

Agricultural Education and  
Skills Improvement Framework

# AESIF

2015 – 2025



**Africa's greatest asset is its people.** Human capital development is a pre-requisite for the successful implementation of programmes toward Africa's Transformation Agenda. Improving education in the agricultural sector serves as a tool not only for raising the intellectual capacity of individuals, but also as a means of ensuring that agricultural productivity and food security improves. By focusing on developing agriculture education in Africa, countries would benefit from having the unemployed youth engaging in this sector where jobs are available and opportunities for entrepreneurship exist in all agricultural value chains.

The AESIF arose from:

- **A high political will of African Heads of State and Government** in the 2014/2015 AU Heads of State Summits whereby strong decisions and commitment were made for human capacity development in agriculture; and
- **Lessons learnt from the first decade of implementing CAADP** that indicate that Africa's capacity to generate knowledge, foster learning and enable development of skills among its workforce can make a difference.

The NEPAD Agency, the African Union's development agency, initiated the development of the AESIF framework to transform Africa's Agriculture Education and Training (AET) to leverage the quality and quantity of required skills for the advancement of agricultural growth and achievement of targets set in the Malabo declaration and recommitment to CAADP principles.



# Why AESIF?

AESIF represents a common agenda for addressing the three key challenges in education and skills improvement for the whole agriculture knowledge system regionally and nationally.

1. The **need to transform Agricultural Education and Training** which is characterised by: outdated traditional training systems that are not based on current employer skills demands; a lack of synergy between Tertiary Agriculture Education (TAE) and research centres; lack of coordination and strategic alignment to the national development priorities; and lack of management information systems.
2. **Mismatch between AET and Skills requirement in industry and public institutions** (outdated curricula that are not adapted to changing skills demands). AET systems lack practical training and do not use modern training tools.
3. **Decrease of AET financing** as there is a lack of incentive from private sector and stakeholders towards funding AET.

## What is AESIF Framework

The AESIF has been developed in recognition of the need to strengthen and transform the AET system across all education levels. The institutional reform of AET is imperative for African Agriculture to improve food security and nutrition, economic empowerment, prosperity, jobs and wealth creation.

### Vision

Transform Africa's Agriculture Education and Training (AET) in order to leverage the quality and quantity of skilled workforce required for the advancement of agricultural growth and the achievements of targets set in the CAADP Malabo Declaration on accelerated agricultural growth and transformation for shared prosperity and improved livelihoods.

### Mission

Address the misalignment between types of training provided and skills needed in the workforce

- Address the fragmentation of knowledge actors and isolation of AET from research and extension services;
- Address duplication and inefficient allocation of resources by public, private and development partners;
- Address the apathy of youth and women towards AET learning systems and development of entrepreneurial skills.

### Objective

- Play a central role in guiding capacity building to continuously replenish the skilled human capital much needed to drive the agriculture transformation agenda in Africa;
- Provide a common agenda in leveraging multi-stakeholder private-public partnerships on agriculture education and skills development to drive innovation and wealth creation;
- Offer practical guidelines and tools for sharing of experiences and learning;
- Ensure coherence among initiatives and alignment between actors and integration of all processes into a common agenda mainstreamed within the CAADP process.

Figure 1: AESIF vision/Missions/objectives

Investing in transforming Africa's Agricultural Education System is one of the key requirements towards achieving agriculture-led development as stated in the CAADP Malabo Declaration. The Agricultural Education and Skills Improvement Framework (AESIF) 2015 – 2025 is an integrated policy framework developed to address the need to transform and embrace various forms of agricultural education and training methods.



# AESIF Strategic Areas

AESIF identifies three strategic action areas that should be given immediate attention to propel reforms that can improve AET:

- ▶ **Strategic area 1:** Reforms in Governance and Management Policies
- ▶ **Strategic area 2:** Reform and update teaching curricula and teaching methods
- ▶ **Strategic area 3:** Mobilisation of Public and Private partnership

## Strategic area 1:

### Reforms in Governance and Management Policies

#### Improve governance policies through:

**Action 1.1: Establishing or Strengthening an existing National AET council as a hosting body to coordinate and drive the entire system of AET according to the national priorities.**

The council should sensitise a multitude of stakeholders, including political leaders, parliamentarians, the private sector, civil society organisations, farmers' organisations, academic institutions and others on the importance of transforming AET to improve on the quality of human capital. These actions should ensure that AET becomes more attractive to the youth and women by providing modern on-the-job training and learning facilities which enhance their entrepreneurial skills and employability. This is feasible through:

- A clear strategic plan based on national priorities and comparative advantages of the countries and the regional dynamics.
- National quality assurance framework with appropriate monitoring and evaluation, self-assessment, accreditation mechanism, and dynamic development of training that responds to the different demands of various target groups.
- Lifelong Learning and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) system, in which the skills of workforce are continually upgraded and promoted; and
- Representation of the whole AET system at national and international levels.

#### Improve the management system by

**Action 1.2: Appointing AET leaders with good managerial skills based on individual merits instead of other subjective criteria.**

The AET leaders should be appointed through a competitive selection processes.

**Action 1.3: Developing an adequate data recording system** to better collect and analyse information about the labour market needs and trends in agricultural employment.

**Action 1.4: Providing training opportunities** for employees including managers, teachers and support staff with appropriate ICT tools to run daily activities effectively.



## Strategic area 2:

### Reform and update teaching curricula and teaching methods

#### Action.2.1: Reform and update curricula

- Update the curricula to take into consideration the dynamic shift of the agriculture sector from family-on-farm production for subsistence purposes to consumers-and market based needs.
- Develop curricula that responds to the interests of the youth by offering a wider range of appealing courses.
- Structure future career paths around themes beyond production (i.e. food security) to include nutrition, post-harvest storage and processing, agribusiness and entrepreneurship, bio-information and biotechnologies, natural resource management, rural finance, forecasting and risk management which are more appealing to the youth.
- Blended training and career guidance opportunities such as using guest lecturers from different spectrums of society that relate to agriculture to help raise awareness on the broad range of jobs available in the sector.
- Upgrade skills of trainers/ teachers through T.o.T (Training of Trainers) in agricultural vocational and technical centres.
- Leverage ICT tools to create mobile and online education and training platforms which increase trainee access despite proximity and mobility challenges.

#### Action 2.2: Improve training methods by

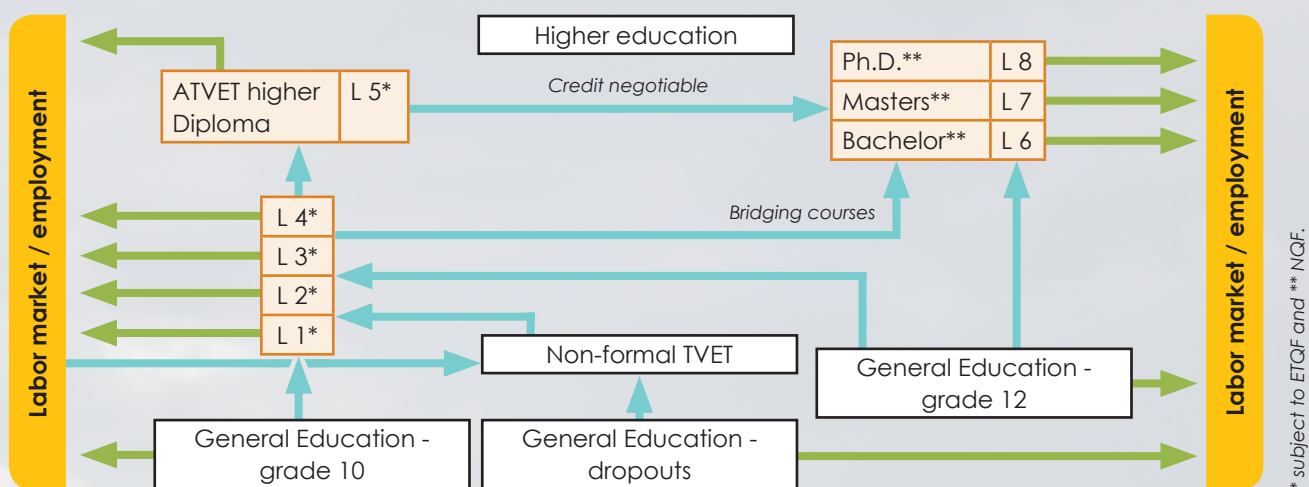
- **Establishing Innovation Centres (ICs)** which hold training of trainers on best-practices in delivering services for different target groups.
- **Focusing on practical training and using modern teaching methods ICT and online courses such as Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs).** This requires the implementation of modularized training delivery in addition to full-time delivery which must be certified through National Qualification Frameworks (NQFs) and Regional Qualification Frameworks (RQFs).
- **Using cooperative training** which promotes direct participation of private sector in the provision of practical training.
- **Providing entrepreneurial (agri-preneurial) training** that improves the commercial performance of the target groups along value chain segments.
- **Promoting informal training** which takes place outside of the institutional education and training system.
- **Focusing on teacher and instructor training:** Establish or Strengthen existing pedagogy training centres for them to provide pre-service and in-service training.
- **Providing Vocational guidance and job placement** especially for youth, through a variety of agencies.



### Action 2.3: ATVET and TAE systems integration and porosity

To facilitate articulation across the two systems, pathways such as bridging courses must be developed to allow permeability between ATVET and Tertiary Agriculture Education (TAE) to reinforce opportunities.

#### Integration of ATVET into overall education system



The integration of ATVET into the overall education system illustrated in figure 2 should be guided by NQFS and Regional Qualification Frameworks (RQFs).

Figure 2: ATVET and TAE systems integration and porosity

## Strategic area 3:

### Mobilisation of Public and Private Partnership

**Action 3.1: Establish a 10-year investment plan coupled with a business model** through a participatory approach during regular National AET forum. The National AET council should approve the budget and follow up its implementation. The NAIPs should be revised and consider the specific needs of AET systems activities.

**Action 3.2: Increase public investment** in establishing long term AET infrastructure in rural areas closer to the producers with easy access to experimental land and technologies for the further development of business incubator models.

**Action 3.3: Strengthen the private sector** to play a key role by offering training capacity such as on-the-job training, scholarships, current and prospective employee's sponsorships and mentorships to complement and strengthen public AET initiatives.

**Action 3.4: Enhance joint research activities** can be enhanced through technical and financial support as well as convention between research and academic institutions in Africa and advanced countries globally.



# How do we operationalise AESIF?

AESIF operationalisation involves implementation agents at different levels.



## Continentially

AUC and NPCA are responsible for the realisation and development of the framework. They also provide technical advice for countries on how to implement the AESIF.



## Regionally

The Regional Economic Communities (RECs) are responsible for developing regional capacities and holding countries accountable to regional commitments, taking ownership of AESIF at regional level.



## Nationally

AU Member States establish National AET Councils representative of key stakeholders to follow up on the AESIF implementation process. Private sector and members of other continental initiatives must also be active participants.

Pre-requisites:

- Effective Knowledge and Information system for the development of individual and organisational capabilities.
- An effective communication and advocacy strategy is needed to sustain the positive momentum of AESIF (continentally and nationally).

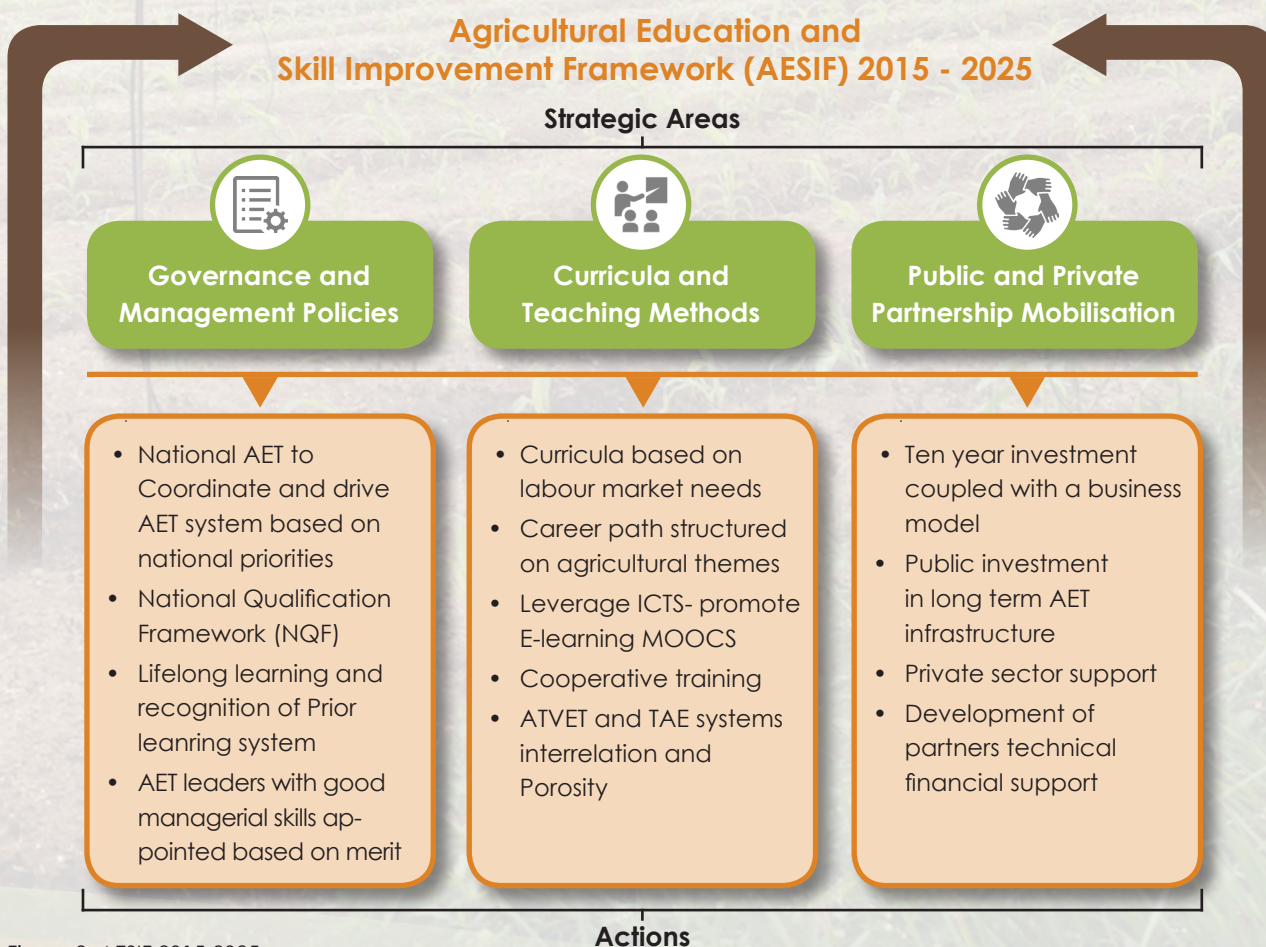


Figure 3: AESIF 2015-2025