upskilling for HCs will be provided by implementing organisations and external training partners.

5.3 Specialised Training providers

Training providers specialised in soft skills instruction for workers in the targeted sectors will be selected to deliver the off-the-job training component of the WRP. They are responsible for developing and implementing a soft skills curriculum aligned to the needs of each sector for participating graduates, and must be:

- Able to offer high-quality training and coaching services to graduates enrolled in the work readiness programme and to participating in-company trainers and coaches;
- Able to develop a participatory, quality skills and attitude curriculum that applies adult learning principles for skills development that can be rolled out on a large scale within a specified sector; and
- Officially registered and certified for providing training and coaching in soft skills as a local or international company registered in Uganda or their home country (though with operating capacity to work in Uganda).

Further specifications for identification and engagement of soft skills training providers will be established during the pilot phase of the WRP.

5.4 Higher Education Institutions

Higher education institutions can include universities or tertiary training institutions. They will contribute to the WRP by promoting the programme among recent and soon-to-graduate students. They must be:

- Committed to advertising the programme and participating in matching fairs with graduates by promoting WRP options to soon-to-graduate students as well as recent graduates from their institutions.

5.5 Implementing Organisations

Implementing organisations can include both private sector social impact agencies and development partners. They must have the following capacities to oversee the WRP, including:

- Ability to provide oversight and administration of the programme;
- Extensive experience in financial management and budgeting; and
- Capacity to provide a portion of each temporary employee's stipend/wage, insurance and transport fees during the programme (in a sliding scale, with host companies increasingly taking on more of the cost burden over time).

6 BENEFITS FOR PARTICIPATING HOST COMPANIES AND ASSOCIATIONS

Some of the clear benefits host companies and associations will receive for their participation in the work readiness programme include access to a pipeline of high-quality new employees and extended technical support from the programme's implementing organisations and specialised training providers to create a structured trainee programme within their companies.

However, employers must clearly see, and realise, additional benefits from engaging in such a programme. Establishing a structured WRP within a company, while critical to ensuring employees have the necessary skills to perform their tasks, can also be time consuming and expensive. In order to expand benefits to the private sector for participating in the programme, the following actions are envisioned under the WRP:

- Provision of free training courses in soft skills curriculum delivery for company-based trainers and mentors, with the aim of helping companies embed a trainer of trainer's model within their businesses.
- Provision of free training in coaching, mentoring and facilitation for company-based trainers and mentors, who will deliver soft and technical skilling inputs and supervision for their temporary employees, as well as oversee the onsite execution of the WRP.
- Provision of technical support and guidance from implementing organisations and specialised training providers for establishing a structured WRP within participating companies.
- Delivery of a matching process overseen by implementing organisations between host companies and temporary employees to effectively and efficiently link graduates with relevant skills and profiles to employment opportunities in host companies. This will reduce human resource costs in sourcing new talent and limit some of the risk involved in the hiring process.
- Enhancement of corporate social responsibility mechanisms within companies and national recognition for training programmes and decent work environments via the positive reputation companies will gain from their participation in the programme.

Additionally, in recognition of each companies' active engagement in the WRP and to compensate for the 20% off-the-job training time their temporary employees will spend gaining soft skills from a certified training provider, employers will receive partial salary support from the implementing organisations towards the wage costs of their WRP temporary employees. This financial support will be provided in greater sums at the beginning of the WRP and will be scaffolded down over time as employers assume more of the remuneration costs for their trained and certified employees. At the request of employers, implementing organisations can also support host companies or associations to acquire recognised accreditation for their in-house work readiness training programmes.

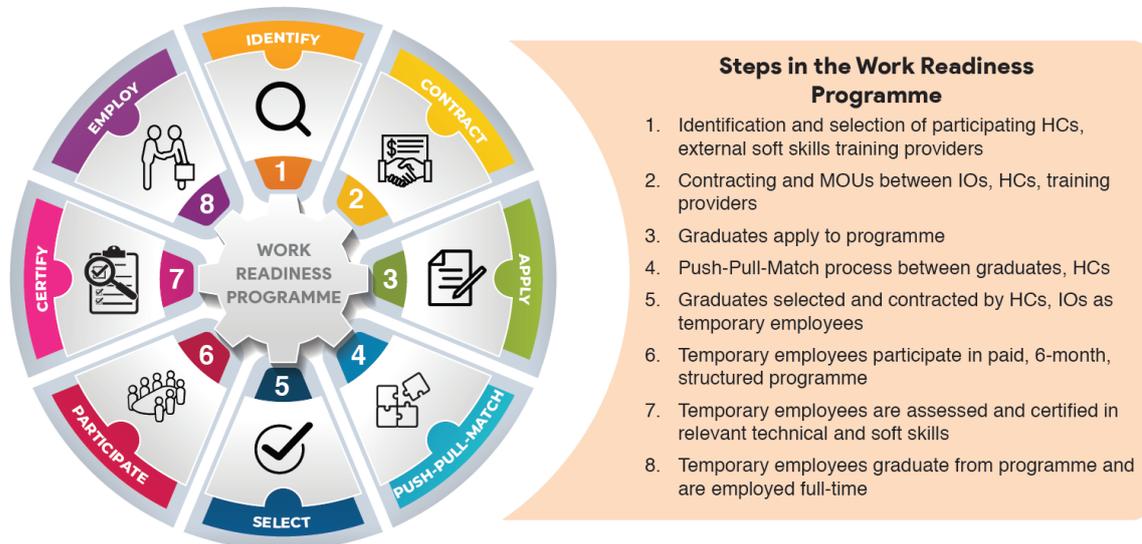
In return for the benefits outlined above, employers are expected to commit before the start of the WRP to offering full employment contracts to their temporary employees at the end of the 6-month training programme. These employment contracts must last for a period of at least one year from the close of the 6-month training programme and provide remuneration against the same wages and employment conditions of other employees in the company with equivalent functions.

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) signed between the host company, participating graduate and implementing organisations at the start of the WRP will define the exact terms and conditions of this commitment and the rights and duties ascribed to the signing parties.

7 STEPS IN THE WORK READINESS PROGRAMME MODEL

The following diagram outlines the critical steps involved in the WRP model, which are described in more detail below.

FIGURE 1 – STEPS IN THE WORK READINESS PROGRAMME



SOURCE: AUTHOR

Step 1: Identify - Identification and selection of participating host companies and external soft skills training providers

A public procurement process will be launched at the start of the programme to contract private sector host companies and external soft skills training providers for the WRP. Potential applicants in each category will be informed about the details of the programme and criteria for applying, as outlined in sections 5.2 and 5.3 above. Multiple channels will be employed by the implementing organisations to share the details regarding application processes and procedures, including via print, digital and social media, sector skills councils, trade advisors at European embassies, local business platforms and private sector associations, roadshows, promotional campaigns and events, etc. Informational campaigns will be organised by sector depending on the platforms that are most likely to reach relevant applicants with information.

Following the informational campaigns, a public call for interest to participate in the WRP will be launched for private sector companies and external soft skills training providers working in the specified sectors. The application and selection process will be managed by the implementing organisations, and nomination will be determined by a selection committee appointed for the exercise.

Step 2: Contract - Contracting and MOUs between implementing organisations, host companies and soft skills training providers

Once selected, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) will be signed between the implementing organisations and host companies and between the implementing organisations and soft skills training providers. The MoUs will outline the expected roles and responsibilities of each party, the terms and conditions of the commitment and the rights and duties of the signing partners.

Step 3: Apply - Graduates apply to programme

To inform graduates about the WRP, the implementing organisations will organise, in close cooperation with relevant tertiary education institutions, awareness raising campaigns about the programme. A range of marketing tools will be utilised, including online platforms (websites, social media, digital flyers), radio and newspaper advertisements, and in-person career and networking events and job fairs (likely held at tertiary education institutions or other appropriate venues).

Eligible graduates in the identified sectors who are interested in taking part in the WRP will formally apply to participate, ideally through an online application form. The basic documents required for an application will include a CV, academic records, certificates and/or degrees, foreign language certificates (if relevant) and references. Other documents may be requested in order to meet specific requirements laid out by the host companies, including proof of course registration and motivational letters.

The application process will be managed by the implementing organisations. Depending on the volume of applications, a private company can be contracted to oversee the initial pre-selection of applicants based on a specified rating criteria.

Step 4: Push-Pull-Match - Push-Pull-Match process between graduates and host companies

A *push* (from the application process above), *pull* (based on employee job descriptions or profiles provided by host companies), *match* (between graduates, implementing organisations and host companies) process will be applied to connect graduates that pass the initial selection phase above with participating host companies in need of their skills. This process will be repeated during each application phase and will be led by the implementing organisations. In order to guarantee an adequate match of applicant profiles with the needs and demands of a given host company, each host company will clearly define temporary employee profiles and job descriptions that outline the tasks graduates will perform during the programme.

Through the push-pull-match process, each host company or association will receive a list of at least three suitable candidates for their open positions based on the job profiles provided. Participating host companies have the right to opt out of this list in case none of the proposed candidates fulfil their minimum criteria. In this case, the implementing organisations will propose a new list of candidates for the host company to choose from.

Step 5: Select - Graduates selected and contracted by host companies and implementing organisations as temporary employees

Once the selection process has been successfully completed, an MoU or contract will be signed between the employer, the graduate and the implementing organisations defining the exact terms and conditions of the programme engagement and the rights and duties of the signing parties. This document will serve as a guarantee of participation in the WRP and ensure the commitment of each party to the programme, including provision of remuneration and insurance to the participating graduate. Host companies will also sign a temporary 6-month employment contract with their graduates according to their internal regulations and Ugandan labour laws.

Step 6: Participate - Temporary employees participate in a paid, 6-month, structured programme

Following formal contracting, graduates will begin a paid, 6-month, structured WRP in their host company focusing on the acquisition of technical and soft skills relevant for the workplace in their specified sector. Four days a week, the WRP temporary employee will engage in a tailor-made, in-company learning programme where they are fully integrated into the work process through on-the-job training under the guidance and mentorship of an in-company trainer or coach. One day a week the WRP temporary employee will participate in a training and coaching programme designed and led by a qualified soft skills training provider that focuses on the acquisition of workplace readiness competencies. Each soft skills training provider will utilise a standardised curriculum framework for training WRP temporary employees in non-occupational, labour-market orientated training and workplace readiness skills enriched with sector-specific content.

During the programme, each temporary employee will receive a monthly stipend for their work that equates to a value of up to 50% of the salary costs of an equivalent full-time employee in their respective host company. In addition to the stipend, employers will provide other benefits to their temporary employees based on standards within their companies and globally-accepted decent labour practices. The implementing organisations will provide insurance to temporary employees in addition to this package.

A scaffolded payment scheme for temporary employee stipends will be agreed upon between the host companies and implementing organisations. In principle, this will start from a nearly full coverage of stipend costs under the WRP from the implementing organisations in the first two months of the programme, with an increasing contribution provided from employers from months three to five, and culminating with a nearly full salary package provided by the employer in the final month.

However, if the implementing organisations determine that a graduated payment scheme might risk the long-term financial commitment or overall engagement of host companies in the programme due to a required investment in salary costs for temporary employees, the payment scheme can be altered to suit the needs of private sector partners. Options may include providing for the costs of temporary employees throughout the duration of the training programme, or to require that host companies provide a larger initial cost for the stipend up front, with additional funding offered by the implementing organisations on a restricted basis throughout the training period.

Throughout the 6-month WRP, each temporary employee will be monitored and assessed on their performance and acquisition of technical and soft skills by their host company and the soft skills training providers.

The in-company trainers within host companies will oversee the skilling and coaching of temporary employees throughout the programme in sector-specific, technical competencies. Company-based trainers are responsible for developing a tailor-made, in-company learning programme and plan for each temporary employee that will be presented to the implementing organisations for formal approval. Implementing organisations will provide technical support and guidance to each host company's training team to design these materials, as well as offer a free coaching programme for helping trainers adopt and apply relevant facilitation and mentoring skills to the oversight of their temporary employees throughout the WRP.

In-company trainers will conduct daily monitoring of each temporary employee's progress using a continuous assessment recording form. A full assessment of the skills acquired by each temporary employee will be made on a monthly basis by trainers using an assessment report format provided by the implementing organisations.

Along with monitoring progress, trainers and employers are responsible for identifying any major challenges or issues with temporary employees that may jeopardise the training programme for that individual, as well as any larger issues that threaten the delivery of the WRP in a specific company or sector. This includes identification of temporary employees who are making insufficient progress or facing other major issues such as dropout, illness, etc. In these cases, a consultation session will be held between the employer, temporary employee and implementing organisations to find a solution. Reporting channels for these issues will be established by the implementing organisations at the start of the programme.

Trainers housed at soft skills training institutions will follow a similar approach. They are responsible for monitoring the progress of temporary employees on a weekly basis and conducting a monthly assessment of their progress and acquisition of key workplace readiness skills against the curriculum. In-house trainers in companies, soft skills trainers, employers and implementing organisations will remain in close contact and communication throughout the programme to ensure outcomes are readily shared and the performance of temporary employees is closely monitored.

Importantly, progress measurements for workplace readiness skills, like technical skills, should be assessed using practical, hands-on activities and projects in order to evaluate each temporary employee's ability to put their new knowledge and learning into practice. While written assessments may at times be relevant to administer, the focus of the WRP should be on developing skills that can be physically documented and analysed against a set of key competencies for technical and workplace readiness skills.

Step 7: Certify - Temporary employees are assessed and certified in relevant technical and soft skills

After completing the 6-month work readiness programme, temporary employees will be given a final assessment of the technical and soft skills they have acquired by their trainers. The assessment tools and reporting templates for this final evaluation will be developed by the host companies, soft skills training providers and implementing organisations through a collaborative process before the completion of each phase of the WRP. The final assessment of temporary employees' skills and competencies will be aligned to industry and sector standards, the content of the training programme provided and international standards.

If a temporary employee successfully passes these final assessments, and has performed to expectation throughout the training programme, they will receive a certificate from the soft skills training provider for the soft skills they acquired, and from the implementing organisations and employer for the technical skills they acquired through the on-the-job training component.

Step 8: Employ - Temporary employees graduate from the programme and are employed full-time

At the end of the WRP and based on their successful completion of the programme and achievement of soft and technical skills certification, temporary employees will be offered a full-time employment contract lasting at least one year by their host company in accordance with the provisions of the MoU, including the agreed salary and benefits package. If full-time employment is not possible within the host company, employers and implementing organisations will attempt to match the temporary employee with another company working in the sector to ensure their successful transition into the workforce full time.

Additional Actions – Standardised Curriculum and Accreditation

In addition to the steps above, it is expected that, following the pilot programme for the WRP, standardised curricula for soft skilling will be developed and validated by the implementing organisations and their partners. These curricula will be sector-specific to cater for the application of soft and workplace readiness skills for employees working in specific industries.

Additionally, a process will be developed for the accreditation of companies and associations for their in-house training programmes, as well as external soft skills training providers for their programmes. Under the WRP framework host companies and associations, after an initial period of implementation and review of their performance and outputs within the programme, can request to become officially accredited as a private sector training provider. The process for this will also be developed during the pilot stage of the programme.

8 WORK READINESS PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

The following table presents details on the scope; design; administrative, legal and financial management; conditions for participation; candidate engagement processing; financing; delivery; and monitoring and evaluation of the WRP framework. It specifies the main aspects of the WRP and provides specific guidelines for its execution.

TABLE 1 – WORK READINESS PROGRAMME FRAMEWORK

Scope and Design	
<p>Beneficiaries</p> <p>Recent Graduates</p> <p>Eligibility Requirements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A recent graduate is defined as someone who has completed a first degree or graduate degree within a set period of time (between the last 0 to 2 years). • Recent graduates that are awaiting their confirmation from an HEI are eligible to participate as long as they can successful prove they have completed their course of study. • Graduates with previous professional experience related to their field of study (upon completion of their university degree) are not encouraged to participate in the programme, unless they can prove that their previous experience did not provide a relevant pathway for employment. • Eligibility criteria will be set by the IOs in coordination with HCs regarding academic records and/or skill sets to ensure a recent graduate is eligible for participation.
<p>Learning Programme</p> <p>In-Company Learning Plan</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The priority is to establish skills-oriented learning plans focused on the acquisition and mastery of soft and workplace readiness skills that will contribute to increased employability and employment readiness of graduates. • In-company learning plans are critical for the WRP. They will serve as a guarantee that the temporary employee will have the opportunity to obtain useful learning outcomes, while also ensuring that the activities carried out are aligned with sectoral standards and expectations. In-company learning plans will include clear technical training modules and competency acquisition standards for trainee employees and will vary per sector and company. Development of these plans will be guided by IOs and external training providers to ensure they align with the soft skills curricula. • Companies must be trained on how to create in-company learning plans linked to the acquisition of relevant industry-identified technical skills. Curricula frameworks and guidelines will be provided by an external training provider for soft skills acquisition and assessment so the WRP can be analysed against a set of industry/sector standards for workplace readiness capabilities. The set of identified soft skills will be aligned to each targeted sector to ensure their relevance. • Research shows that the most beneficial training model includes an in-company learning plan that is closely aligned with business and market demands. These plans are critical in successful skilling programmes for recent graduates. • Host companies must be committed to establishing ad hoc/evolving learning programmes tailored to meeting the needs of specific occupations and/or specific graduate target groups (for example, graduates with particular academic profiles, women, or for graduates with special needs). • Host company learning plans will primarily be based on course modules focused on the acquisition of technical skills; but, they will also including one day per week in a training centre or in the workplace to learn soft skills, which are applied in the technical component of the programme the other four days of the week. • The option of incorporating online instruction or e-learning components for soft skills acquisition will be explored during the design phase of the WRP with each host company and soft skills training provider to ease the process involved for trainee employees to access soft skills training courses.

<p>Temporary Employee Supervision</p> <p>Training Institution Tutors/ Mentors</p> <p>Company Tutors/ Mentors</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate guidance, supervision and evaluation of temporary employee activities are key elements for ensuring programme quality and successful acquisition of technical and soft skills learning outcomes. • One of the major weak points of many training programmes is the existence of ‘passive’ tutors/mentors who are not directly engaged in guiding and supervising the learning process for temporary employees and facilitating appropriate reflection activities. • Training programmes must promote a proactive approach to guidance, supervision and evaluation by tutors/mentors for all temporary employees. • Host companies must establish adequate designation procedures within their staff structure to oversee and administer the programme, manage monitoring systems and, when possible, provide official recognition or compensation for the tasks carried out by tutors/mentors. • Company tutors will deliver technical skills training within their companies, so they will be responsible for the occupational training of their temporary employees. They will be trained under the WRP by the IOs and certified by the IOs and external training providers to facilitate and mentor the temporary employees under their supervision. • External, certified training providers or institutions will deliver soft skills to temporary employees either on site at companies 1 day per week, or in a formal, external institution setting 1 day per week.
<p>Skills Certification for Temporary Employees</p> <p>Selection of Host Companies</p> <p>Certification of Temporary Employees</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Formal certification of the technical and soft skills acquired during a temporary employeeship is critical as a motivation for participating youth and helps confer the programme with a ‘market value’. • Temporary employees must have the option to achieve acknowledgement and/or a specific certification in soft skills (from this programme) as well as technical skills (from their host company). • Under the WRP, a special certification for the soft skills acquired by each temporary employee will be provided by an external training provider and validated by the IOs. • A final certification issued by the host company for participation in/mastery of technical skills acquisition will also be provided and will be validated by the IOs.
<p>Business Scope</p>	
<p>Host Companies / Associations</p> <p>Profile</p> <p>Requirements</p> <p>Selection</p> <p>Engagement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identification and selection of host companies/associations will be undertaken by IOs in the pilot phase. A criteria for selection is critical to ensure the selected host companies meet desired standards for participation in the programme. • The WRP can be carried out only in companies which are active in the labour market in the targeted sectors (manufacturing and agro-processing, construction, tourism and hospitality, digitisation). They will represent a mix of European and Ugandan-owned companies. • Host companies are accountable for providing temporary employees with a valuable learning experience in line with their skills and occupational area of focus, degree area or career aspirations. Host companies must also have the required resources to carry out adequate mentoring, monitoring and evaluation tasks with temporary employees. They must also be capable of hiring a portion of their temporary employees full time following completion of the programme. • Although any company may, in principle, host temporary employees, it is important to consider the following set of criteria when selecting and validating host companies for the WRP: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The strength and added value of the WRP for the host company, and their organisational and financial capacity to implement the programme. - Their commitment to compliance with programme characteristics and requirements (e.g. the provision of mentoring and supervision services;

	<p>monitoring and evaluation of results; certification; funding and financial conditions; etc.).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Previous experience managing traineeship programmes is an added value. - Financial solvency and business sustainability. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Once selected, participating host companies will be required to solidify their engagement with temporary employees and intermediary organisations. This will include individualised relationship management; setting quality assurance mechanisms; ensuring a regular feedback process; building long-term partnerships; and participating in periodic impact studies.
Work Conditions	
<p>Duration</p> <p>Minimum and Maximum Time Scope</p> <p>Work Schedule</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The minimum duration required for a useful WRP (both for the temporary employee and for the host companies) is six months. • Programme periods under this time limit prove to be insufficient for quality training, as they do not facilitate full integration of the temporary employee within the work environment. • Traineeships may be scheduled year-round on a full-time basis for a six-month cycle.
Compensation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To avoid the risk that promoting institutions and host companies use temporary employees as cheap or unpaid labour, appropriate compensation policies will be fixed with employers so that participants are hired and paid as temporary, entry-level employees or junior associates earning a minimal acceptable wage. • Temporary employee compensation policies must consider factors related to social mobility and equal opportunity when deciding on compensation packages, as well as national policy frameworks regarding employment such as social security and pay as you earn tax; these arrangements must be negotiated with IOs and the government at the start of the programme. • In many similar programmes globally, these fees are waived for work readiness initiatives to provide incentives to the private sector to participate and ensure they can invest in providing a minimal acceptable wage for their temporary employees. • Unpaid or inadequately paid traineeships can have a negative social impact by inhibiting access for particular socioeconomic groups who cannot afford to work for a significant period without pay. • Paid traineeships, on the other hand, facilitate social mobility and promote equal opportunity, motivate temporary employees, and increase host companies' commitment and engagement with the programme and the temporary employees they are responsible for. • Payment is given in the form of a stipend (weekly, monthly) and/or compensation in kind (meal vouchers, transport allowance, living accommodations, etc.). • Minimum stipends must be set; maximums may vary depending on the host company or the sector. • At the start of the pilot WRP, costs for temporary employees will be met by the IOs. Over time in the programme, host companies will absorb an increasing amount of these fees, amounting to between 50-75% of the total costs by the end of the pilot through a scaled costing model.
<p>Insurance</p> <p>Government</p> <p>Private</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance is the principle way to reduce the financial impact of a risk occurring and clear insurance requirements will be built into temporary employee agreements between implementing organisations and programme participants. • Insurance will be covered by the implementing organisations under the programme through private providers (health, accident, travel, etc.). • Temporary employees will not be responsible for their own insurance coverage.

<p>Mobility</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Research shows that mobile temporary employees who work across a country learn to adapt and respond to situations that are wholly unfamiliar to them. This exposure to new environments provides them with the opportunity to learn about themselves, discover new strengths and abilities, face new challenges and solve new problems. • In some sectors, such as construction and tourism, mobility is a key facet of almost all employment options. In these situations, a temporary employee will still be tied to one host company throughout the duration of their programme. • Adequate selection and validation of highly engaged host companies is essential in situations where temporary employees are mobile, as monitoring, evaluation and follow-up of temporary employees takes on a special dimension when they work across various locations. • Pre-departure orientation for temporary employees will be offered before movement to field offices or sites, as well as at the start of the internship programme through an induction module.
<p>Management Model</p>	
<p>Management Model</p> <p>Intermediary Organisations</p> <p>External Soft Skills Training Providers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnerships and alliances with intermediary organisations enable implementers to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Pool resources. - Unify programme procedures. - Simplify programme management for participating host companies. - Design broader, more inclusive programmes, as well as specialised schemes to meet specific sector or business needs. - Reach out to a larger number of potential host companies, enhancing engagement. - Facilitate communication with host companies, offering one single communication channel to potential or selected host companies. - Reach out to a wider universe of graduates, providing them with equal access to more opportunities to increase their employability and improve their employment readiness. - Contribute to capacity building among participating host companies. • Intermediary organisations will distribute tasks and responsibilities across each organisation according to each partner’s capacities and know-how, as indicated below: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Selected intermediary organisations, who will be procured through a public process, will be responsible for designing and providing soft skills learning content, assessment of temporary employees in soft skills, and certification for soft skills in coordination with IOs. It is assumed that 1-2 providers will be selected per sector to provide these services under the WRP. - Host companies will provide placement/job descriptions for temporary employees; make final selections of candidates in coordination with IOs; design in-company technical skills training plans for each temporary employee; provide company-based mentoring, and oversee evaluation and certification of technical skills for their temporary employees. - Intermediary organisations are in charge of day-to-day operations, legal, administrative and financial management; programme marketing and promotion; recruitment, selection, validation and engagement of host companies; graduate candidate recruitment, short-listing and preselection, programme monitoring and measurement of impact.

Legal, Administrative and Financial Management	
<p>Agreements</p> <p>MOUs and/or Contracts</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Templates for MOUs and contracts will be created for the WRP between IOs and host companies. They will be adapted to the special requirements of the host company as needed (for example, confidentiality clauses). • The entire process (preparation, ensuring signatures and distribution, updating/adapting content, etc.) will be centralised by the intermediary organisations to guarantee prompt and efficient procedures. • Different types of agreements must be signed, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Framework cooperation agreements between host companies/intermediary organisations - WRP agreements between temporary employees, IO and HCs
<p>Insurance and Risk Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of insurance will be centralised by the intermediary organisations in order to guarantee prompt and efficient procedures. • Insurance will be provided to temporary employees by the IOs; temporary employees will not pay for their insurance. • Temporary employees will receive a basic induction on occupational health and safety (OHS) at the start of their programme during their induction and orientation. • Clear step-by-step procedures for emergency situations will be established by IOs. Host companies and temporary employees will be provided with internship guidelines for risk management (including emergency contact information as well as rules and procedures in case of accident or illness). • IOs will seek additional insurance for themselves over the course of the programme, including against potential law suits from host companies or temporary employees.
<p>Budget Structure</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Budget structures depend on the specific characteristics of each WRP programme (by sector) and should include the following budget lines: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Temporary employee wages and food and transport allowances - Training programme costs (teaching and learning materials, tutor professional fees for external providers of soft skills, etc.) - Private insurance - Marketing and promotion costs for advertising the programme to applicants, host company applications during the identification and selection phase; this can include fees to hire an external service provider to manage the application process and first round of application reviews during pre-selection - Recruitment and management costs for hosting graduate/HC job matching fairs and other marketing activities, tools and staff time for reviewing applications and managing applicant contracts and agreements - Administrative costs for executing the programme - Monitoring and evaluation costs, including learning and sharing actions and events with stakeholders
<p>Financial Management</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial management includes: programme budget design and control; invoicing host companies; payment of all programme expenditures (temporary employee wages; insurance; tutors, trainers for soft skills; training materials; withholding of taxes; fiscal certificates, etc.). • Financial management is the responsibility of the IOs. • Management costs for IOs will form a substantial part of the overall budget, as the oversight for the WRP will require significant staff time and resources.

Marketing and Promotion	
Target Groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Programme promotion involves the following groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - University students in their final year of studies - Recent graduates (not more than 2 years from their graduation) - Programme alumni, in their role of 'programme ambassadors' capable of engaging future participants - University management and staff: rectors and vice-rectors, faculty deans, school directors, career services departments, etc. - Sector skills councils in the identified industries - Host companies: CEOs/directors, managers of internship and training programmes, HR staff at companies
Marketing Strategy and Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marketing strategies and tools will be adapted to each target group profile and designed to meet their specific needs and expectations. • For graduates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Online (where possible, this is the best option): general internship platform; special pages on university websites; social media; direct emailing campaigns; digital flyers/brochures/billboards; radio shows and advertisements; promotional videos; student blogs. - Offline: university career events; job fairs; career orientation and counselling services; programme ambassadors and alumni network; printed flyers/brochures; roadshows. • For higher education institutions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networking and face-to-face meetings. - Sponsorship and/or active participation in university career events and job fairs. - Digital and printed flyers/brochures and promotional videos. - Case studies and impact reports. - Press releases sent to university career services, rectors' and vice rectors' offices, faculty members. • For host companies: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Networking and face-to-face meetings: personalised messages and opportunities to tailor talent attraction strategies. - Participation in specialised business fairs and career development/human resources events. - Digital and printed flyers/brochures and promotional videos. - Case studies and impact reports. - Press releases sent to general and specialised media.
Recruitment and Selection of Candidates	
Recruitment and Application Procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications are best managed online (if possible; where this is not they will have to be paper-based). Setting up an integrated WRP platform where interested soon-to-graduate students/recent graduates may obtain full information on the opportunities available, together with detailed instructions on how to apply online, will encourage applications (offline procedures are more tedious and can be dissuasive), but also facilitate the selection process, which will be managed by IOs. • The basic documents needed for these applications are CVs; academic records, certificates and/or degrees; foreign language certificates; references. • Other documents may be requested in order to meet specific requirements laid out by the host companies. Some of these documents are: proof of course registration, motivational letters, referees, etc. • All application documents and processes must be tailored to the accessibility level of applicants and ensure they are inclusive of marginalised groups who may not have access to technology.

<p>Selection</p> <p>Graduates</p> <p>Host Companies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A push (from marketing and HEIs), pull (from job descriptions provided by host companies) match (between graduates, IOs and HCs) process will be applied to connect graduates that pass the initial selection phase with participating host companies in need of their skills. This process will be repeated during each application phase and will be led by the IOs. • In order to guarantee an adequate match of applicant profiles with the needs/demands of a given host company, the programme will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensure that the host company clearly defines the temporary employee profile requested and associated tasks/projects through a job description against a format specified by IOs - Validate the suitability of the profile defined for the tasks to be carried out - Promote candidate applications to specific positions and specific host companies • Selection tools may include some or all of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Shortlisting based on CV analysis - Tests: language skills, numerical skills, personal profile analysis, reading and/or writing tests - Personal interviews: face-to-face, telephone - Assessments: case studies, role plays, group dynamics • The selection process will be a shared responsibility: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Preselection: intermediary organisations preselect candidates and send a shortlist to host companies for an internal selection process. Host companies will have the right of final selection. The number of candidates sent per position will depend on a host company's requests but must include an average of 2-3 temporary employees. • Final selection of graduates to participate in the programme will be the responsibility of the host company. • Host companies will apply to participate in the programme. They will be selected by IOs based upon the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Operation in one of the targeted sectors - Officially registered and licensed to operate in Uganda - Interest and buy-in to the programme - Interest in and absorptive capacity for hiring new employees - Ability to contribute increasingly over time towards temporary employee costs - Commitment to hiring temporary employees full time - Training and coaching capacity and willingness to be trained and upskilled by IOs and training partners to deliver an effective in-house training programme
<p>Induction</p> <p>Temporary Employees</p> <p>Host Companies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Selected host companies will participate in an induction and orientation process led by the IOs and training partners at the start of the programme. All key staff in the HC supporting the WRP will take part in the process, which will include an overview of the programme, expected inputs, management and monitoring tasks, and an overview of the soft skilling component of the programme, in addition to other critical topics. • Selected graduates will also participate in an induction process at the start of their programme, led by the IOs, training partners and HCs. It will cover the programme basics, expectations of temporary employees, contracting, remuneration and insurance requirements, the scope and sequence of the soft skills training component, and expectations regarding performance and certification.

Programme Monitoring and Impact Measurement	
Monitoring	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adequate monitoring and sharing of information collected from monitoring activities with stakeholders (participating host companies; potential candidates) is fundamental for efficient programme evaluation, development (sustainability) and improvement (quality). • Monitoring tools/actions will include: training reports; periodic surveys and/or questionnaires; special focus group sessions; face-to-face follow up meetings; financial reports; data collection from application platforms; etc. • Aspects to be monitored include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Finance: income and expenditure - Promotion and tracer studies: follow-up and evaluation of impact on stakeholders (host companies, temporary employees) and the general public (media and social networks), including monitoring employment uptake of graduates and hiring within host companies or other employers - Recruitment and application: evaluation of results and trends - Temporary employees: assessment of learning outcomes and skills acquisition (tied to technical and soft skills certification), training programme quality, follow-up on employee-alumni to measure impact in the short, medium and long term. - Host companies: quality of traineeships; compliance with programme norms; identification of new business demands; identification of new potential host companies; assessment of trainer/mentor capacities for staff supporting and overseeing temporary employees - Stakeholder monitoring: continuation of partnerships and alliances - Government partners - Satisfaction: temporary employees and host companies
Measuring Impact	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) will be identified and tracked for the WRP's impact evaluation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Host companies: #/year; # new/year; % new/year; location; sector; % changes in numbers, sectors and locations on previous years; % programme fidelity; #/% hiring of temporary employees (absorption capacity) - Temporary employee placements: # offered/year; # covered/year; % covered; # covered but not completed; % covered but not completed; reasons for early cancellation; average permanence measured in months - Temporary employees: # candidates/year; # selected/year; % as per study area; % as per geographic origin; % as per geographic destination; % offered employment by host company; % hired by host company; % hired by other company. • Data will be disaggregated by gender, vulnerability status, geographical region, sector, etc.

Source: Author

9 SOFT SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES DELIVERED IN THE WORK READINESS PROGRAMME

The list below provides a summary of the soft skills that will be delivered under the off-the-job training component of the WRP by selected external training providers. They are broken down into three key areas, each with a sub-set of relevant skills that are critical in any sector and position to ensure an employee is able to succeed as a professional in the work place.

- **Personal Qualities and Abilities**
 - Creativity and innovation
 - Critical thinking and problem-solving
 - Initiative and self-direction
 - Integrity
 - Work ethic
- **Interpersonal Skills**
 - Conflict-resolution
 - Listening and speaking
 - Respect for diversity
 - Customer service skills
 - Collaboration and teamwork
- **Professional Competencies**
 - Big-picture thinking
 - Career and life-management skills
 - Continuous learning and adaptability
 - Managing time and resources
 - Information-literacy and IT skills
 - Professionalism
 - Workplace safety
 - Application of technical, literacy and numeracy skills to occupation
 - Good governance
 - Environmental awareness and green economies

The skills identified above are based upon findings from a recent (2019) Skills Needs Assessment conducted prior to the development of the WRP. The list was derived following a series of in-depth interviews conducted with over 100 professionals and Ugandan and European businesses operating in the country in the targeted sectors for the WRP, and is based on skill gaps the private sector has consistently identified in their current and potential employees. The list is aligned with international standards for soft and workplace readiness skills and represents the range of transferrable skills modern day employees need in the current economy.

Research studies within Uganda and globally, including from the European Union, have shown that employees who lack these skills often struggle to acquire or retain a job, and typically have extreme difficulty transitioning into different professional environments and positions over their career. Combating these challenges means that employee training programmes must focus on not just technical skilling, but also on the development of core workplace readiness skills that are the foundation for a lifetime of successful employment.

In addition to this list of core skills, which will be modified against the needs and experiences of sector actors during implementation of the WRP, additional skilling topics will be added to the list, including skills to work in the green economy and modules focusing on the role of good governance and anti-corruption in the workplace.

10 CERTIFICATION OF TEMPORARY EMPLOYEES IN SOFT SKILLS

An important, and unique, component of the WRP is the structured delivery of the off-the-job soft skills training element of the programme. The delivery of this component relies on the public procurement of qualified training providers across the three target sectors to design and deliver a soft skilling curriculum to the temporary employees participating in the programme.

Integrated into the curriculum design is an assessment and certification process for measuring the uptake of relevant soft skills in temporary employees. *Certification* is the action or process of providing someone with an official document attesting to a status or level of achievement.

Throughout the delivery of the curriculum, temporary employees will be continuously assessed in the acquisition of specific competencies related to the skills they are acquiring. At the end of their 6-month programme, temporary employees will be given a final evaluation of their skills and, if they pass, will be certified in these proficiencies by the skills provider and implementing organisations.

A key outcome of this component in the first phase of the WRP's implementation is the production of a standardised, tested, adapted and accredited curriculum for soft skills that can be made widely available to a range of companies and associations for further uptake and certification of their employees. Ideally, each sector will produce its own curriculum relevant to the soft skills most valued in their industry, although many of the soft skills contained within the material will overlap, albeit with different sector-specific competencies.

Over time as the WRP framework is executed, the delivery of this component of the programme could be managed in-house by some companies with large-scale training operations, or by an expanded set of public and private service providers who can be contracted to deliver soft skills training modules off-job. This option will be explored throughout the initial phase of implementing this framework and additional recommendations and guidelines produced to guide the process.

An appropriate design and delivery of any soft skilling curricula must provide multiple access points for participants to obtain employability- and career-related experiences. Content in the curriculum must be visibly progressive, culminating with one or more capstone experiences that allow participants to physically exhibit or demonstrate their skills development. Capstone experiences integrate coursework, knowledge, skills and experiential learning to enable the participant to demonstrate a broad mastery of learning across the curriculum for further career advancement. Capstone experiences enables participants to:

- Have an overview of what they have accomplished in their programme;
- Relate discipline-specific learning outcomes to the workplace;
- Link their knowledge and abilities to their future full-time employment;
- Showcase their competencies in specified areas; and
- Substantiate personal and core learning as well as professional development and achievement.

11 ACCREDITATION

One of the longer-term goals of the WRP framework is to provide a pathway for the accreditation of companies and associations for their in-house training programmes and external soft skills training providers for their programmes. *Accreditation* is the action or process of officially recognising an organisation or institution as having a particular status or being qualified to perform a particular activity. It is possible that through this process, company-based training programmes can become recognised training centres in their own right, capable and designated to offer training services to other institutions or companies and associations on a for-profit basis.

Under the WRP framework, host companies and associations, after an initial period of implementation and review of their performance and outputs within the programme, can request to become officially accredited as a private sector training provider for their in-house training programme, if they fulfil the following minimum conditions:

- Has a high-quality, tailor-made, industry-specific, in-company learning programme combining on-the-job technical training investments for new employees alongside soft and workplace readiness skilling inputs;
- A dedicated, properly trained and certified staff capable of providing the required training and coaching investments and activities in terms of quantity and quality;
- Meets minimum standards and requirements for the quality, content, delivery mechanisms, assessment procedures and certification requirements for sector-specific trainee programmes as evaluated and confirmed by a recognised external assessor/auditor; and
- Applied for accreditation following the outlined steps and processes specified by certified accreditation bodies (comprised initially of implementing organisations and certified sectoral experts from the private sector).

After a positive assessment by a certified authority, the company or association will receive an official accreditation for their in-house training programme. This accreditation will support their continued participation in the WRP, as well as their recognition in their sector as a recognised training provider.

Overall, accreditation processes and procedures under the WRP must be further defined following the initial phase of its implementation in consultation with the primary implementing partners and host companies, as well as with Sector Skills Councils, Government bodies and other private sector and education stakeholders.

12 ANNEXES

WORK READINESS PROGRAMME



Graduates from higher education institutions

- Not more than 2 years after graduation
- Seeking work in targeted sectors
- Willing to commit to a 6-month programme

Implementing organisations (IOs)

- Oversight and administration of the programme
- Financial management and budgeting
- Provide portion of wages, insurance and transport fees for temporary employees



Steps in the Work Readiness Programme

1. Identification and selection of participating HCs, external soft skills training providers
2. Contracting and MOUs between IOs, HCs, training providers
3. Graduates apply to programme
4. Push-Pull-Match process between graduates, HCs
5. Graduates selected and contracted by HCs, IOs as temporary employees
6. Temporary employees participate in paid, 6-month, structured programme
7. Temporary employees are assessed and certified in relevant technical and soft skills
8. Temporary employees graduate from programme and are employed full-time



Host companies/associations (HCs)

- Seeking temporary employees in targeted sectors
- Ability to contribute increasingly over time to absorb temporary employee costs
- Provide technical training to temporary employees
- Commitment to hiring temporary employees full-time after programme

Higher education institutions (HEIs)

- Advertise the programme
- Identify graduates to apply



SOFT SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES

