

GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE



MINISTRY OF TECHNICAL AND HIGHER EDUCATION

Sierra Leone TVET Dual Apprenticeship Policy
Supporting skills acquisition and employment

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DRAFT ZERO

- NOT FOR CIRCULATION -

List of Abbreviations

Key Terms and Definitions

Attachment (or industrial attachment): An attachment is a compulsory part of an education program, usually implemented in the TVET sector and in higher education. Participants are students, and the successful attachment is a pre-requisite for graduation and certification. Although the learning may be structured, the main purpose of an attachment is work exposure, i.e., putting into practice what has been learnt before. An example is the Industrial Attachment Program (IAP) in the TVET sector.

Internship: An internship is similar to an attachment. However, it is not part of an educational learning program, but an own-standing work experience scheme, aimed at easing the entrance into work of a young person. Supported internship programs, for example the Youth National Internship Programme, are youth-targeted active labor market interventions. Internships are also offered by companies.

Apprenticeship training: Unlike attachments and internships, which primarily aim at work experience, apprenticeship training is a structured - usually pre-employment – training in the real world of work. Apprenticeship training aims to build full occupational competence of apprentices. Apprenticeships are longer than attachments and internships and imply a considerable commitment to and ownership of the training by the involved employer/enterprise. It is suggested to distinguish between two different main types of apprenticeship:

Traditional apprenticeship in the informal sector: Traditional apprenticeship describes a more or less formalized training relationship between a traditional master and a young person. The young person commits her-/himself to work for the master as an assistant and will be instructed by the master to learn on-the-job. Training is not based on a prescribed curriculum, and learning contents are determined by the kind of work conducted in the training enterprise. Traditional apprenticeship does not necessarily lead to formal qualifications, but recognition of prior learning can be introduced. There are times when NGOs and development agencies sponsor traditional apprenticeship programs. Under such circumstances, financial rewards and other benefits are given to traditional masters if and when they provide training to specially defined target groups.

Cooperative apprenticeship training with companies in the formal sector: Cooperative training is a modern form of apprenticeship through a cooperative agreement with a training or TVET institution. An important learning location is a company, but the training is complemented by basic, generic and theoretical training modules, delivered in a training institution. Usually, cooperative training is governed by a formal training Agreement, and is based on a learning plan or curriculum and aims at a formal qualification. An internationally well-known and highly recognized cooperative training scheme is the “dual apprenticeship system”.

TVET in companies: This is a special form of workplace learning where skills training is provided in and by companies using well experienced industry practitioners. It is also often called “industry-based training”. A major characteristic of TVET in companies is that the company has a well-established training unit separate from other departments or units within the company. Thus, training is provided by the company through the training unit. The differences between TVET in companies and normal TVET or higher learning is that training leads to the company recognized certificate, that may not necessarily be recognized by the NCTAV, though may be recognized and accepted within the industry.

Company-based (skills upgrading) training: This term refers to all kinds of training and further training that an employer provides to the employees of the company. This kind of workplace learning targets existing workforce of the company.

Preface

Acknowledgement

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1 Background to the Dual Apprenticeship Policy

1.1 Technical Skills Training in Sierra Leone

1. Sierra Leone's population is estimated at 7,541,641 million (Stats SL, 2022), out of this, about 42 percent are below 15 years of age. Thus, providing adequate socio-economic opportunities particularly jobs are becoming increasingly difficult, resulting in migration from rural to urban areas as well as from urban areas to other countries. Despite the policy interventions and actions by the government and its partners, young people are still grappling with a number of challenges: a lack of skills relevant to the contemporary job market; limited development programmes for youth; limited jobs and poor work conditions for youth; inadequate policy and legislation that protect the welfare of young people; and drug use and abuse, among others.
2. In 2019, the Government of Sierra Leone launched an ambitious Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP), 2019-2023, sub-titled 'Education for Development'. The MTNDP set a clear vision for the country's sustainable development path towards the achievement of progress across the eight pillars of plan, as core components of the country's journey out of fragility towards its vision of becoming an inclusive and green, middle-income country by 2035 (GOSL, 2019). The MTNDP prioritized human capital development as the most fundamental path towards the country's ambition of attaining a medium-income status and sustainable development.
3. Alongside human capital development, the GoSL has prioritized the diversification of the economy, targeting agriculture, fisheries, mining and tourism to be the new drivers of growth for Sierra Leone and to create quality jobs. The Government of Sierra Leone defines youth as those between ages 15 and 35. Approximately 2.5 millions of Sierra Leone's 8 million population (set to increase to 4.1 million by 2050), are youths. The projected increase represents an opportunity to enhance the youth's potential to help Sierra Leone achieve Middle Income Status by 2030.
4. The GoSL is aware that relevant skilled Sierra Leoneans are required for the attainment of the country's short- and long-term development aspirations. Numerous analytical reports and policy documents, for example the Private Sector Development Strategy (PSDS), have identified the shortage of relevant skills as a major impediment to economic growth and competitiveness. Skills are lacking throughout the economy, among people working in the private sector and at public workplaces, as well as among young labor market entrants. The National Capacity Building Secretariat (NCBS) is currently in the process of formulating a National Capacity Building Strategy to comprehensively address skills and capacity deficits. In this respect, the GoSL has assigned a special importance to TVET since 2018.
5. In this respect, the GoSL created a new Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) in 2018. The mandate of the MTHE is to "provide effective supervision to the tertiary, technical and vocational sectors of the national education system for effective service delivery in the country". Prior to this the creation of the MTHE, basic, senior secondary education, technical, and higher education were all together under the Ministry of Education, Science and Technology (MEST), which was in charge of all education sub-sectors. However, TVET was not given the needed priority and suffered from a lack of visibility and holistic policy direction; poor documentation; a lack of investment, equipment and tools; inadequate coordination; and insufficient supervision and monitoring.
6. Against this backdrop, the ongoing transformation of the TVET sector led to the adoption of a national TVET policy (GoSL, 2019) as well as the development of guidelines and methodologies to facilitate TVET implementation, with women and disadvantaged youth its heart. The rationale for prioritizing TVET is to transform the entire TVET landscape in the country through better service

provision for the technical and vocational needs of the growing young population, especially girls and women, and those seeking fresh skills or transitioning into alternative occupations, to meet the labor market demand.

7. In response towards meeting the anticipated surge in demand and shift towards demand-driven skills production, the GoSL has established GTIs in 10 districts, since 2019, with plans to construct 6 more in the remaining districts. The objective of increasing the number of GTI's is to develop qualified and quality middle-level manpower nationwide, that are certificated through the GTI's with National Technical Certificates (NTC), National Diplomas (ND) and Higher National Diplomas (HND). Also, the government recently 2022 established three technical universities all with the aim to bolster quality skills acquisition and employability of youth.
8. Apart from GTIs and polytechnics, there is a large number of TVET institutions in Sierra Leone, about 183, of which 107 (58%) are privately-owned and 76 are government- assisted (42%). According to the 2020 NTHEC, only 40% of these institutions offer training programmes and activities that are of relevance to economic demand, despite the fact that this is central to youth employability and labor market integration. In this respect, the GoSL Educational system is undertaking reforms to the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) sub-sector to match international best practice in terms of access, quality, market relevance, graduate employability.
9. Access to TVET and higher education increased considerably during recent years. For example, enrolment rates in formal TVET grew from 35,000 to 84,000 between 2007 and 2013. However, there is need to further increase the system's capacities in terms of quantity and quality to meet the employment targets set out in the Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) II. In this context, the National Employment Programme (NEP) calls for more apprenticeship and internship programs delivered in conjunction with companies.

1.2 Misalignment of Skills Training and Education to Labor Market

10. According to a skills needs assessment in strategic sectors with high potential for economic growth and job creation (industry including mining, construction and manufacturing, as well as health, energy, tourism and agriculture), employers face challenges in filling vacancies as most candidates possess limited technical skills and practical experience (GIZ, 2018a). Besides, only 3% of surveyed employers appear to actively collaborate with training institutions. It is also known that the mining and construction industries are in dire need of heavy machinery operators, but such occupational skills are not readily available in Sierra Leone which therefore has no choice but to resort to hiring foreign labor.
11. With respect to new labor market entrants, it is a major challenge of the education and training system that learning is theory-based and that learning outcomes are mostly not aligned with the needs of the labor market. Graduates from the technical and vocational education and training (TVET) system and from higher education lack practical skills and important core skills like communication, positive work habits, team-work, analytical and problem-solving skills, and the ability to work independently, flexibly and innovatively responding to customer needs and a business environment. These skills are also essential to enable the Rwandan youth to find employment or venture into self-employment. The prevailing skills mismatch is identified in the 2009 National Skills Audit as a major contributor to youth unemployment.
12. Despite the programs being implemented by the GoSL to improve TVET system, skills development and employment, a key remaining challenge is to integrate the private sector in the productive sector, especially the employers and companies in the country into the education and training structures to ensure that education, training and skills development are better aligned to the job market demands.

1.3 Justification for a dual apprenticeship Policy

13. Dual apprenticeship¹ in the formal TVET system is a priority on the reform agenda for the GoSL. The justification for mainstreaming dual apprenticeship in TVET programs in the country is to expose trainees to hands on experience in the job or workplace setting while helping to improve their technical proficiency in their respective skills programs. It is against this backdrop that the Ministry of Technical and Higher Education (MTHE) has developed this dual apprenticeship policy. Through this Dual Apprenticeship policy, the MTHE will help improve technical, and skills competencies, and labor market outcomes for TVET graduates.
14. Dual apprenticeship is being advocated for by the GoSL with the aim to address the misalignment of Skills Training and Education to Labor Market. As dual apprenticeship approach brings both private and public stakeholders to develop balanced training programmes, it facilitates the alignment of skills training to labor market demand. It also facilitates employers to equip apprentices with on-the-job practical skills and training institutions equip apprentices with more theoretical off-the-job training. It is also envisaged that dual apprenticeship programmes will contribute to addressing high youth unemployment rate as in developed countries like Australia, Austria, Switzerland or Germany, where the dual apprenticeship approach is the most common form of skills training.
15. A TVET Dual Apprenticeship Policy is needed for Sierra Leone to exploit the opportunities for improved skills and employability of youth and their contribution to the work force for national development provided by workplace learning and training in TVET institution. In order to exploit this opportunity, it is therefore necessary to develop Sierra Leone TVET Dual Apprenticeship Policy that provides the overarching framework for the following:
 - (a) Provides legal and regulatory framework for apprenticeship training, as there is presently no legal framework that is consistent with the labor law related to apprenticeship.
 - (b) Developing and recognizing apprenticeship training as part of the formal TVET and the National Qualification Framework for TVET (NQF);
 - (c) Develop the conditions and mechanisms to award apprentices after successful completion of the dual apprenticeship to be awarded formal and recognized certificates under the NQF;
 - (d) Develop curricula for dual apprenticeship and modalities for approval and recognition by the NCTVA based on occupational standards recommended by a recognized national professional body;
 - (e) Develop mechanisms to recognize and certify workshops or workplaces as learning or centers of specialization and that leaning in such workshops or workplaces are recognized and credit bearing that counts as part of the overall assessment for the award of certificates under the NQF.

1.4 Guiding Principles of the Dual Apprenticeship Policy

16. Although the Dual Apprenticeship Training Schemes (DATS) have worked elsewhere, it must be realized that each scheme operates within the wider context of socio-economic, cultural traditions and level of industrial sophistication. The schemes also have direct relationship to the national TVET system and aspirations of individuals and the complexity of labor market regulation.

¹ Dual apprenticeship combines theoretical training in formal TVET institutes with practical training in industry and businesses in the formal and informal sectors. Apprenticeship scheme aims to provide TVET participants with work-based learning and market experience to apply theoretical knowledge acquired at TVET training institutes

Therefore, this policy has been formulated ensuring that it is adapted to the context and development aspirations of Sierra Leone. In so doing, it has identified and adapted more universal policy characteristics underpinning successful systems. It is therefore these universal policy characteristics that provide the guiding principles for the Dual Apprenticeship Policy for Sierra Leone. Therefore, the following are best practices for dual apprenticeship policies based on review of similar policies for developing² and developed³ countries.

- (a) *Legal basis for the Dual Apprenticeship*⁴. Modern and successful dual apprenticeship is enacted and regulated by law. Therefore, the GoSL shall enact a law that clearly defines and enforce the rights and responsibilities of apprenticeship partners. A standard format of such a law relieves firms of the burden of individually negotiating each Agreement and provides each party with a clear statement of rights and responsibilities with redress for failure to observe the apprenticeship Agreement. In this respect, the GoSL shall formulate coherent legislation that is simple but effective, and should
- Recognize the unique status of the apprentice as learner and secure the right to high-quality training with strong transferable elements;
 - set out the right of apprentices to a training allowance commensurate with their productive contribution net of training costs;
 - Set a minimum duration for the apprenticeship and secure provision for career progression;
 - Place DAT in the hands of firms and chambers and thus emphasizes the principle of employer responsibility for content while defining the basic framework guaranteeing mutual rights and obligations of employers and apprentices (Ryan P., 2000).
- (b) *Legislate membership of local Chamber of Commerce and Professional Bodies*. A critical mass of membership of companies in local Chamber of Commerce and industry as well as professional bodies are required to support dual apprenticeship program. However, the size of companies must be defined by legislature, just as in Germany, where membership of the local Chamber of Commerce is obligatory for employers over a certain size. In addition, employers are encouraged to join Employers' Associations". Such associations are expected for example participate in the negotiations and to follow the terms of the collective agreements (e.g., on trainee pay) negotiated at sectoral level by those associations.
- (c) *Recognize the fundamental role of the social partners*. The GoSL shall recognize the fundamental role of employers and their engagement in the implementation of the Dual Apprenticeship Policy. An important condition for a successful dual apprenticeship system is the recognition and regular engagement and constructive dialogue with employee representatives. The Dual apprenticeship scheme is strongest and most successful in countries where both employer and employee representative organizations wholeheartedly support and promote apprenticeship and the conditions necessary for its success. In this respect, the GoSL shall ensure that social dialogue is legislated as the necessary prerequisite for this commitment, and that employers take part in the governance of dual learning apprenticeship systems and contribute to the design of curricula and their adaptation over time. Employer and employee representatives will agree on the apprenticeship content, assessment and certification.

² India, Bangladesh, South Africa and Tanzania

³ Germany, Austria, Denmark, England, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Switzerland

⁴ Germany, Austria, Denmark, England, Ireland, the Netherlands, and Switzerland – regulate apprenticeship through an Act of Parliament. The dual apprenticeship legislation safeguards rights and responsibilities of the main partners, while leaving questions

- (a) *A dual apprentices must have a contract (Agreement).* The GoSL shall enact legislation that require employers to issue apprenticeship Agreements that are enforceable by law. An agreement is a fundamental condition that protect the interest of apprentices in respect of health and safety at work, probation period, etc.
- (b) The objective of the Technical Committee formation is to guide the process of developing the architecture of the policies in line national dynamics, best practices, to catch up with regional and continental dynamics in developing skills for jobs.
- (c) *National assessment and certification of apprenticeship.* An important interest of the apprentice is gaining a final certification of the apprenticeship. In this respect, the GoSL shall legislate the testing and certification of apprentices. The testing in the occupation of the apprentice and certificates shall be nationally recognized. The testing and certification shall be agreed upon by employee organizations/trade unions and representative of employees.
- (d) *The GoSL shall play a supportive and facilitating role.* The GoSL will not micro-manage apprenticeship, rather the government shall play a supportive and facilitating role. Major decisions by the GoSL relating dual apprenticeship shall be made only after trade unions and employers' representatives have given their consent. Participation of social partners in decision making at the national level shall be based on the principle of consensus.
- (e) *Institutional support for apprenticeship.* All partners in the apprenticeship system - firms, companies, firms, apprentices and the public authorities, all require formidable and efficient institutional support, that assure quality and standards, while ensuring that the goals and objectives of the apprenticeship programme are respected and achieved. Therefore, the GoSL, shall provide the institutional support through dedicated organization/department or unit that provides labor market intelligence on changing skill needs, collects and monitors statistical information and provides support to employers' organizations updating or devising new training programmes. The same institution may also conduct formal inspection apprenticeship to ascertain the quality of the training provided during apprenticeship.
- (f) *The role of technical and vocational institutions.* As all apprenticeship programmes require the apprentice to spend part of the learning period away from the workplace. This is normally provided in publicly-funded vocational colleges although it is increasingly possible for the technical and knowledge elements of apprenticeship training to be provided in the workplace. The GoSL will set up criteria for the participation of the technical and vocational institutions in the dual apprenticeship.
- (g) *Finance the apprenticeship.* Apprenticeship is costly for the government likewise other parties involved in the scheme, thus finding a sustainable financing is critical its viability. Therefore, the GoSL shall device a cost-effective and sustainable way of financing scheme, based on whether or not apprenticeship provides the incentives needed to encourage employers and young people to participate.

1.5 Dual Apprenticeship Policy Development Process

1.5.1 Principles Guiding the Policy Development Process

17. The formulation of this Sierra Leone TVET Dual Apprenticeship Policy was guided by the following principles:-

- (a) *Participatory* Development of this policy was guided by a Technical Committee (TC) set up by the MTHE. Membership of the TC comprised of representatives from the public and private sectors, employers, employers organizations, TVET institutions, civil society organization and development partners. The objective of the Technical Committee formation was to guide the process of developing the architecture of the policies in line with national dynamics, best practices, and to catch up with regional and continental dynamics in developing skills for jobs.
- (b) *Consultative*: Leaning institutions, employers and employees representatives as well as civil society were consulted at all stages in the development of this policy. Specifically, stakeholder consultative workshops were organized in all five provinces of the country. At these workshops, a draft policy document was presented and discussed in groups. Recommendations for improvement of the draft were presented at the workshops for inclusion in the final draft policy. A national validation workshop was organized in Freetown, where final corrections were made and a final draft prepared and validated.
- (c) *Relevance and Focus*. Relevance for the socio-economic development of the country was considered in all discussions, especially in focusing of the policy for the formal TVET and in recommendation of trades to be supported under this policy.
- (d) *Facilitating partnerships*: Noting that dual apprenticeship requires the buy in of employers (private sector), the training institutions and employee representatives, the need for a policy framework that facilitates and coordinates the efforts of partnership in skills development was emphasized in all discussions and drafting of the policy.
- (e) *Financially Secure and sustainability of TVET Dual Apprenticeship*: Dual apprenticeship is expensive. Noting that there is presently no budgetary allocation to dual apprenticeship, which is already stretched, alternative sources of financing the Dual Apprenticeship was a central topic in the stakeholder consultative workshops.
- (f) *Quality*: The TVET Dual Apprenticeship Policy framework aims to promote quality while emphasizing the need to promote demand driven apprenticeships and training. The selection of workplaces and TVET institutions that will participate in or benefit from programs supported by the policy shall be based on criteria that emphasizes quality.
- (g) *Incorporating lessons from Dual Apprenticeship Policies from other countries*: This TVET Policy document has benefitted from review of several similar policies from which lessons are drawn and contextualized for Sierra Leone.
- (h) *Special focus on youth, especially girls and young women*. This policy focuses on youth. It therefore provides opportunity for youth to gain skills and employment or become entrepreneurs. Special initiatives shall be developed to encourage girls and young women to participate and benefit from dual apprenticeship programmes.

1.5.2 Existing Policies facilitating Dual Apprenticeship Policy

- The TVET policy 2019
- Labor policy
- Local content policy
- National youth policy

- Environmental policy
- EU training foundation policy
- Child Right Act
- Gender Act

1.5.3 Policy Development Process

18. The formulation of the Sierra Leone TVET Dual Apprenticeship Policy followed a participatory, consultative, and inclusive process building on the national TVET policy, other relevant policies and the Sierra Leone Education Sector Plan 2022 to 2026. In this respect, representatives from employers, employers organizations, other private sector, Civil Society and public sector participated actively in the formulation of this policy. The entire formulation of this policy was guided by a technical committee set up by the MTHE. The committee comprised of relevant representative required for the dual apprenticeship. These also participated in regional workshops organized for all five regions of the country. A final draft policy document was presented at a national stakeholder validation workshop in Freetown, where final corrections were made, and the final draft policy document validated.

2 Dual Apprenticeship Policy Statements and Guidelines

2.1 Policy Vision, Mission, Objectives and Target

20. The Sierra Leone National Dual Apprenticeship Policy recognizes trades that are nationally registered, or company apprenticeships approved, or Company apprenticeships approved and registered by the NCTVA⁵ must meet the criteria for learning, and skill gain to qualify under this policy. Company apprenticeships must meet the criteria for learning, and skill gain to qualify under this policy.
21. Vision: The vision of the SL-NDAP is to develop a modern, transparent and sustainable dual apprenticeship system that contributes to increasing the availability of competent workforce for the labor market, higher productivity and to the country's development.
22. Mission: The mission of the SL-DAP is to facilitate the development of workplace learning promoted and supported by both the private and public sectors, leading to qualifications that are recognized by the Sierra Leone National Qualifications Framework, and responds to the skills requirements for the socio-economic development of Sierra Leone.

2.2 Purpose of the Policy

23. The main aim of this policy is to develop the skills of the Sierra Leonean workforce. In this respect, the specific purpose is to:-
- (a) provide opportunities for new labor market entrants gain work experience and improve their prospects of finding jobs;
 - (b) Encourage learners and employers to participate in the dual apprenticeship system;
 - (c) Provide for skills trainings that lead to recognized occupational qualifications;
 - (d) Promote public-private partnerships to provide learning in and for the workplace;

2.3 Specific Objectives and Target of the Policy

24. The objective of the SL-NDAP is to provide regulations and control of training of apprentices in Sierra Leone and all other related matters including governance, financing, monitoring and accountability. The specific objectives are as follows:-
- (a) Establish dual apprenticeship and outline policy the framework for formal apprenticeship training
 - (b) State the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders of the policy
 - (c) Establish implementation structures and arrangements, including roles and responsibilities
 - (d) Establish financing, institutional, management and coordination for dual apprenticeship
 - (e) Define the framework for quality assurance and reporting of the dual apprenticeship system

2.4 Target and Non-Target Groups of the Policy

25. The SL-NDAP specifically applies to:
- (a) Students and Learners in Government TVET institutions : The learning and training needs of students in accredited and recognized Government TVET and higher education institutions, and labor market entrants in the formal sector associated with a TVET and/or higher education programs that facilitate school-and-work training.

⁵ The National Council for Technical Vocational and other Academic Awards (NCTVA) was established by Act No. 10 of October 2001

- (b) Training Providers. It applies to training providers which includes Government TVET, and higher education institutions as defined by the MTHE.
- (c) Employers participating in Dual Apprenticeships that are accredited by the MTHE.
- (d) Institutions and establishments participating in the financing, management and coordination of dual apprenticeship

26. This policy does not apply to

- (a) Apprenticeships in a sector that is not recognized and accredited by MTHE/NCTVA
- (b) Persons below the age of 14 years and those above 35 years of age
- (c) Persons that are not registered and following formal training and education at a recognized and accredited Government TVET or higher education institution
- (d) Internships, skills upgrading of workers in industry
- (e) Persons following learning and/or educational programs that are not accredited and recognized for dual apprenticeship by the MTHE/NCTVA

2.5 Policy Statements and Guidelines

2.5.1 Recruitment of Apprentices and Training

- 27. The GoSL shall legislate all conditions, requirements, certification and other related matters of apprentices and their training. Such legislation shall be enacted after consultations with and receiving inputs from employers and professional organizations registered in Sierra Leone.
- 28. The GoSL shall modify the rules governing the conditions, terms and requirements, training agreement of apprenticeship training. Such modifications shall be made in consultations with employers and professional associations, groups or councils.
- 29. The guidelines relating to the recruitment of apprentice and their training are provided as follows:-

Fields of Apprenticeship

- 30. The fields, skills, trade or occupations that are subject of this policy shall be those areas that are "designated trade" by the GoSL. This means any trade or occupation or any subject field in engineering or non-engineering or technology or any vocational course which the GoSL, after consultation with the recognized trades and professional organizations, may, by notification in the Sierra Leone official Gazette, specify as a designated trade for the purposes of this policy.

Qualifications for apprenticeship

- 31. Qualified age for apprenticeship: A person shall not be qualified to be engaged as an apprentice or accepted to undergo dual apprenticeship training in any designated trade, unless, the person is more than fourteen years of age, and for designated trades related to hazardous industries, not less than eighteen years of age. Persons above 35 years of age at the time of application for dual apprenticeship are not qualified.
- 32. Educational qualifications: Apprentices shall meet the minimum educational qualification and standards (and physical fitness as required by certain trades) as may be prescribed by the MTHE/NCTVA, in consultation and agreement with employers' associates, professional bodies, etc.
- 33. Special Condition for Physically Challenged Persons (PCPs): Special qualifications and incentives shall be provided to encourage participation of PCPs. Therefore, special incentives shall be provided by the GoSL to encourage PCP to participate in dual apprenticeships apprentices in all the designated trades; similarly, incentives shall be provided to employers to recruit PCPs as apprentices in designated trade in an establishment.

34. The number of training places to be reserved for PCPs in any designated trade shall be published annually by the MTHE/NCTVA taking into consideration, the population of PCPs in TVET and institutions of higher education.

Requirements of Apprentices

35. Recruitments of apprentices shall be done in a transparent and competitive basis. In this respect, apprenticeships that are financed by the GoSL shall be advertised on the MTHE/NCTVA website and in at least two nationally distributed newspapers in Sierra Leone for at least two weeks
36. Depending on the number of applicants to a particular establishment for a limited number of apprenticeships, the employer shall interview all candidates following the recruitment procedures of the establishment but using the most cost-effective means for the candidates.
37. Recruitments of apprentices directly by employers shall undergo the recruitment processes of the employers. However, such process shall be documented, and documents saved on file, and the recruited apprentice registered with the MTHE/NCTVA.
38. The MTHE shall prescribe the maximum number of apprentices to be engaged by the employer for designated trade per annum.

2.5.2 Arrangements for Apprentice Training Allowances

39. Apprenticeship programme requires significant financial outlay that must be coordinated between the MTHE and the Ministry of Finance and employers and professional associations. The MTHE shall be responsible for periodic review of funding arrangements for apprentices in collaboration with the Ministry of Finance.
40. The policy recognizes four sources of funding arrangements for Apprentices training allowances and other benefits are as follows:-
- (a) Fully funded by GoSL
 - (b) Self-funding
 - (c) Cost-sharing
 - (d) Fully funded by employer
41. Fully funded by the GoSL: This funding source is available to only Sierra Leoneans. Under this arrangement, the GoSL through a Skills Development Fund (to be set up) or budget allocation fund the tuition fees and allowances for the dual apprenticeship. The administrative and application procedures for application and award for GoSL fully funded apprenticeship shall be prepared and published by and on the website of the MTHE. Under this funding arrangement, preference shall be given to apprentices applying to be attached to priority areas as defined in the Medium-Term National Development Plan 2019-2023 or succeeding national development plans.
42. Allocation of funding by the GoSL shall ensure parity between male and female application as well as inclusiveness. In this regard 40 percent of the total allocation shall be awarded to male applicants and 40 percent of total allocation to female applicants, while 20 percent shall be allocated to people living with disability.
43. Self-funding: Under the self-funding arrangement, the apprentice or parents pays the full cost of training at both the training institution and workplace. However, the apprenticeship electing self-funding arrangement shall also meet all entry requirements as prescribed for the Dual Apprenticeship under this policy or as may from time to time modified by the MTHE. This funding source is open to all nationalities.

44. Cost-Sharing: This shall be a special arrangement to support apprenticeship training between the GoSL, the employer and parent. The GoSL shall only participate in this arrangement to support Sierra Leoneans. The MTHE shall prepare administrative and cost sharing arrangements.
45. Fully funded by employer: This arrangement is for employers who finance the training of apprentices. The employer shall be responsible for all training cost including payment of allowances and other benefits to the apprentice. However, the apprentice is required to have satisfied all conditions outlined in this policy. This funding source is open to all nationalities.

2.5.3 Payments to Apprentices

46. Any apprentice undergoing training in a designated trade in an establishment shall be considered as a trainee and not staff or workers of the establishment. However, apprentices shall be paid monthly compensations for services provided to the employers. The monthly payment to apprentices shall be referred to as “Apprentice Monthly Allowance” and so shall they reflect in the account books of the employer. The monthly Apprenticeship Monthly Allowance shall be equal to the gross minimum wage as announced from time to time by the GoSL.
47. Apprentices shall receive monthly training allowance equivalent to 75 percent of the minimum wage prescribed by the GoSL. However, employer may at its sole discretion pay an Apprentice Monthly Allowance higher than the minimum wage, but not above the gross minimum wage as announced by the GoSL.
48. Insurance: Employers shall ensure the safety and health of apprentices at the workplace. In this respect, employers shall provide workplace Occupational Health and Safety training to apprentices. The employer shall enroll apprentices in the company’s insurance scheme to cover injuries and occupational health issues during the period of apprenticeship.
49. In the case the Apprentice is covered by insurance at the training institution and the insurance cover the apprenticeship at the employer’s workplace, then the employer is not required to provide another insurance for the apprentice, however, copy of the insurance policy from the training institution must be made available to the employer and kept on file.

Apprenticeship Agreements and Obligations of Parties

50. A written agreement (Apprenticeship Agreement) must be issued by the employer to any person qualified and accepted to be engaged as apprentice. Such agreement shall be signed by the apprentice and employer, and apprenticeship training shall be deemed to have commenced on the date the agreement of apprenticeship has been signed by both parties.
51. The terms and conditions of the agreement shall contain clauses that have been agreed upon by the parties, provided they are consistent with the provisions of this policy any rule promulgated in support of this policy. The terms and conditions must specify the agreement duration, hours of work, overtime, leave days and holidays, among others.
52. In addition to the Training Agreement outlining the basis of the Apprenticeship and the responsibilities of all parties involved, the employer shall provide the Apprentice a Training Plan outlining the selected Apprenticeship outcomes and a timetable for achievement.
53. The employer shall send copy of the signed agreement, including the terms and conditions to the MTHE/NCTVA within 20 working days from the date parties would have signed the agreement.
54. Upon receipt of the Apprenticeship Agreement by the MTHE/NCTVA, the parties give the right to the MTHE/NCTVA to enter the information therein contained in the Apprenticeship Database, portal for verification, registration, storage, processing and dissemination.

2.5.4 Termination of Apprenticeship Agreement

55. An employer having agreement with an apprentice shall terminate the agreement, in the event that the apprentice does not perform or adhere to the conditions of the agreement. However, termination of an Apprenticeship Agreement can only be issued after due consultations and agreement with the MTHE/NCTVA or the sponsoring entity. In the case an employer is unable to fulfil obligations under the agreement, the apprentice shall request the MTHE/NCTVA to transfer his/her apprenticeship to another employer in a similar industry. If the MTHE/NCTVA approves, the apprentice shall be transferred, to complete the apprenticeship from the date of such registration.
56. An Apprenticeship Agreement shall expire on the date agreed upon and stated in the agreement. This said date is the expiry date of the apprenticeship training with the employer.
57. Either party to an Apprenticeship Agreement may request through a formal letter addressed to the Director, TVET/Director NCTVA for the termination of the Apprenticeship Agreement, and when such application is made, a copy of the application shall be sent by registered post to the other party to the agreement. The other party may upon receipt copy of the application submit written objection or acceptance of the application to the MTHE/NCTVA.
58. Upon receipt of the application and objection or acceptance by the MTHE/NCTVA, the two submissions shall be reviewed and the MTHE/NCTVA shall by order in writing, terminate the agreement, based on the conditions stated in the Apprenticeship Agreement.
59. Notwithstanding anything contained in any other provision of this policy, where an Apprenticeship Agreement has been terminated by the MTHE/NCTVA before the expiry of the period of apprenticeship training and a new agreement of apprenticeship is being entered into with an employer, the MTHE/NCTVA may, if satisfied that the agreement of apprenticeship with the previous employer could not be completed because of any lapse on the part of the previous employer, permit the period of apprenticeship training already undergone by the apprentice with his previous employer to be included in the period of apprenticeship training to be undertaken with the new employer. This provision holds only where an Apprenticeship agreement is terminated:-
- (a) for failure on the part of the employer to carry out the terms and conditions of the agreement, the employer shall pay to the apprentice such compensation as may prescribed;
 - (b) for such failure on the part of the apprentice, the apprentice shall refund to the employer as cost of training as determined by the MTHE/NCTVA.

2.5.5 Trades, Qualifications and Duration of Apprentices Period

60. The trades that shall be qualified for Apprenticeship under this Policy shall be prescribed by the MTHE, after due consultations with employers and professional groups, associations or council. Such prescribed trades shall be published in the Sierra Leone Gazette and shall be effective from the date states in the gazette.
61. Qualifications and the associated tests of apprenticeships shall be prescribed by the MTHE and made available on the website of the MTHE/NCTVA.
62. The period of apprenticeship training for specific trades shall be specified in the Apprenticeship Agreement as prescribed by the MTHE/NCTVA. The specified period shall include the required time for holding of test
63. The MTHE shall prescribe the conditions for the award of certificates and other honors to apprentices that successfully complete the apprenticeship.

2.5.6 Routes to and Duration of Apprenticeship

64. Duration of apprenticeship shall be prescribed for each trade by the MTHE/NCTVA in conjunction with the trade associations and/or professional associations. The minimum and maximum period of apprenticeship shall be determined based on the following routes and as described in the Table below. The period of apprenticeship shall not be less than the minimum duration, although the maximum can be exceeded based on special designated trades as published by the GoSL.

Routes to Apprenticeship	Basic Training Duration	Duration of On-the-Job-Training/Practical training at a designated establishment	
	Maximum	Minimum	Maximum
Dual learning for students registered in a Technical Institute, Polytechnique or Technical University pursuing a Designated Trade			
Graduates from a Technical Institute, Polytechnique or Technical University that has completed a course in a Designated Trade			
Students that have completed SSS holding a WASSEC certificates following a Designated Trade			
Students that have completed basic education and holding WASSEC certificates following a Designated Trade			

2.6 Testing and Certification

2.6.1 Testing

65. The GoSL shall develop standards and competency-based qualifications for each designated trade. Once the competency-based standards are developed, every apprentice registered in designated trade shall be tested in an approved trade test and certificate awarded for passing the test. The guidelines relating to the testing and certification of apprentice are provided as follows:-
66. Apprentices shall register and take an approved trade test at the end of the apprenticeship. However, an apprentice shall only be registered after completing the prescribed training at an approved training institution, and recommendation from the establishment where the OJT was undertaken, stating in writing that the apprentice has demonstrated the required practical skills and knowledge to attempt the Trade Test.
67. The basic requirements including those stated in the above paragraph, shall be published in the Sierra Leone official Gazette and made available on the websites of all technical and vocational institutions, Universities and the MTHE.
68. Trade Tests shall be conducted only at accredited centers. The MTHE/NCTVA shall publish the list of accredited Trade Test Centers annually. Dates and locations for taking Trade Tests shall be announced and published on websites of all technical and vocational institutions, Universities and the MTHE.
69. An employer shall register an apprentice to take a Trade Test, prior to finalizing the theoretical training, should employer ascertain that the apprentice has the competency in the trade for which

the apprentice is being trained. Such application must be sent to the MTHE/NCTVA for approval and registration of the apprentice for the Trade Test.

70. Every apprentice shall have the opportunity to register and take a trade test, provide that the apprentice has completed the apprenticeship, or recommended by an accredited raining institution and/or employer. However, an apprentice who fails the first attempt, shall have two additional chances to take the Trade Test, provided the tests are taken six (6) months after the previous attempt and that the test is done within the prescribed (maximum) period of the apprenticeship.
71. The Apprenticeship Agreement of an apprentice that fails the Trade Test after the second and third attempt within the maximum period of the apprenticeship shall be deemed to have terminated from the last date of the Trade Test.
72. Trade Tests shall be conducted for designated skills and qualifications that are modular-based. Apprentices for such designated skills shall be required to register and take the approved tests for the level of qualification for the trade. Upon successful completion of each level, the apprentices shall be issued a certificate listed the demonstrated skills as appropriate for that level.

2.6.2 Certificate of Training.

73. Apprentices who successfully complete and pass the required trade tests, shall be awarded equivalent units of credit that can be used to gain admission and in pursuing tertiary degree courses. However, this is subject to the policies and guidelines on equivalency (being prepared) by MTHE/NCTVA and the Universities Commission.
74. An apprentice that has completed the period of training may appear for a test to be conducted by the NCTVA or any other agency authorized or recognized by the GoSL to determine proficiency of apprentices in a designated trade in which the apprenticeship has undergone training.
75. Any apprentice that passes the test specified for the trade shall be granted a certificate of proficiency in the trade by the NCTVA or by the other agency authorized or recognized by the GoSL

2.6.3 Offer and acceptance of employment.

76. Recruitment of graduates that have completed apprenticeship training in an employer's establishment shall be based on the employment policy of that establishment.

2.7 Roles and Responsibilities of Key Stakeholders in Apprenticeship

2.7.1 Youth and Apprentices

77. The youth are responsible for adequately researching and gathering information about educational choices, training opportunities and formal workplace learning programmes. Furthermore, they are responsible for:
 - (a) Be adequately informed about potential employment opportunities and make decisions over future career choices
 - (b) Understand the aims, strengths and weaknesses of the different training pathways; and
 - (c) Understand the obligations expected of apprentices by other stakeholders.
 - (d) Once a youth is accepted into apprenticeship programmes as an apprentice, he/she must commit to undertaking the training whilst in employment and work in accordance with the University's performance expectations.

- (e) Every apprentice has the obligation to attend practical and instructional classes regularly, carry out all lawful orders of his employer and superiors in the establishments; and to carry out his obligations under the agreement of apprenticeship.
- (f) Apprentices must commit to undertake the training whilst in employment and work in accordance with the performance expectations of the employer and training institution. It is required that each apprentice acquire the skills and to prove his mastery of these in a practical skills test, thereby obtaining credits as stipulated by the accredited testing institution or accredited company.

2.7.2 Employers

78. Employers participating in the dual apprenticeship are required to provide apprentices with practical training in the trade in which the apprentice is indentured. To ensure effective training, the MTHE/NCTVA shall publish from time to time the apprentice to regular workers' ration, that must be adhered to by employers. In addition, they are responsible for:-

- (a) Employers shall be required to release an apprentice for both theoretical and practical training for those periods to be specified by the MTHE/NCTVA to allow the apprentice to attend technical classes.
- (b) The employer is expected to assign an apprentice to a line manager/technician (master), with the relevant skills being learned by the apprentice. The master is responsible for the overall guidance and training of the apprentice at the workplace. The master is also responsible for managing the performance of the apprentice and shall work in partnership with a Training Provider/Institution.
- (c) The employer is responsible for providing the apprentice with the training in his trade in accordance with the provisions of this policy, and related regulations. In the case, the employer does not have the skills and qualification in the trade of the apprentice, the employer must ensure that a person that possesses the prescribed qualifications is placed at the disposal of the apprentice for the training
- (d) It is required the employer should have adequate qualified and skilled instructional staff, possessing such qualifications as may be prescribed, for imparting practical and theoretical training and facilities for trade test of apprentices.

2.7.3 Workers' representatives in enterprises

79. Workers' representatives shall have the following roles and responsibilities:-

- (a) Representing the interests of apprentices in the running of the Quality Apprenticeship systems at the enterprise level and, in particular, ensuring appropriate working and training conditions (e.g. with regard to occupational safety and health, and allowances and working hours) for apprentices;
- (b) Preventing exploitative practices under the guise of training; and
- (c) Providing apprentices with advice for training activities

2.7.4 In-company Mentors, Trainers or Supervisors

80. Companies participating in apprenticeship programmes shall be required to appoint in-company mentors, trainers or supervisors, who shall be directly responsible for interacting with apprentices, imparting practical training, and introducing them into the work during the on-the-job part of the training. Their main roles and responsibilities are to:

- (a) Ensure that the apprentices work and learn in the occupation as specified in the Agreement;
- (b) Plan, organize and implement the Apprenticeship training in the enterprise;
- (c) Ensure that the apprenticeship meet quality standards as set up by the MTHE

- (d) Monitor, assess and record the progress of the apprentices' skills acquisition;
- (e) Act as the focal point for the Apprenticeship programme, coordinate with other sections and workers in the enterprise, as well as with external partners involved in the training process (e.g. TVET institution, public authorities for education and employment);
- (f) Prevent and resolve conflicts by mutual agreement, and if this is not possible, follow the predetermined conflict settlement procedures (e.g. in-company staff regulations, collective agreements, Labour Code);
- (g) Provide special care for apprentices with learning difficulties, disabilities and other limitations; and
- (h) Ensure safety and security at work for apprentices.

2.7.5 TVET institutions

81. In addition to the roles and responsibilities of TVET institutions as stated in the Act establishing TVET institutions and Universities participating in formal apprenticeships, with respect to training quality requirements for specific qualifications, these institutions have the following roles and responsibilities:-

- (a) Implementing the institution-based learning components of Apprenticeship programme;
- (b) Contributing to the design and development of apprenticeship training programmes;
- (c) Supporting partner enterprises in establishing an effective in-company training plan, following the overall objectives of the apprenticeship programme;
- (d) Building the capacity of teachers and trainers responsible for the delivery and assessment of apprentices; and
- (e) Nominating a TVET teacher or trainer as the focal point for coordination with external partners.

2.7.6 TVET Teachers and Trainers

82. TVET Teachers and Trainers play a key role in the formal apprenticeships, and therefore the MTHE shall ensure that in order for TVET teachers and trainers to be effective in carrying out their roles and responsibilities, teachers and trainers that hold the necessary professional qualifications and certifications are employed. Therefore, the roles and responsibilities of the TVET teachers and trainers are as follows:-

- (a) Planning, organizing and delivering off-the-job training in TVET institutions within the framework of the overall apprenticeship programme;
- (b) Interacting with their counterparts in partner enterprises in order to ensure optimal coordination between the off-the-job and on-the-job elements of the training programme;
- (c) Monitoring the learning progress and skills development of apprentices on a regular basis;
- (d) Updating their knowledge, skills and competence in their own professional field and adapting their training methods on a regular basis;
- (e) Taking on work experience in partner enterprises in order to update their understanding of the skills requirements of the different occupations and to experience personally the learning environment of apprentices in enterprises; and
- (f) Providing special care for apprentices with learning difficulties, disabilities and other limitations.

2.7.7 Employers' Associations or Trade Unions

83. Employers' associations or trade unions shall have the following roles and responsibilities:

- (a) Engaging in social dialogue and actively participating in policy-making regarding Apprenticeships, particularly at the sectoral level through sector skills councils;
- (b) Building confidence and trust among stakeholders;
- (c) Providing advice to policy-makers and assisting member enterprises;

- (d) Informing and encouraging enterprises to offer Apprenticeship positions;
- (e) Where appropriate, incorporating Apprenticeships into the agenda of collective bargaining and collective agreements;
- (f) Supporting the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of Apprenticeship programmes;
- (g) Contributing to the development of occupational competency and qualification standards;
- (h) Participating in assessment certification procedures; and
- (i) Providing training for enterprises so that they can deliver quality on-the-job training.

2.7.8 MTHE

84. The MTHE shall have the following roles and responsibilities:-

- (a) Formulating and adopting a national strategy to promote the dual apprenticeships in collaboration with the employers' associations and trade unions - and other stake- holders;
- (b) Incorporating the dual apprenticeships into the national development plan and/or the national employment policy, where appropriate;
- (c) Promoting social dialogue on dual apprenticeships by means of a formal coordination mechanism;
- (d) Developing and implementing an appropriate legal and regulatory framework, in consultation with the social partners;
- (e) Supervising the implementation of agreed arrangements for funding the dual apprenticeship training, for example via the collection of levies on the one hand, and the disbursement of incentives on the other;
- (f) Supervising the implementation of the accreditation of TVET institutions and programmes based on the established quality standards and of the administration of public and private TVET institutions;
- (g) Supervising the implementation of programmes for training TVET teachers and trainers;
- (h) Engaging in promoting apprenticeship training; and
- (i) Monitoring and evaluating the different apprenticeship programmes.

2.8 Grievance Redress Mechanism and Transfer of Apprentice

85. The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) for disputes between apprentice and employer shall be based on a two-tier process. Tier one involves is the same procedures established within the establishment of the employer. However, a representative from the training institution shall join the established committee dealing with a complaint as an observer. Outcome of the first-tier dispute resolution process shall be forwarded to the MTHE/NCTVA for endorsement in the case of a GoSL sponsored apprentice. In the case of non-GoSL sponsored apprentice, the outcome of the company level decision becomes final.

2.9 Eligibility of Training Institutions and Employers

2.9.1 Eligibility of Training Institutions

86. The MTHE shall be responsible to define, review and modify eligibility criteria of training institutions for providing apprenticeship training within the context of this policy.

87. Government TVET institutions, including polytechnics and Universities of Science and Technology registered with the relevant accreditation bodies are the eligible training providers within the dual apprenticeship policy.

2.9.2 Eligibility to Employers

88. The MTHE in consultation with employers and training institutions shall be responsible for defining eligibility criteria and accreditation of employers for participation in dual apprenticeship programs. The following are the eligibility criteria for employers and companies that provide apprenticeship training:-

- (a) Must be legal entities registered in Sierra Leone with the Cooperate Affairs Commission
- (b) The employer must also be registered with the National Revenue Authority as a tax paying entity; as well as with the National Social Security Insurance Trust (NASSIT)
- (c) The employer must possess adequate facilities, including workshops, laboratories, space, etc that meet minimum standards for practical and on-the-job training.
- (d) The employer shall demonstrate that a person who possesses the prescribed qualifications in the specified trade for apprenticeship is available to be in charge of training of the apprentice.
- (e) Employer with suitable arrangements in the workplace for imparting a course of practical training to every apprentice engaged at the workplace.

2.9.3 Incentives for Employers

89. The MTHE in consultation with employers and training institutions shall be responsible for proposing incentives for employers participating in the dual apprenticeship.
90. Employers that accept apprentices shall be entitled to deduct the total training allowance paid to apprentices from the annual tax returns.

3 Institutional, Funding and Implementation Arrangements

3.1 Institutional Arrangements

91. Policy Statement: The GoSL shall constitute a National Apprenticeship Board (NAB) and a National Apprenticeship Secretariat (NAS). The NAB shall be appointed by the GoSL to serve as a high-level inter-institutional coordination body to provide strategic guidance for the implementation of the apprenticeship. In general, the NAB shall be responsible for ensuring and monitoring the smooth execution apprenticeship initiatives in the country.
92. Policy Statement: The GoSL shall establish the National Apprenticeship Secretariat (NAS) domiciled within the MTHE or the NCTAV. The main role of the NAS is to provide overall secretariat for the implementation of the apprenticeship policy and specifically to provide overall administrative and technical support to the NAB and over-see the implementation of the dual apprenticeship policy.

3.1.1 National Apprenticeship Board

93. The GoSL shall appoint a Chairperson and members of the NAB shall be as follows:-
- (a) Permanent Secretary, MTHE
 - (b) Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Labor
 - (c) Permanent Secretary, MOPEL
 - (d) Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Youth Affairs
 - (e) Permanent Secretary, Gender and Women's Affairs
 - (f) President, Chamber of Commerce and Industry
 - (g) President, Chamber of Agriculture
 - (h) Other members shall be appointed from the following institutions/organizations or groups
 - Representative employees in public sector establishments (1)
 - Representative employees in the private sector (1),
 - Representatives of the 5 regions of the country (5)
 - Highly experienced Sierra Leoneans relating to industry, labor and TVET (1)
 - Representatives of Tertiary Education Commission (1)

Alternate members shall be proposed by Ministries and organizations of the Board. The term office for NAB Chairman and members shall be as prescribed by the MTHE.

Responsibilities of the NAB

94. The specific roles and responsibilities of the NAB are as follows:-
- (a) Provide cross-institutional strategic oversight of the policy implementation
 - (b) Propose implementation improvements for the compliance of the project objectives.
 - (c) Advise the Minister, MTHE on issues relating to formal apprenticeship policy and regulations
 - (d) Propose policy alternatives for improvements of apprenticeship initiatives in the country
 - (e) Discuss and provide recommendations on strategic matters on formal apprenticeship raised by employers, and or training institutions
 - (f) Coordinate strategic actions of the key stakeholders of formal apprenticeship

3.1.2 The National Apprenticeship Secretariat

95. A Director shall be appointed from the MTHE to head the NAS. The role of the NAS is to provide overall secretariat for the NSB. The NAS shall include representatives of Employers, workers and private sector. These representatives shall be seconded to the NAS and shall not be below the level of Assistant Director (Sierra Leone Civil Service). Representatives seconded to the NAS shall serve for a period not less than three (3) years consecutively.

Roles and Responsibilities of the NAS

96. The main role of the NAS is to provide overall secretariat for the implementation of the apprenticeship policy and specifically to provide overall administrative and technical support to the NAB and over-see the implementation of the dual apprenticeship policy. Specifically, the NAS shall be responsible for the following:-

- (a) Provide administrative and secretarial functions for the NAB
- (b) Register and document all approved apprenticeship programs in the country
- (c) Regularly monitor and review all approved apprenticeship programmes in the country
- (d) Provide technical advice to the NAB on all issues dealing with formal apprenticeships
- (e) Collect and collate inputs and reports on formal apprenticeships submitted by Sector Skills Associations for the attention of the NAB
- (f) Serve as the focal point for all matters relating to formal apprenticeship in Sierra Leone
- (g) Coordinate and manage apprenticeship applications

3.1.3 Sector Skills Associations (SSA)

97. Policy Statement: The GoSL shall support employers in the same industry sector in their efforts to form Sector Skills Associations (SSA).

Roles and Responsibilities of SSAs

98. The key role of the any SSA is to define the type and nature of the skills that the specific industry sector needs in the workforce, and the requirements for admission of skilled individuals into such associations. However, SSAs may undertake other functions in the area of skills training, education and workforce development, including Specifically, the functions of SSAs are as follows:

- (a) Support employers in developing and managing apprenticeship standards
- (b) Assessing skills needs and gap in the sector and developing sector skills strategies
- (c) Determining skills/competency standards and qualifications and advising the MTHE for action.
- (d) Ensuring that the persons trained and skilled in accordance with the norms laid down are assured of employment at decent wages.
- (e) Monitoring skills shortages and advising the GoSL on the quantity of training needed for the sector
- (f) Helping to develop curricula for relevant vocational education and training in formal education;
- (g) Undertaking promotional activities to boost the skills of their sector workforces
- (h) Determining methods of assessment for testing or validating skills;
- (i) Approving frameworks requirements, duration);
- (j) Assist in the placement of apprentices by aggregating demand and advertising on their websites

3.2 Sustainable Financing of Apprenticeship

99. Dual Apprenticeship has to be financed within the framework of a National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS)⁶. Thus, a National Skills Development Fund shall be established to provide funds for the implementation of GoSL financed dual apprenticeship policy and programmes.

3.2.1 National Skills Fund

100. Policy Statement: The GoSL shall establish by an Act of Parliament a “National Skills Development Fund” (NSDF). The role of the NSDF is to support priority skills development in the productive sectors by providing funding to enterprises, companies, organizations and TVET institutions that provide skills including apprenticeship training. The NSDF shall also be responsible for developing appropriate initiatives to enhance, support and coordinate private sector activities

⁶ The MTHE anticipates to formulate a NSDS based on detailed Skills Gap Assessment in the Productive Sector

for raising funds both from Government and Non-Government sectors for skill development in the country.

101. Policy Statement: To capitalize the NSDF, the GoSL shall establish by an Act of Parliament a “Skills Development Levy” (SDL). The purpose of the SDL is to provide for the imposition of a skills development levy; and for matters connected therewith.
102. Policy Statement: The GoSL shall further set up a Board of Trustees to operate and manage operate the Skills Development. The Trust accepts donation, contribution in cash or kind from the Contributors for furtherance of objectives of the Fund. The GoSL shall also appoint a Chief Executive Officer for the Trust, who shall be responsible for the day-to-day administration, management and reporting on the activities of the Trust.

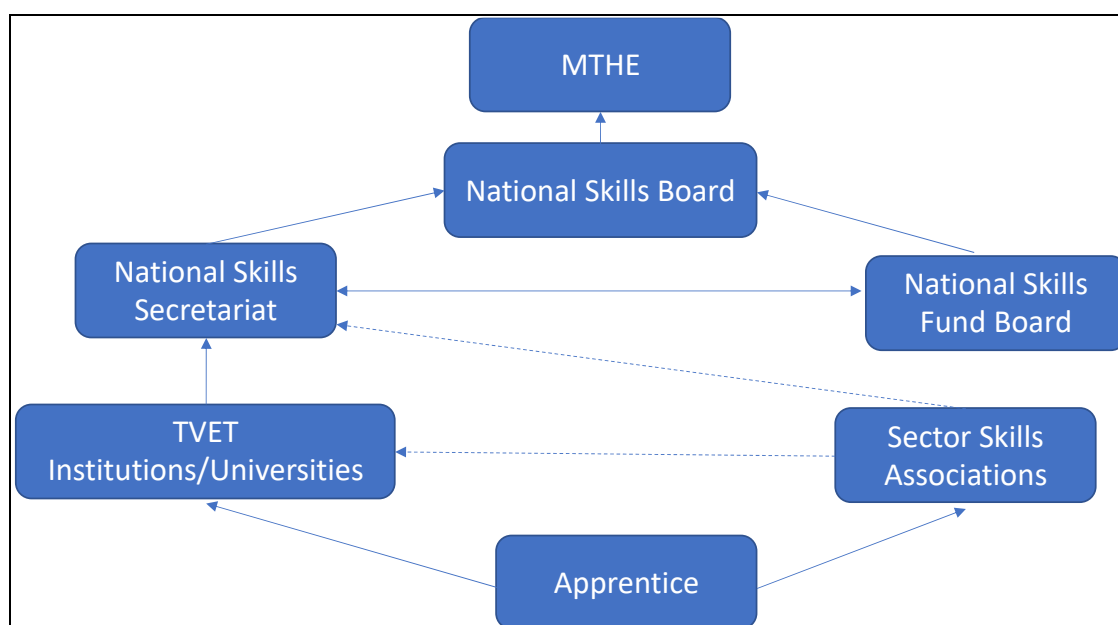
3.2.2 Funding Sources for the NSDF

103. The NSDF shall be capitalized from the following sources:-
- X percent of the Skills Development Levies to be proposed in the Skills Development Levies Act of Parliament (to be prepared separately)
 - Other sources as may be proclaimed by the GoSL
 - Donor contributions to the fund
 - Contributions from foundations, other trust funds, and NGOs
 - Private sector entities, and individuals

3.3 Implementation Arrangements

104. A schematic representation of implementation arrangement is shown in Figure 2. The National Skills Board shall be the highest implementation body for the dual apprenticeship in TVET policy. The board shall advice the Minister, MTHE on all matters relating to the policy. The MTHE is responsible for the overall policy formulation, review, monitoring and evaluation of the policy. The NSB shall be supported by the National Skills Secretariat (NSS), which shall work in partnership with the National Skills Fund Board, the Sector Skills Associations and TVET Institutions.

Figure 2: Implementation arrangements



Source: Author

3.3.1 Ministry of Technical and Higher Education

105. The MTHE shall have the following roles and responsibilities with respect to the TVET Dual Apprenticeship Policy. Specifically, MTHE shall be responsible for the following:

- (a) Overall mandate for policy formulation, review and monitoring implementation of the policy
- (b) Facilitating collaboration and partnerships between employers' associations/organizations and public sector (MDA), and other organized partners especially development partners on all issues relating to apprenticeship in Sierra Leone
- (c) Facilitate the mobilization of training institutions and employers to participate in the implementation of this policy, especially training of apprentices
- (d) Provide financial and other support to assure quality and accreditation of apprenticeship training and programmes
- (e) Collect data and maintain database on apprentices and apprenticeship programmes.
- (f) Monitor and evaluate apprenticeship training programmes

3.3.2 NCTVA

106. The NCTVA shall be responsible for assuring quality, standards and accreditation of apprenticeship trainings. In order to deliver this role, the NCTVA has to be capacitated with appropriate and adequate human, financial and other resources necessary for the effectively performance of the role.

107. The NCTVA shall work in close collaboration and partnership with Sector Skills Associations on all matters relating to accreditation, testing (workplace component) and certification of apprenticeship training. Thus, the NCTAV in collaboration with SSAs shall be responsible for the following:

- (a) Assess and accredit (issue certificates to) companies to provide apprenticeship training and benefit from GoSL programmes that provide support to companies accepting and training apprentices.
- (b) Regularly monitor workplace training and assure that the training is compliant with quality and standards set and agreed upon by SSAs
- (c) Ensure that all partners participating in training of apprentices have the requisite capacity (technical, equipment, machines, space, experience and qualified trainers)
- (d) Conducting final assessment and issuance of certificates to apprentices that successfully complete trainings.

3.4 Development of Pilot Apprenticeship programs

108. Policy Statement: The GoSL shall finance the development and implementation of a Pilot Apprenticeship in TVET for a period of four-years. Implementation of the pilot should be incremental on annually based on fund availability and lessons learnt. The purpose of the pilot is to establish the institutional arrangements and provide sufficient experience for scaling up the implementation at national level.

3.4.1 Pilot Apprenticeship programs

109. During the pilot phase, the MTHE in partnership with private sector employers organizations from the productive sector, especially those identified in the MTNDP 2019-2023 should develop:-

- (a) Appoint Apprenticeship in TVET Implementation *Team ad interim*
- (b) Establish the institutions to implement the policy
- (c) Occupational Standards for priority skills/occupations
- (d) Develop quality assurance and assessment and certification mechanisms
- (e) Develop standardized curriculum for use in TVET institutions

- (f) Develop and make available Training and Learning Materials (TLM) for the curriculum
- (g) Develop Training Plans and Train/upgrade Trainers in the use of the standardized curriculum
- (h) Identify suitable workplaces and enter into MOUs to train apprentices
- (i) Agree on financial arrangements and incentives for participating companies
- (j) Prepare and agree on apprenticeship agreements terms and conditions
- (k) Agree on eligibility criteria for participating companies and TVET supply institution
- (l) Agree on roles and responsibilities of various stakeholders participating in the pilot

110. A detailed Evaluation of the Pilot programme should be conducted by an independent consulting firm and a lessons learnt workshop organized. The pilot should be upscaled based on recommendations from the lessons learnt workshop and end of pilot phase evaluation report.

4.0 Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting

111. The National Skills Secretariat shall be responsible for the developing and implementing a Monitoring and Evaluation framework for this policy. The framework shall be developed in collaboration with the private sector in the productive sector, especially representatives of the SSA, training institutions, NCTVA, MTHE and other relevant partners including development partners, NGOs in TVET and other relevant MDAs (MoL, MoF, MWGA, etc.).
112. Monitoring and Evaluation of policy implementation shall be carried out annually and report submitted to the National Skills Board for review and escalation of actionable recommendations to the MTHE for action.