



RETURNING MIGRANTS' ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION: MAPPING OF STAKEHOLDERS, PROGRAMMES, AND POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS

GHANA

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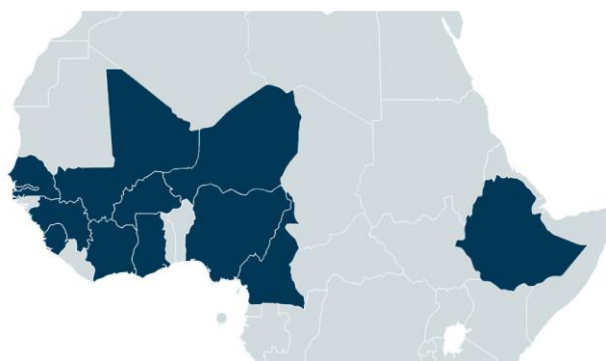
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This report is part of a regional study covering 12 countries: Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia. For each country of the study a report has been elaborated, based on a document review and interviews conducted in the field. The country reports are accompanied by a regional synthesis, identifying key trends, good practices, and recommendations at the regional level.



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ABBREVIATIONS

AFD: *Agence française de développement* (French cooperation agency)

AfDB: African Development Bank

BAC/BRC: Business Advisory/Resource Centre

BMZ: German Federal Ministry for International Cooperation

CSO: Civil society organisation

CTVET: National Commission for technical and vocational education and training

DP: Development partner

ERRIN: European Return and Reintegration Network

EU: European Union

EUTF: European Union Emergency Trust Fund for stability and addressing root causes of irregular migration and displaced persons in Africa

GDP: Gross domestic product

GEA: Ghana Entreprises Agency

GGC: Ghanaian-German Centre for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration

GIS: Ghana Immigration Service (under the MoI)

GIZ: *Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit* (German cooperation agency)

GLMIS: Ghana Labour Market Information System

HR: Human resources

ICES: Integrated Community Centre for Employable Skills

ICMPD: International Centre for Migration Policy Development

ICT: Information and communications technologies

ILO: International Labour Organisation

IOM: International Organization for Migration

IP: Implementing partner

JI: EU-IOM Joint Initiative for Migrant Protection and Reintegration

JICA: Japan International Cooperation Agency

MASLOC: Microfinance and Loans Centre

MDAs: Ministries, departments, and agencies

MELR: Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations

MICR: Migration Information Centre for Returnees

MLS: Monitoring and Learning System (for the EUTF)

MMB: Migration Management Bureau (under the Ministry of Interior)

MoBD: Ministry of Business Development

MoE: Ministry of Education

MoGCSP: Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection

MoI: Ministry of Interior

MoTI: Ministry of Trade and Industry

MoU: Memorandum of understanding

MoYS: Ministry of Youth and Sports
MSMEs: Micro, small, and medium enterprises
MU: Migration Unit (under the Ministry of Interior)
NABCO: Nation Builders Corps
NADMO: National Disaster Management Organisation
NBSSI: National Board for Small Scale Industries
NGO: Non-governmental organisation
NEIP: National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme
NSS: National Service Scheme (managed by the MoE)
NVTI: National Vocational Training Institute
NYA: National Youth Authority (under the MoYS)
PEA: Private employment agency
PEC: Public Employment Centre
REP: Rural Enterprises Programme
RRR: Return Readmission & Reintegration
SNV: Dutch cooperation agency
SOPs: Standard operating procedures
TPML: Third-Party Monitoring and Learning mechanism (for the EUTF)
TVET: Technical and vocational education and training
UNCDF: United Nations Capital Development Fund
UNDP: United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund
USAID: United States' Agency for International Development
YEA: Youth Employment Agency
YMCA: Young Men's Christian Association

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study commissioned by the European Union (EU) aims to make recommendations for future EU-funded returnee reintegration programming in Ghana. More specifically, it explores how current economic reintegration assistance could be made more successful and which institutions and service providers could be involved in addition to the ones already involved.

Since 2017, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) have been the reintegration implementing partners (IPs) of the EU in Ghana through the EUTF-funded EU-IOM Joint Initiative (JI) and the European Return and Reintegration Network (ERRIN). Coordination and harmonisation of their actions has been too limited but is slowly improving. Synergies with and referrals to the numerous other government and development partners working on youth employment issues has been nearly non-existent. This is mainly due to the lack of intersectoral dialogue and the high level of fragmentation within the youth employment sector. Improving the governance of reintegration programming is therefore a necessity.

At the implementation level, the diversity, completeness, and effectiveness of economic reintegration support needs enhancing. Many opportunities exist in Ghana, effective approaches are tested and documented, and lessons can be learnt from the JI, ERRIN, and other reintegration and youth employment initiatives, and incorporated into future EU programming.

The main study recommendations are as follows:

1. Lessons from the JI and other programmes need to be drawn and fed back into future reintegration programming through an update of the current national standard operating procedures (SOPs). The revised SOPs should be expanded beyond the scope of voluntary returns from North Africa assisted by the EU and IOM, and place government institutions at the centre of the reintegration process through a national referral mechanism. The mandate and specific contribution of the various ministries and agencies must be clarified, including that of the various departments within the Ministry of Interior (MoI) and of the various employment institutions under the leadership of the Ministry of Employment (i.e. the Public Employment Centres, the YEA job centres, and the Ghanaian-German Centre for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration).
2. All stakeholders including EU reintegration implementing partners should be trained on the revised SOPs and align accordingly for increased coherence.
3. The national referral mechanism, currently under discussion, should offer more economic reintegration options and pathways for returnees primarily through the many government institutions and programmes facilitating youth employment and entrepreneurship, but also through referrals to the equally numerous donor initiatives able to enrol returnees (list in section 4). For increased programme success and reintegration sustainability, technical, business, financial literacy, employability, and soft skills trainings are among the services that should be mainstreamed, together with facilitated access to finance (several service providers are suggested in section 4). This type of support needs to be carefully timed and sequenced with regards to returnees' post-arrival and microbusiness start-up and development phases, and prolonged with longer-term follow-up support and mentoring.

The concept of national referral mechanism means that future economic reintegration assistance shall be directly provided or mobilised through the relevant government institutions in charge of youth employment and entrepreneurship promotion rather than by means of direct, ad-hoc, and short-term contracts between EU IPs and service providers from the civil society and the private sector. There should not be a parallel system for returnees. This approach presents numerous political, financial, and operational advantages – including for the EU and returnees themselves.

4. This approach requires that the appropriate platforms are established/operational for reintegration and youth employment stakeholder coordination; government institutions receive extra technical support from the EU and its reintegration implementing partners for improved processes and management capacity; future EU and Member States funded programmes are designed in a way that effectively enables future referrals of returnees, with the necessary processes and incentives; and programme adaptations are made to meet returnee beneficiaries' specific situations and needs.
5. To enable the above governance and programming improvements, the EU should increase its budget per returnee, factoring in some additional level of flexibility to adapt to the unforeseeable evolution of return flows. Budget rationale and assumptions should be discussed with the concerned stakeholders (MDAs, IPs).

1. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND OF THIS REPORT

The study objectives are as follows:

- Capitalise on key lessons on migrant economic reintegration programming learned through Altai Consulting's work for the EUTF in Ghana as part of the Monitoring and Learning System (MLS) and the Third-Party Monitoring and Learning mechanism (TPML)
- Identify key skills development, employment and entrepreneurship programmes and actors, assess their positioning, capacity, and interest/ability to partner with the EU and its implementing partners (IPs) in returnee reintegration programming, and identify the most suitable and promising opportunities for partnerships and referrals for future EU-funded reintegration programmes
- Identify and assess other national and local actors and services (public, private and civil society) that could be integrated into future programming in order to build sustainable reintegration systems over the medium and long term
- Make strategic recommendations for future reintegration programming of the EU and its current and future IPs

2. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The study was carried out between June and December 2022 and included a field trip to Ghana from June 15 to July 2. Data on the programming context and on potential economic reintegration partners and service providers were collected, triangulated, and analysed from the following sources:

- **29 key institutions interviewed**, including government ministries and other relevant public agencies, development partners (DPs), and civil society and private organisations working in the field of reintegration, employment, technical and vocational education and training (TVET), and entrepreneurship (over 45 key informants in total, see Annex C);
- **153 policy and programme documents** as well as research studies and institutional websites;
- **Direct field visits and observations** of 15 training and entrepreneurship service providers.

Potential partners and services recommended for future EU programming were shortlisted based on a set of criteria including the following:

- The accessibility of support: presence in the main areas of departure and return, alignment of their beneficiaries' selection criteria with the profile of returnees, etc.;
- The experience or interest of these structures in providing support to vulnerable groups, and their ability to integrate returnees into their programming in the short or medium term;
- The quality of support as measured by the post-support employment rate of beneficiaries, if such information is available, or based on the feedback from beneficiaries and clients, for example.

2. MIGRATION CONTEXT AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

1. COUNTRY CONTEXT AND DYNAMICS OF MIGRATION AND REINTEGRATION

Ghana has experienced three decades of political stability and economic growth, resulting in a sharp decrease in poverty. The country is a democratic, multi-party system since the early 1990s. The GDP per capita doubled between 2000 and 2020, well above the average of peer countries¹ and of the low- and medium-income countries average. Agriculture (incl. cocoa), extractive industries (oil, gas, gold), construction, services², and manufacturing, all contributed to this growth¹. In the same period, the poverty rate decreased from above 30% to below 15%¹. Ghana attained middle-income country status in 2011. It is among Africa's ten fastest growing (and most diversified) economies since 2017 and resolved to reach high-income status by 2057.

Significant economic inequalities and youth unemployment persist, however, and inflation is on the rise. The pace of poverty reduction had progressively slowed since the 2010s, and the incidence of poverty remains high in Northern Ghana and in the Volta region (South-East)³. These regions are predominantly rural, mostly rely on subsistence farming, have low access to electricity, roads, internet, and markets, and are more vulnerable to climate conditionsⁱⁱ.

Moreover, as in the rest of sub-Saharan Africa, Ghana's population is growing rapidly, and the economic growth is not translating into sufficient productive, quality employment, especially for the youth. The formal youth unemployment rate is estimated around 12% by the Ghana Statistical Services (twice as high as the overall unemployment rate). Among those employed, 80% to 90% are in the informal sector while over 65% of formal jobs are categorized as 'low-paying, vulnerable employment'. 50% of youths are considered in underemploymentⁱⁱⁱ. Gaps in (stable, quality) employment are explained by demographic trends combined with shifts in the structure of the economy. The economy is moving away from agriculture, while the growing sectors are natural resources, ICT, and financial services, which tend to generate fewer jobs, as well as low-productivity, low-wage retail, and wholesale trade^{iv}.

Since 2020, the two successive crises of COVID-19 and the war in Ukraine have raised global prices for many key commodities, lowering households' and firms' purchasing power, slowing down the economic growth, reducing the state's fiscal space, and increasing poverty and unemployment. Youth unemployment rate is estimated to have risen to nearly 20% in 2021^v. The country's debt skyrocketed in 2021-2022, and the government reduced expenditure for public infrastructure and basic services.

Figure 1: Map of Ghana with the new regions as approved late 2018



¹ Such as Cote d'Ivoire, Nigeria, Senegal, Kenya, Ethiopia, and Cameroon.

² Especially ICT, finance, transport, and tourism/hospitality.

³ In 2016, poverty rates ranged from 2% in Greater Accra to 71% in Upper West, while the Gini coefficient was 0.35 in Greater Accra and Eastern regions and 0.48 in Upper West.

Ghana is not a major country of emigration, but a sizeable number of Ghanaians do emigrate either regularly or irregularly, including to Europe¹. Most migrate for better economic opportunities, although emigrants do not come from the most deprived regions – the main areas of departure are the central regions² and Greater Accra^{vi} – and their education level and employment situation before migrating tend to be more favourable than the average Ghanaian youth³. This points to the complex and multidimensional causes of irregular migration.

While regular emigration channels to Europe are limited, irregular migration attempts from Ghana to the EU continuously increased in the early 2010s to reach nearly 5 800 recorded arrivals to the EU in 2016, before decreasing sharply since then⁴. Ghana is ranked seventh in the list of West African countries of origin in the period 2009-2022, far behind Nigeria, Guinea, Mali, and Cote d'Ivoire, among others^{vii}. The decrease since 2017 has been attributed to bilateral agreements negotiated by the EU, notably with Morocco and Libya, to other measures aiming to tighten border controls and reduce irregular migration, and to the COVID-19 crisis. In addition to these Ghanaians who arrived in the Europe, an estimated 16 000 are currently in Libya^{viii} (fourth West African nationality).

An unexpected number of migrants returned from North Africa to Ghana, particularly in 2017, due to the situation on the Central Mediterranean migration route – more migrants, more insecurity, and increased difficulty of reaching Europe. In total, between April 2017 and December 2022, IOM assisted 3 070 voluntary returns to Ghana⁵ through the EU-IOM Joint Initiative (JI), most of them from Libya, far surpassing the initial JI target of 650 returnees set in 2016^{ix}. From 2018, the number of JI assisted returns reduced to around 300 annually, but anecdotal evidence suggests that a significant number of nationals returned by their own means. Moreover, returns may rise again if migrants currently in Libya are not able to stay in the country or to cross to Europe⁶. Once in Ghana, most returnees resettle in Greater Accra and the central regions. Around 85% of them are between 18 and 35 years old (average: 26), and 11% are women^x. By December 2022, over 2 500 returnees (81% of the caseload)^{xi} had received or started receiving economic reintegration assistance from the JI in Ghana, which typically involves job counselling and orientation, a short business skills training, the development of a business plan, and in-kind support for starting up entrepreneurship microprojects – mostly individual as opposed to collective or community based.

2. LESSONS LEARNT FROM EUTF PROGRAMMING

In addition to the JI, the EUTF funded three job creation projects in various regions of Ghana, which started two-and-a-half to three-and-a-half years later than the JI: two green jobs and enterprises projects – one jointly managed by UNCDF/SNV ('GrEEen project') and the other by Inclusive Businesses Sweden – and one promoting business opportunities and employment in horticulture, coordinated by Delft University of Technology.

¹ It is to be noted that Ghana is a country of both (mainly labour) immigration and emigration. Ghanaians abroad form a relatively large diaspora, mainly in neighbouring countries (Nigeria, hosting an estimated half a million Ghanaians, and Cote d'Ivoire about 100 000) and in Western, mainly English-speaking countries (over 100 000 Ghanaians live in the USA and the UK). Gulf States have also become a popular destination of labour emigration. In the EU, Ghanaians mainly reside in Italy and Germany. An estimated 1 million Ghanaians live outside of Ghana in total, according to the latest statistics from IOM (Migration in Ghana: a country profile, IOM, 2019) and UNDESA.

² Ashanti, Bono, Bono East, and Brong Ahafo.

³ 55% of returnees surveyed by Altai Consulting in 2019-2021 had reached primary education and 43% secondary education. 53% were employed full time before migrating, while 30% either had a part-time job or multiple jobs, 9% were studying/in training, and 7% were unemployed. But 38% reported that they were not able to cover their basic needs before migrating.

⁴ About 4 000 detected arrivals in 2017, 900 in 2018, and fewer than 500 since 2019.

⁵ According to the latest figures provided by IOM Ghana.

⁶ In addition, according to Frontex, between 1 000 and 2 000 Ghanaian migrants voluntarily or forcibly return from Europe every year, mostly from Germany. In 2021, about 3 000 Ghanaians were estimated to reside in the EU without a regular residence permit.

The main lessons learnt from these four EUTF projects are the following^{xii}:

- **The economic reintegration opportunities offered by IOM have been too limited, which resulted in considerable delays in the delivery of support to returnees and in a mismatch with the JI principle of a comprehensive and tailored assistance.** In Ghana as in the other JI countries, IOM was not prepared for the initial caseload of returnees¹. It delivered economic support through ad-hoc contracts with only a few civil society organisations (CSOs) and a national training centre. It took time to establish and manage these partnerships. The job counselling and orientation process has insufficiently considered returnees' individual backgrounds and desires, as well as local job market opportunities and constraints. Most returnees were only offered an in-kind support to set up an entrepreneurship project. The budget available for returnees' reintegration did not allow for complementary forms of economic support to be offered to all returnees².
- **There has been a lack of effective synergies and referrals between the JI and other youth employment actors and programmes.** The three other youth employment projects funded by the EUTF could have benefitted JI-sponsored returnees more, but this linkage did not materialise because it was not factored in the projects' planning phase: the projects' timeline, intervention areas, and beneficiary targeting did not match well, and no referral mechanism was put in place. Similarly, IOM did not coordinate with initiatives of other donors and government agencies that could have enrolled returnees. This direct delivery, siloed approach has not only limited reintegration opportunities for returnees, it also reduced complementarity of action among development partners (DPs) and increased IOM's operational and management costs. Finally, mainstreaming returnee reintegration assistance within the country's broader youth employment agenda and programmes would have raised increased interest and support from the government.
- **Several other measures can facilitate returnee (and youth) employment entrepreneurship projects and should be mainstreamed in future EU programming.**
 - Up-to-date **labour market information**, effective **employment intermediation mechanisms**, and **business advisory services** can help orient returnees to the most relevant sectors and jobs, but they are not easily accessible or used.
 - The experience of the three non-IOM projects funded by the EUTF in Ghana and that of the JI in other West African countries indicate that returnees who took a **technical and business skills training** in addition to the in-kind support for starting up a microbusiness have better employment prospects and the sustainability of their businesses is improved. Best results are achieved when they benefit from both types of training combined.
 - **Employability and soft skills trainings** are also increasingly recognised as important components of youth employment initiatives.
 - The **duration of trainings** should be sufficient and their quality vetted. They should be **adequately timed, sequenced, and paced**, as youths/returnees' situation and needs evolve over time; for instance, returnees' interest in TVET grows over time once they are able to meet their immediate financial needs, and some entrepreneurship training modules only become relevant and useful once they have set up their business. Adequate information, accommodation, and stipends should be planned for.
 - Post-support, follow-up **mentoring, networking** with other returnees and entrepreneurs (especially those operating in the same sector, area, or value chain), and **access to additional finance** can significantly improve employment/business sustainability and growth.

¹ Only half of the active caseload of returnees received economic reintegration support in the first three years of the JI. Two third of economic support beneficiaries had to wait over six months, and nearly half waited for a year or longer.

² In the first three years of the JI, only about 10% of beneficiaries of some form of economic reintegration assistance had received either a vocational or a business skills training. Regarding post-support coaching, NGOs and the national training centre contracted by IOM had funding for only 3 months of coaching after the delivery of the in-kind support.

3. GOVERNANCE OF RETURNEE REINTEGRATION AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT

1. POLICY AND NORMATIVE FRAMEWORK

Economic growth and employment are the first-ranked development priorities in all major national development plans¹ and sectoral policies in Ghana, such as the national employment, green jobs, youth, education, and TVET policies². All these policies call for boosting youth employability through technical skills development programmes and creating decent jobs primarily in the formal sector of the economy. The priority sectors are the manufacturing of raw materials (oil, gas, and aluminium), agricultural products, and high-value equipment (car assembly, green energy); high productivity services (ICT, construction, tourism/hospitality, transport, healthcare); and horticulture and livestock^{xiii}.

Policy objectives translated into several government programmes such as the Free Apprenticeship and Free TVET initiative, the Ghana Jobs and Skills project ([website](#)), the One District One Factory Initiative, and the One District One [industrial] Park Initiative. The latter aim to exploit the comparative advantages of each district's natural resources and to ensure an even spread of industries and economic activities across the country, including in rural areas. Government programmes often target specific sectors and age groups but are accessible to all qualifying residents including returning migrants.

Migration is a topic featured in national development plans and has dedicated policies. Most above-mentioned development plans contain a section on migration management because inward and outward migrations, if adequately regulated, are seen as contributing to the country's economic growth. "Improving youth's livelihoods and economic prospects and reducing migration" is also explicitly mentioned among the main objectives of the One District One Factory and One District One Park initiatives. A stand-alone National Migration Policy was endorsed in 2016 and a Labour Migration Policy in 2020. They were developed with technical and financial support from external partners, mainly the EU, IOM, and the International Labour Organization (ILO), with contributions from a wide range of other stakeholders. They outline key responsibilities for the government and its partners (international, civil society and private sector organisations), and priority areas of work in all aspects of migration. However, the annexed action plan is too broad and lacked a prioritisation, clear lead agency, allocated budget, and monitoring/review/update process to ensure its effective implementation.

The National Migration Policy (NMP) marginally addresses reintegration. 'Return, readmission, and reintegration' is one of the 11 main areas of work defined in the policy document. In this chapter – two paragraphs in a 177-page long document –, the government commits to facilitate the return and reintegration of Ghanaian emigrants by strengthening its own capacity to manage return migration, developing a national reintegration framework, and creating bilateral and multilateral partnerships. Regarding economic reintegration specifically, the policy calls for raising awareness about local job opportunities and assisting returnees with re-engagement in their sector of work. The role of government institutions and their partners in the reintegration assistance is not specified (while it is for other areas of work), and no reintegration-related activity is included in the action plan in annex.

Dedicated standard operating procedures (SOPs) for reintegration have been developed as part of the JI, but they only partly fill that gap. In late 2020, over three years after the start of the JI, SOPs for reintegration assistance developed under the leadership of IOM were finally endorsed by the

¹ The current ones are, mainly: the Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies 2017-2024, the Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework 2022-2025, and the Ghana Beyond Aid charter and strategy 2019.

² TVET Policy for Ghana, 2004; ICT in Education Policy, 2008; Inclusive Education Policy, 2013; National Employment Policy, 2015; Education Strategic Plan, 2018-2030; National Green Jobs Strategy, 2021-2025; Youth Policy of Ghana, 2022-2032.

government for the specific purpose of the JI. They were later elevated by the government as ‘the national reintegration framework’ for all returnees in Ghana beyond the scope of the JI, i.e. regardless of the region they returned from (North Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Gulf countries, etc.), their return status (voluntary, forced, or unassisted return), the date of return, or the organisation funding and organising the return. Establishing a national framework was a commitment of the NMP. However, the SOPs themselves lack the required level of specificity and are only partially complied with by reintegration stakeholders, including IOM (see section 3 below). They mostly follow the template and standard contents drafted by IOM headquarters for the purpose of the regional JI programme, with very few adaptations to the Ghanaian context and no details on the distribution of roles and responsibilities¹. Hence, they cannot be used as a guidance for streamlining and harmonising reintegration approaches.

2. OPERATIONAL ENVIRONMENT: STAKEHOLDERS AND COORDINATION

The lead ministry for migration and reintegration matters is the Ministry of Interior but several other government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) are involved in various degrees and capacities, and there are conflicts of mandates.

The **Ministry of Interior (Mol)** and its Migration Unit (MU, established in 2010 with IOM support) have the mandate to coordinate all migration initiatives in the country, including reintegration programmes. They were central in coordinating the formulation of the NMP. The Ghana Immigration Service (GIS), created in the 1950s and also part of the Mol, plays a role in return and reintegration programmes. Until recently its mandate mainly involved participation in the return and immediate post-arrival registration process and in data management, but may evolve significantly, because of its newly established Migration Management Bureau (MMB), which notably comprises a Migration Affairs Desk and a Return and Reintegration Desk. Its creation, in late 2019 – three years after the National Migration Policy’s adoption but before the SOPs’ – is an output of an EU-funded ERRIN project². The division of roles and responsibilities between the MU and MMB is still unclear and debated between the two bodies and their respective partners. The MMB Return and Reintegration Desk is composed of 12 staff and operates a Migration Information Centre for Returnees (MICR) at Accra airport. The MICR is the first focal point for returnees coming back to Ghana. It provides them with initial information and counselling and mobilises other stakeholders who can assist with their post-arrival and reintegration process³.

The **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Regional Integration** also plays an important role, especially in the return phase. It leads the cooperation with partner countries and international organisations on diaspora affairs and facilitates returns although, even in these fields, its mandate and action can overlap with those of the Mol.

The **National Disaster Management Organisation (NADMO)** has long expressed its desire to be included beyond the return process, in the pre- and post-return phases, and to be strengthened as much as possible for their parallel involvement in the management of returns not organised by IOM^{xiv}.

¹ Roles and responsibilities are not distributed. Reintegration stakeholders are still not nominatively designated – only, sometimes, examples of institutions that should or could be involved at a certain stage, or broad categories such as ‘government agencies’, ‘international organisations’, and ‘NGOs’. When specific organisations are named, their exact mandate in relation to reintegration assistance is not spelled out. Phrases such as “the responsible organisation will...”, “the relevant agencies provide...”, “state and non-state actors can also be involved”, and “some actors that should be considered include – country-level assessments can help identifying relevant services” are used throughout, although, over three years within JI implementation, reintegration processes and partnerships were already in place and lessons learnt could have been drawn from that and other programmes.

² ERRIN is funded through the EU Asylum, Migration and Integration Fund (AMIF), with co-financing from participating national agencies.

³ More specifically, the MICR, staffed by GIS, registers returnees arriving at the airport and provides them with information, short-term counselling, and immediate (and limited) in-kind support (phone, SIM card, food, etc.). It also acts as single access point for migrants and returnees for questions related to departure, return and post-arrival support, including existing reintegration programmes and respective national services returning migrants can access. The MICR may have had contact with returnees or their support organisations prior to arrival. For example, they sometimes arranged a virtual information session and would introduce returnee to the services available upon their return. They would also coordinate in advance if a returnee required immediate assistance at arrival at the airport, such as medical attention, airport pick up, or accommodation.

It is mentioned in the NMP and reintegration SOPs but with no specific responsibilities. In practice, it participates in the provision of material, medical, and psycho-social support to some categories of migrants in distress, with a more limited role in the economic reintegration.

The **Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR)** has the mandate to promote decent work through employment policies and programmes and the regulation of work conditions and labour relations. It is involved in returnees' reintegration into the labour market mainly through three agencies under its tutelage, the Ghanaian-German Centre for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration (GGC), the Youth Employment Agency (YEA), and the National Vocational Training Institute, and to a lesser extent through its own Public Employment Centres (PECs) and Integrated Community Centres for Employable Skills (ICESs) that are present in all regions (see sections 3.3 and 4.1). Despite its geographic reach, the MELR is reportedly under-funded and under-staffed.

The other main MDAs involved in youth skills development and employment but only marginally (if at all) involved in economic reintegration assistance are the following. Further details on their respective initiatives are found in sections 3.3 and 4.

- *Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS):* It leads youth policies, which also have a youth employment component. Under its tutelage, the National Youth Authority (NYA) manages nationwide youth employment programmes and operates the Youth Leadership and Skills Training Institutes.
- *Ministry of Education (MoE):* Its mandate extends to TVET policies and programmes, although other ministries have their own TVET institutions and initiatives. The MoE also runs the National Service Scheme (NSS).
- *Ministry of Trade and Industry (MoTI):* It formulates and supervises the implementation of policies that create services and an enabling environment for trade, industries, and for the development of micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in these sectors. It can provide business development services to returnees as part of its on-going programmes such as the Rural Enterprise Project.
- *Ministry of Business Development (MoBD):* Created in 2017, it has the (partly overlapping) mandate to promote a favourable business environment and to support the activities of the private sector, with a focus on youth entrepreneurship. It oversees several nationwide programmes.
- *Ministry of Food and Agriculture:* It ensures that policies and programmes encourage youths to seek employment in the agriculture and agribusiness value chains. This ministry also designs programmes that include incentives for the private sector to invest in large-scale agricultural initiatives that generate jobs.
- *Ministry of Local Government and Rural Development:* It facilitates the implementation of employment programmes in line with existing local government structures. It also ensures that development activities and the investments of the district assemblies promote productive employment and income generation opportunities.
- *Ministry of Gender, Children, and Social Protection (MoGCSP):* As part of its mandate, it is responsible for the protection of and assistance to women and children returnees, as well as the fight against human trafficking. It also ensures that beneficiaries of social assistance programs who have productive capacity are linked with job training or job placement initiatives.

Key informants describe the capacity and leadership of government MDAs, and the level of coordination among them and with non-state actors, as generally weak. MDAs in both the migration and youth employment sectors are reported to struggle with significant budget and staff constraints despite successive government reforms and technical and financial support from development partners. The multiplicity of actors and of government and DPs' initiatives makes coordination even more difficult. Beyond the EU and IOM, the main external support agencies in the migration and reintegration field are the German cooperation (BMZ and GIZ), ICMPD (lead ERRIN implementing partner), and to a lesser extent ILO. The EU, GIZ, and ILO are also active in the youth

employment and entrepreneurship sector, alongside the World Bank, African Development Bank (AfDB), USAID, JICA, SNV, and the MasterCard Foundation.

In the migration sector, inter-ministerial coordination for the implementation of the NMP and of the reintegration SOPs is currently the responsibility of the MoI-hosted Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee on Migration, initially set up for the purpose of drafting the NMP. In the document, the government committed to transfer this responsibility to a Ghana National Migration Commission, which has still not materialised. The Commission was to take over additional management and advisory responsibilities and to include representatives from NGOs, civil society, academia, interest groups, the diaspora, and the media. In the absence of such an inter-ministerial body, coordination among migration stakeholders remains un-institutionalised, confined to certain topics, and project based.

The communication and harmonisation of approaches between DPs themselves have been limited, even between the two main return and reintegration programmes funded by the EU. For example, the JI and ERRIN worked on the same issue of migrants return, post-arrival assistance, and referral (mostly with returnees from North Africa for the JI/IOM and returnees from the EU for ERRIN/ICMPD), but they worked with two distinct departments within the MoI, adopted two different processes, and created two separate stakeholder coordination platforms¹. The same applies to other initiatives, on-going or under preparation, such as Frontex's Joint Reintegration Services, the Return and Reintegration Facility, and bilateral return and reintegration schemes of EU Member States. A Migration Coordination Platform now exists, led by the MoI and IOM, with a return and reintegration working group co-chaired by IOM and ICMPD but without MDA members. They are currently functioning² but need to be widened, institutionalised, and sustainably funded³.

The situation is similar in the employment sector. According to the National Employment Policy, the MELR was to be assisted in its coordination duties by a National Employment Coordinating Council which has not yet been established. In addition to line MDAs, it was to include representatives of the main private sector and civil society partners. Currently, the MELR chairs the employment sector working group, which brings together key MDAs, donors (e.g. World Bank, ILO, GIZ, JICA, USAID), and a few other stakeholders. It meets very irregularly. Donor members organise ad-hoc discussions and events around their respective projects. A TVET donor working group exists and is functional.

3. LABOUR MARKET INTERMEDIATION MECHANISMS AND SERVICES

The guiding principle established by the SOPs is that national institutions should be involved in or directly implement reintegration assistance and returnees should, by default, be referred to them for economic support. Such referral mechanisms should be formalised and institutionalised as opposed to ad-hoc and project-based⁴. This approach is explicitly promoted because of its numerous advantages: national institutions have an “added value in terms of experience, expertise and geographical coverage” and they ensure the sustainability and local ownership of reintegration programming. The SOPs further mention existing national skills training, employment, and entrepreneurship services and programmes, which include those run by MDAs but also by civil society and private sector organisations^{xv}.

¹ A JI project steering committee was set up in 2017, which only gathers key stakeholders directly involved in JI implementation, therefore focused on returns from North Africa and excluding some MDAs as well as NGOs, CSOs, and development agencies also active in the migration and reintegration fields. In 2020, an ERRIN project implemented by ICMPD created another coordination platform for MDAs, international agencies, and local reintegration actors managing returnees from Europe – some of which were already members of the JI steering committee.

² For example, the working group developed a directory of return and reintegration actors and a mapping of migration projects.

³ The Migration Political Dialogue launched in January 2019 also helped improve the EU-government dialogue and relationship.

⁴ “With regard to reintegration assistance, referrals should constitute the first option for all migrants, whether or not vulnerable. (...) When services or programmes able to respond to the needs or preferences of returning migrants (either vulnerable or not) exist, the relevant agency/organization refers returning migrants to them.”

A very limited number of returnees supported by the EU have been referred to these structures so far. While several employment institutions and labour market intermediation mechanisms exist, a centralised, institutionalised, and sustainable referral mechanism with government ownership is still a work in progress. Data up to December 2022 points to about 100 external, ‘outbound’ referrals having been achieved to non-returnee specific employment and entrepreneurship institutions, services, and programmes. This is less than 0,05% of the caseload, and these were all done in 2022^{xvi}. The JI and ERRIN have focused on returnees specifically, and created bespoke reintegration and referral pathways for them (see details on their respective approaches below). Recognising that this approach has singled returnees out of the rest of the Ghanaian job seekers, reduced government leadership, and limited the sustainability of reintegration assistance/programmes, ICMPD, IOM, the government, and their partners have agreed on the need for a national referral mechanism able to orient all returnees to available services and programmes for economic support. This is being discussed in the ERRIN stakeholder platforms and in the return and reintegration working group. In line with the SOPs, they also called for a comprehensive and regularly updated mapping of institutions (MDAs, employment agencies, NGOs, financial institutions, etc.) and programmes offering information on the job market, TVET, business skills training, employment opportunities, apprenticeship/on-the-job training, paid internships, job fairs, access to finance, and additional services that could be of potential relevance to returnees^{xvii}.

There are numerous state and non-state institutions and programmes whose role is to match the supply and demand for employment and help young people and/or returnees enter the labour market. As apparent from the brief stakeholder description above (section 3.2) and the details below, they are dispersed and partly overlapping.

3.3.1. GOVERNMENT-LED INTERMEDIATION SERVICES FOR THE GENERAL YOUTH

Public labour intermediation mechanisms and government employment and entrepreneurship services for youth employment are available to all Ghanaians including returnees. The main ones are the following (their collaboration with reintegration actors and experience with returnees, if any, is specified)^{xviii}.

- **The MELR’s Employment Information Bureau (EIB)** is the government agency responsible for gathering labour market information¹, disseminating it online and through school visits, making referrals for training and skills development, providing career guidance and job search assistance, and facilitating registration and placement in jobs. It works through and directly operates **Public Employment Centres (PECs)**. The 64 PECs are located in 38 districts across the country, mostly in Accra and the other major cities. GIZ, IOM, ILO, and the EU have provided support since 2020 to fill some of their significant equipment and capacity needs and to familiarise their employees with the specific needs of returning migrants seeking training and employment. The EIB is currently building a **Ghana Labour Market Information System (GLMIS)** with World Bank support, whose online [portal](#) is intended to gather job and training opportunities and facilitate applicants’ recruitment.
- **The Youth Employment Agency (YEA)**, also under the MELR, started in 2006 as a presidential programme. It was institutionalised by law in 2015 with the mandate to supervise and facilitate employment for graduate and undergraduate, unskilled and low skilled youth aged 18-35 with little or no work experience. Since then, it has received funding from the government and donors and gained significant operational capacity. Much like the MELR, the YEA runs job centres that aim to serve as a one-stop shop providing job counselling, skills training, and job opportunities, and thus compete with the array of HR consultancies and private online job recruitment agencies in the

¹ Sources of labour market information include Ghana Statistical Service’s survey data, information provided by employers, business associations, and job centres, periodic national and local trends analyses, and ad-hoc studies.

country. Trainings range from employability¹ and soft skills² to business management and TVET. These workshops and seminars are organised periodically based on diagnosed interest areas and registrations, delivered by consultants and professional institutions partnering with YEA at no cost to beneficiaries. Employers can also enrol their employees and new recruits for training. The walk-in job centres now serve all regions and districts. They are generally hosted by the district assemblies and at times co-locate with the PECs. YEA has also an online job portal where job seekers can register and apply for jobs advertised by employers or by YEA on behalf of employers. Finally, YEA manages nationwide, short-term skills acquisition and job placement³ programmes on behalf of the government and a few DPs. IOM started collaborating with YEA recently, in 2021, and appreciates this partnership. The Agency reported an increase from 30 000 to nearly 100 000 beneficiaries per year in five years. Despite being described as being one of the most promising public institution in the sector, YEA's local job centres, personnel, and online systems/portals still require significant technical support and long-term funding⁴ (websites: www.yea.gov.gh and <https://yeajobcentre.gov.gh>).

- **The Ghanaian-German Centre for Jobs, Migration, and Reintegration (GCC)** is an initiative of the German cooperation launched in 2017 and also placed under the responsibility of the MELR. The centre is located in Accra and co-managed by GIZ. It aims to support both the general youth and returnees with job counselling, skills training, short- and long-term employment opportunities, business start-up support, and other services specifically targeted at 'potential/prospective migrants' and returnees (e.g. information on regular and irregular migration, and social and psycho-social support). Thanks to the significant financial, technical, and management support from GIZ and additional training from ILO, the GCC became rapidly operational. It reports 15 000 to 20 000 beneficiaries annually, mostly non-migrants seeking career counselling and employment⁵ ([website](#)).
- **The Ministry of Education's National Service Scheme (NSS)** is a nationwide civil service programme created in 1973, with offices in all districts across the country (<https://www.nss.gov.gh>). It offers one-year job placement in the public and private sector for school and university graduates aged 18 to 40 (mandatory for all university graduates). The NSS enrolls around 100 000 graduates per year from over 150 public and private tertiary institutions and provides them with a monthly stipend for the duration of their enrolment. Due to the difficulty of centralising and matching all profiles with available job opportunities and organising placements, private and public intermediation services attempt to coordinate with the NSS to have their own recruitment/placements count towards the NSS. Therefore, in practice, the NSS acts as a nationwide labour market intermediation mechanism.
- **The Nation Builders Corps (NABCO, nabco.gov.gh)** is also a government civil service initiative aimed at job seekers leaving tertiary education institutions, created recently (in 2018). Enrolment is not mandatory, it lasts 3 years, and targets specific sectors⁶. The nationwide scheme typically provides participants with an initial military and soft skills training, followed by placement work in the target sectors, and a final vocational or entrepreneurship training based on a personalised exit

¹ E.g. searching for jobs, writing CVs, preparing for an interview, etc.

² E.g. workplace ethics, discipline, effective communication and interpersonal skills, teamwork, stress and conflict management, organisational skills, time management, etc.

³ Examples of short-term job opportunities are civil service, internships, apprenticeships, volunteer work, and cash for work.

⁴ For example, the YEA and job centre websites are incomplete, partly outdated, and prone to bugs, making registration for services and for modules difficult and unreliable. At the time of writing, there were only 12 job postings advertised online, and the search and filter options were very limited. A list of career centre locations was not available. YEA employees need further professionalisation and monitoring and evaluation systems need strengthening.

⁵ The GCC reports that a total of nearly 65 500 people had accessed its services from 2017 to late 2020, including 29 000 who accessed labour market information/career guidance/coaching services, 4 300 who received coaching and start-up support to establish their businesses, 2 500 posted as interns, 2 600 placed in jobs, and 600 returnees who received psychosocial support.

⁶ Health, education, agriculture, ICT/technology, local governance, revenue mobilization and collection, and business/industry/trade.

facilitated plan to help programme participants transition into regular employment. It reports several tens of thousands of beneficiaries annually.

- **The National Youth Authority (NYA, <https://www.nya.gov.gh>)**, under the MoYS, offers training, education, networking, and job opportunities to youth since 1974. It manages various nationwide youth skills training and employment programmes on behalf of the government and owns Youth Leadership and Skills Training Institutes (see details in section 4).
- **The Youth Resource Centres** of the MoYS currently have at least one location in each region and aim to expand their presence at the sub-regional level in line with the new national Youth Policy revised in 2022 ([webpage](#)).

Several sectoral ministries manage similar services and programmes that connect youth with employment as described in section 4.

3.3.2. NON-STATE ACTORS

Because of the fragmentation, low visibility, and overall weakness that has long characterised the Ghanaian public employment organisations and programmes, non-state actors have gradually engaged and taken on an important intermediation role on the labour market. Among them, only a few CSOs have been involved in economic reintegration programming.

- **Private employment agencies (PEAs)** are fee-charging and for-profit. They sell their employment and job matching services mostly to graduates and professionals seeking wage employment in the formal sector locally or nationally, or abroad. They differ from the numerous Ghanaian job portals by the fact that they do more than just publishing job listings and registering applicants online. By law, they must be registered and are regulated by the MELR. In practice, many are informal, and their supervision and coordination with public institutions and programme is very limited. Over 300 local PEAs are registered by the MELR. There is a national association of PEAs ([Facebook page](#)).
- **Specialized HR consultancies and employability training / coaching organisations** are also fee-charging and for-profit. They typically sell their services to employers. They offer recruitment, staff skills development (short-term technical, management, or soft-skills training), coaching, and HR and payroll management services. They may also work for MDAs, NGOs and donors managing youth skills development and employment programmes. They differ from private employment agencies in that they only select and/or train as many candidates as can be hired/sponsored by their clients. Some also act as employment agencies, however, offering support to job seekers, mostly university graduates and skilled workers in urban areas.
- **Foundations, NGOs, and CSOs¹** working in the employment sector typically offer training followed with mentoring and in-kind or financial support to set up a microbusiness or join an existing business or cooperative. They either deliver training directly or work through public and private agencies. They tend to target vulnerable youths or promising innovators/business ideas, and sponsor fees/stipend with funding from national and international donors. IOM and ERRIN have contracted about 10 CSOs in total over the last five years to provide this type of support to their respective returnees.
- **Academia:** Secondary and tertiary education institutions increasingly play an intermediation role by providing career counselling and job/entrepreneurship opportunities to their students and seeking partnerships with employers. Ashesi, a private university in Greater Accra, has designed a comprehensive preemployment programme that offers support throughout the four years of college, comprising labour market information and job counselling, employability, soft skills, and entrepreneurship trainings, internships, and on-going coaching and mentoring. Ashesi reports 94%

¹ Such as the Mastercard Foundation, the international NGOs CARE and Caritas, the national NGO Returnee Migrant Centre, etc.

of students finding jobs within six months of graduation (<https://www.ashesi.edu.gh>). Private sector employers may also proactively partner with academia. This is especially common in highly specialized industries, such as the oil and gas sector. Technip-FMC, a UK-based energy company, established an MoU with Regional Maritime University in Tema and Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Kumasi to hire technicians, engineers, and management professionals¹.

- **Private sector employers:** As mentioned above, both small and large companies collaborate with government institutions, private recruitment companies, or academia to hire short or long-term personnel across sectors. Government-funded civil service programmes (NSS and NABCO) offer them the opportunity to benefit from educated/trained labour on a regular basis and at nearly no cost. Technip FMC and Danone-Fanmilk are examples of large firms relying on both the NSS and a private employment firm (Field Ready) as hiring mechanisms for technical positions.

The overall scale and absorption capacity of state and non-state actors and programmes is insufficient: They offer far fewer seats than candidates. A World Bank study published in 2016 found that out of a pool of 145 000 applicants, only 29% gained access to employment programmes run by non-state organisations. In the public sector, entry was even more restrictive: only 19% of approximately 1.3 million youth were enrolled^{xix}. The private sector and civil society, which focus mostly on skills and entrepreneurship training, tend to operate on a smaller scale and be more expensive relative to public sector programmes. In most cases, empirical and tracer study data on the effectiveness of both public and private sector institutions/programmes (e.g. employment rate) are unavailable.

3.3.3. INTERMEDIATION SERVICES AND REFERRALS ESTABLISHED FOR RETURNEES UNDER EU-FUNDED REINTEGRATION INITIATIVES

The institutions mandated by the government to provide economic reintegration and employment opportunities to returnees specifically are the MELR's Public Employment Centres and Ghanaian-German Centre for Jobs, Migration and Reintegration. They have been involved in reintegration programmes and received support from the EU, Member States, and other donors. Both the PECs and the GCC assist returnees alongside non-migrant youths, but the GCC has a specific focus on migrants and returnees and benefits from more significant and comprehensive DP support, mainly from GIZ and, to a lesser extent, from ILO². However, the GCC only has one branch, in Accra, and its functioning and sustainability are highly dependent on GIZ funding continuity. On the other hand, PECs have less capacity and experience with returnees but have a better geographic coverage and are mainly government-funded.

ERRIN, through ICMPD, mainly worked through the NGOs AG Care and Caritas Belgium to reintegrate its beneficiary returnees ([webpage](#)). Concurrently, ERRIN supported the GIS in the establishment of the MICR in 2022 and signed an MoU with GIZ to facilitate post-arrival assistance to new returnees transiting through the MICR. Thanks to the MICR and the MoU, referrals are now becoming less ad-hoc and better meet returnees' reintegration needs. They can benefit from the services offered by the GCC and other on-going GIZ skills training, employment, and entrepreneurship programmes. This referral mechanism primarily benefits ERRIN-supported returnees (modest numbers so far, and mostly from Europe³) but it is not restricted to them⁴. A more informal mechanism exists with IOM. The ERRIN Government-to-Government project has also funded a mapping of other relevant reintegration actors

¹ The MoU includes a work-study attachment in the form of sponsored senior capstone projects for 64 for the most promising students per year. The capstone projects also allow Technip FMC to observe future potential hires.

² Under the ILO Initiative for Labour Migration, Employment and Reintegration in Nigeria and Ghana (LMER) funded by GIZ, ILO trained the staff of the GCC and of some of the PECs in the ILO Start and Improve Your Business Programme to enable them to equip their clients, especially returnees, with entrepreneurship skills. The project also seeks improve access of beneficiaries to adapted financial services at all stages of their migration cycle.

³ Voluntary and forced returns mainly from Germany, Denmark, and the UK.

⁴ It extends, for example, to migrants who are forcibly returned or who return through their own means.

and programmes to pave the way for new referral mechanisms towards and between them¹. Two other challenges are mentioned by ERRIN stakeholders^{xx}:

- Because of the multiple systems and programmes providing different reintegration support with different funding, MICR staff are unsure, at times, which returnees qualifies for which reintegration services.
- As highlighted above, a broader referral mechanism is needed that would help returnees take advantage of other, non-returnee specific employment support services and programmes in the country.

IOM has worked since 2017 through its own bilateral, ad-hoc partnerships with – and referrals to – implementing partners (mostly CSOs, and few national institutions)² while, in parallel, providing technical support to some PECs. These contracts and referrals are managed directly by IOM for the specific purpose of the JI, with short-term, project-based funding and staff. This approach allowed IOM to respond more quickly to the unexpected caseload at the beginning of the JI and to keep a higher level of control over the assistance process and results but raises government ownership³ and programme continuity issues. Moreover, not all JI services are extendable to returnees who have not been repatriated by IOM (mostly from North Africa). The JI therefore created *de facto* its own system of referrals and economic employment support, which generated some frustration among line MDAs. IOM is collaborating with / considering opportunities to partner with other structures providing career orientation sessions and other employment services such as the GCC while the discussion around a broader national referral mechanism is on-going.

In Ghana, returnees' economic reintegration opportunities and referrals are not restricted by a lack of employment services or an accessibility issue. There is primarily a problem of dispersion of stakeholders and initiatives, and a problem of approach and coordination among reintegration and employment actors. Recent discussions among these actors and initiatives by ERRIN are a step in the right direction.

Focus Box 1: Opportunities for EU action related to the governance of economic reintegration

The EU should consider advocating for and financially and/or technically supporting the following actions:

- **Clarifying and enforcing MDAs' respective mandates with regard to reintegration policies and programming** – in particular, the mandates of the ministries of Interior, Foreign Affairs, Employment, and NADMO and, within the MoI, the respective role of the MU and GIS/MMB. The EU should ensure a coherent approach between ICMPD, IOM, and possibly Frontex⁴ in their collaboration with these actors, and in particular with the various MoI departments. It should also budget for continuous capacity building and institutional support to the relevant MoI departments.
- **Institutionalising the national referral mechanism for returnees' reintegration, with the government being placed at the centre.** This mechanism should encompass all relevant

¹ For example, under a non-EU funded multi-country project that ended in 2021, Caritas Ghana (CRS) targeted non-IOM assisted returnees and non-migrant youth in the Brong Ahafo region.

² Over the 2017-2021 period, IOM contracted five NGOs (Christian Council Ghana, Bella Teaching Foundation, Challenges Group Ghana, Adventist Development and Relief Agency, and Africa 2000 Network) and one government institution: the National Vocational Training Institute. They have provided counselling, TVET and/or entrepreneurship training, and support to set up an individual or collective microbusiness. In 2018, IOM also contracted, on a short-term basis, the Don Bosco Technical Institute to provide specialised TVET to 24 individuals (5 returnees and 19 community members). In April 2021, IOM signed a new partnership with YEA for the Agency to provide vacancies lists and facilitate job placements, and with the Ghana Entreprises Agency (formerly NBSSI) for the Board to train and support 30 returnees in entrepreneurship.

³ Despite the indirect involvement of the key MDAs through their participation in the project steering committee.

⁴ ERRIN as a programme ended in 2022, its heritage is being taken over by the ICMPD Return and Reintegration Facility (RRF) and the Frontex Joint Reintegration Programme.

stakeholders, including youth employment ones (beyond returnee-focused state and non-state actors) and be managed by the most relevant MDA with external support.

- **The national referral mechanism and future EU support need to put in place the conditions for economic reintegration and youth employment stakeholders to better share information and align actions and to reduce the current situation of overlapping mandates and duplicating efforts** – both within the MELR (between the PECs, YEA, and Ghanaian-German/European Centre) and among DPs (between the EU, Member State agencies, IOM, ICMPD, Frontex, GIZ, ILO, and others). Reintegration development partners should deliberately seek to work with and through a fewer number of partners (MDAs and service providers), avoid multiplying short-term, project-based contracts with CSOs, and seek to reunite the institutions, pathways, and modalities of assistance that are meant for returnees on the one hand and for non-migrant job seekers on the other hand. In addition to its support to the future Ghanaian-European Centre for Jobs, Migration and Development (new name planned for the GGC), the EU and its IPs could consider stepping up capacity support to YEA and coordinate with the World Bank and AfDB on their on-going support to YEA, PECs, and GEA.
- **Reviewing and updating the reintegration SOPs.** The revised SOPs should integrate lessons learnt from the JI, ERRIN, and GGC and the provisions of the national referral mechanism; harmonise the economic reintegration process and packages as well as the DPs' approach to partnerships and referrals; and designate the actors involved in each step and what each one of them should do and how – for all types of returnees.
- **Re-training reintegration (and youth employment) stakeholders on the updated SOPs** once adopted, and planning/budgeting for periodic refresher training.
- **Ensuring compliance of EU reintegration IPs with the revised SOPs for a more harmonised reintegration process for all types of returnees.** The EU should notably request/incentivise greater alignment of assistance packages, partnerships, and referral approaches between IOM, ICMPD, and the Ghanaian-European Centre, and greater knowledge of and linkages with the Ghanaian employment sector and actors.
- **Broadening the information and referral options available to returnees on arrival.** In addition to EU-funded programmes, referrals should include other donor and government programmes/institutions so that returnees can benefit from a larger variety of (employment and other) services and options matching their individual needs and desires. This involves mapping existing employment services and opportunities that could be of interest to returnees and in a position to enrol them (see section 4 below) - and repeating the exercise periodically.
- **Putting in place the necessary conditions and processes for effective referrals.** This includes working more proactively with MDAs and other donors to build the capacity of the employment institutions/services that should act as a labour market intermediation mechanism for returnees; and making referrals between EU-funded programmes easier by planning for them from the design phase (aligning, as much as possible, respective programme timeframes, geographic scope, beneficiaries' eligibility criteria, databases, monitoring systems, establishing consortia or signing MoUs for referrals between EU IPs, etc.). The EU also has a role to play in coordinating/aligning on these aspects with other youth employment donors and achieving greater synergies and complementarities with them.
- **The EU should agree with the government and its reintegration IPs on a gradual transition and institutional strengthening strategy that will allow MDAs to progressively take over more responsibilities in reintegration management and gain autonomy while limiting associated risks.** This strategy should have two components: a change in implementation modalities, and a capacity building plan. It would constitute a more intentional,

continuous, and dynamic approach to institutional strengthening, and enable stronger national leadership, ownership, and sustainability in reintegration programming/management.

- i. *Several implementation models could be considered:* EU IPs could have staff embedded as technical assistant in the relevant government offices; or the other way around, MDA personnel embedded in IPs' offices. Alternatively, IPs could make short-term advance payments to the relevant MDAs for them to implement activities with IP support and close monitoring (subsequent instalments would be triggered based on previous results); or MDAs could implement activities while IPs support costs through direct payments to service providers (without funds transiting through MDAs). Such arrangements have been used by IOM notably in Nigeria and Guinea-Bissau, or are being used by other donors in Ghana (e.g. World Bank, UNICEF, AfDB).
 - ii. In parallel, *the capacity building plan should include regular formal capacity building and learning activities of different types and for all involved MDAs* (e.g. training workshops on the revised SOPs and on technical and management skills, office equipment, joint field supervision missions, study visits). The plan should be updated based on a periodic analysis of remaining capacity gaps. Repeated trainings are needed since workshops can only accommodate a few staff members from each participating institution and management staff constantly change, which hinders the sustainability of training outcomes. Young personnel should be trained too, not only senior officials. Capacity building and learning outcomes should be monitored.
- **Widening the membership of the return and reintegration working group and ensuring more sustainable funding.** In addition to reintegration actors, the working group should include the relevant migration and youth employment MDAs – or a separate space focussed on (economic) reintegration should exist that link up all these key stakeholders. More sustained, predictable funding involves increased government allocations and earmarked co-funding commitments from donors.
 - **Completing the process establishing the Ghana National Migration Commission** to enhance inter-ministerial coordination and leadership. This is planned by IOM for 2023-2024 with the support of the EU-UN Building Migration Partnership project, funded by the EU.

4. DIVERSIFYING ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIPS

1. TVET AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

4.1.1. SECTOR OVERVIEW

In Ghana as in many countries, TVET has long been negatively perceived and been neglected by both young people and government policies. Hence a number of structural challenges^{xxi}:

- Multiplicity of uncoordinated actors and initiatives at both MDA and service delivery levels;
- High cost of TVET;
- Poorly maintained infrastructure, outdated teaching equipment, unattractive working conditions, and low skilled and low motivated teachers;
- Over-emphasis among TVET institutions on garment making, and for all most trades/skills, old teaching curricula and methods, misaligned with the skill needs in the labour market;
- Lack of post-training monitoring and evaluation to assess learning and employment outcomes and improve training design and delivery.

In the early 2000s and then more recently since 2018, the government recognised the importance of TVET for improving workers' skills and youth employment in both the informal and formal economy, and has undertaken to vigorously reform and boost the sector¹:

- *Developing and mainstreaming the TVET policy:* A TVET policy was adopted in 2004, a Strategic Plan in 2018, and a TVET Act in 2020. TVET is now mainstreamed into all relevant development plans and sectoral policies, with stand-alone sections containing clear priorities and strategies². A new Strategic Plan for TVET Transformation is being drafted for the period 2023-2027.
- *Streamlining the institutional and governance framework:* The Ministry of Education was designated as the ministry responsible for formulating and implementing TVET policies, coordinating other MDAs' initiatives, and regulating service delivery by all TVET institutions. To increase coordination and efficiency, a national Commission for TVET (CTVET) was created in 2020 under the MoE and tasked with promoting, regulating and overseeing the entire sector³. Finally, many of the public and private pre-tertiary TVET institutions were brought under the ambit of Ghana TVET Service.
- *Mobilising funding and upgrading infrastructure and equipment:* Between 2018 and 2021, the government quadrupled its budget allocations the TVET sector⁴, and additional donor funding was mobilised to support long-term financing for TVET, workers' skills upgrading, and job creation, notably through the reactivation of the Skills Development Fund⁵. Some of the funding went to the

¹ Mainly with support from the World Bank and DANIDA under the Ghana Skills and Technology Development Project, Germany, the EU, African Development Bank, JICA, as well as GIZ and ILO through the projects listed in section 4.1.3.

² National development plans: Ghana Development Agenda, 2014; Ghana Beyond Aid Charter and Strategy, 2019; and Medium-Term Development Policy Framework, 2022. Sectoral policies: Ghana Youth Policies, 2010 and 2022; and Education Strategic Plan for Ghana, 2018.

³ CTVET brought together several bodies that were set up after the adoption of the 2004 policy and in charge of investment, qualification frameworks, and quality assurance across the broad spectrum of pre-secondary to tertiary, and formal, to informal and non-formal education. See graph visualising the Ghana formal education system including TVET on the Ghana dynamic TVET country profile of UNESCO: [Dynamic TVET Country Profiles \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org)

⁴ From about 500 million in 2018 to 2 billion Cedis in 2021, in line with the government target to increase TVET financing from 4% to 6% of Ministry of Education budgetary allocation.

⁵ The GSDF was set up in 2021 through the World Bank funded Ghana Jobs and Skills Development Project. It is co-funded by DANIDA and other donors. It is a follow-up to the first SDF created in 2011. Website: <https://gsdf.ctvet.gov.gh/>

renovation of existing TVET centres and construction of new ones, teaching equipment (workshops, laboratory, computers, etc.) ensuring that each of the 16 regions has at least two state-of-the-art TVET centres.

- *Increasing the profile of and demand for TVET among youth* public campaign: In 2019, the government launched the “myTVET” campaign and organised secondary school visits and career guidance and counselling sessions for students. In 2021, it launched the “Free TVET” (at the second cycle level) and “Free Apprenticeship” initiatives with selected partner institutions and since then provides vouchers for training and apprenticeships in the informal sector. A significant increase in enrolment was observed since then (though enrolment started increasing before).
- *Aligning skills with industry demand*: The MoE/CTVET conducted a skills gap analysis (2019), established Sector Skills Bodies for 12 key economic sectors¹ involving industry representatives and, with them, defined industry skills needs and standards, revised the national qualification framework and training curricula accordingly, and rolled out competency-based training in TVET institutions. This approach includes mainstreaming the practical component in all trainings (dual education)² as well as life skills and ICT. Teachers are now trained on this approach in the newly designated national apex teacher training institution and new recruits are expected to have workplace or industrial experience. CTVET can now certify informally acquired competencies under its ‘Recognition of Prior Learning’ programme³. The industry and private sector in general are encouraged to invest or get involved in the management of TVET centres and offer internship and employment opportunities through public-private partnerships.

There are many TVET institutions, centres and programmes in Ghana which could contribute to returnees’ skills development and economic reintegration if the necessary conditions are created. CTVET registered nearly 650 secondary level TVET institutions (about 250 public and 400 private), plus 10 technical universities and private tertiary institutions running TVET programmes⁴. 25% have been accredited/trained by CTVET and are therefore entitled to run competency based TVET: the list of accredited institutions is available on this [CTVET webpage](#) and the list of accredited competence-based training programmes on [this one](#). The list of free TVET schools is available on this other [CTVET page](#). The first list of secondary and tertiary institutions targeted for refurbishment by CTVET is in footnote⁵. A larger listing of training institutions is available from the [Ghana Educational Directory](#). Lastly, the 2021 list of accredited tertiary institutions that are issuing certification on the national TVET qualification framework at levels 1 to 4 for various skills/trades is available in the [CTVET report](#) (page 46).

Formal, public centres provide long-term training, ranging from one to three years depending on the trade and the participant entry level. They tend to train students from middle- and higher-class backgrounds due to the conditions, cost, and length of studies. They prepare for technician and manager positions for the public sector and private industries. Their curricula, trainers, and degrees are automatically accredited by CTVET. The main ones at the secondary level are the following^{xxii}.

¹ Agriculture, Construction, Hospitality & Tourism, Pharmaceuticals, Oil & Gas, Renewable Energy, Textiles, Garments & Apparel, Healthcare, Logistics & Transportation, ICT, Automotive, Beauty, hair and Wellness (Cosmetology).

² In 2020-2021, 85% of the technical and vocational institutes surveyed by CTVET stated that they have implemented the workplace-experience learning as part of the competency-based-training programmes incl. through project works, group assignments, practical workshops, on-the-job training, apprenticeships, and internships.

³ Ghanaians who have undergone informal apprenticeships or acquired technical skills directly in the workplace or through work abroad can be evaluated by Ghana TVET Service local offices with a competency-based test and be granted a formal, nationally recognised competency certificate at level 1 or 2 of the national TVET qualifications framework. IOM has helped some returnees apply and prepare for the test.

⁴ This is more than Nigeria (500 registered TVET centres) which has a population seven times larger than Ghana.

⁵ Takoradi Technical University (petro-chemical and hydraulic systems), Kumasi Technical University (mechatronics systems), Koforidua Technical University, Cape Coast Technical University, Tamale Technical University, Wa Polytechnic, Accra Technical University, Ho Technical University, Sunyani Polytechnic, Bolga Polytechnic, and Asuansi Technical Institute (mechanical, electrical/electronics and auto-engineering systems in the latter nine institutes). The renovation/modernisation/equipment may not have started in all these institutions yet. In addition, at least 34 National Vocational Training Institutes were upgraded.

Table 1: Main state training institutions providing TVET at secondary level (latest available data)

Ministry	Training institution	Number of centres (2018)	Further information
MELR	National Vocational Training Institute (NVTI) (now named Ghana TVET Services)	34	Covers 28 skill areas. Institution with second highest enrolment and growing fast. Is an IOM reintegration partner. https://www.nvtighana.org
	Integrated Community Centres for Employable Skills	62	Predominantly located in rural areas. https://iccesghana.wordpress.com
	Opportunity Industrialization Centre and Technical Institute	3	https://www.facebook.com/oicgh https://www.facebook.com/togetherwehelpourselves
MoE	Ghana Education Service (GES) Technical Institutions	47	Institution with highest enrolment. https://ges.gov.gh/
MoYS	Youth Leadership and Skills Training Centres	11	Operated by the National Youth Authority https://www.nya.gov.gh/taxonomy/term/32
MoTI	National Board for Small Scale Industries Business (NBSSI) Advisory Centres	161	https://nbssi.gov.gh/find-brc/ https://ekma.gov.gh/nbssi-3/
	Rural Technology Facilities	15	Predominantly located in rural areas. No dedicated webpage but an online article from 2011 provides more info
	Ghana Regional Appropriate Technology Industrial Service (GRATIS Foundation)	9 to 17	Lowest enrolment. https://gratis.gov.gh/about/
MoGCSP	Community Development Vocational Technical Institutes	N/A	Predominantly located in rural areas. Can be searched at http://directory.mogcsp.gov.gh/
Others	Under various sectoral ministries	~60	Ministries of Local Government and Rural Development; Environment, Science and Technology; Food and Agriculture; Roads and Transport; Tourism, Art, and Culture

The formal, private TVET centres offer similar training to similar target groups but must undergo an application and assessment process if they want to get an accreditation of their programmes from CTVET. This is a relatively heavy process which must be repeated regularly. Thus, not all of them can provide officially recognised certifications, although many private institutes may have valid and well-designed courses.

Non-formal TVET is provided by NGOs and CSOs. The focus is on developing skills for microbusinesses and self-employed individuals rather than formal, wage jobs. Training is more short-term, typically ranges from 2-3 months to 1 year depending on the trade. The practical component often has prominence. Such training is evolving to incorporate new sectors and job profiles – such as ICT, marketing, green energy, and the creative industry, and classes on entrepreneurship, employability, and/or soft skills – which is both relevant and attractive for returnees.

In term of relevance and accessibility for returnees: Based on their education background, about 25% of Ghanaian returnees would be eligible to formal, tertiary TVET programmes. The remainder could either qualify for formal and non-formal secondary TVET programmes, or apprenticeships directly offered by employers. This would require adequate and timely targeting and orientation of returnees, securing adequate funding for tuition fees and stipend (particularly for returnees not eligible to the Free TVET and Apprenticeship initiatives), and collaborating with CTVET and other relevant MDAs to identify the most pertinent TVET institutions, programmes, partnerships, and referrals. Some are proposed in the next two sections: partnerships with training institutions in 4.1.2, and coordination with and referrals to government and donor programmes in 4.1.3.

4.1.2. SELECTED TRAINING PROVIDERS RELEVANT FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

Due to the high number of training institutions providing various types of training, and the diversity of profiles, desires and needs of returnees, the following shortlist of potential, additional training partners for future reintegration programming is non-exhaustive: it should be further vetted and expanded. It is based upon the following criteria:

- Relevance of services for returnees' economic reintegration
- Accessibility of services for returnees (e.g. geographic location in at least one of the main areas of emigration and return, admission requirements in terms of age and education background, selection process, intent to reach vulnerable groups, affordability) and ability to adapt to the specific and varied profiles and needs of returnees
- Quality and effectiveness of training offered¹, and overall management and absorption capacity
- Support offered to training graduates to transition into employment (employability training, job placement, support to set up a business) and linkages with the private sector
- Mix of different types of training: TVET (in agribusiness, manufacturing industry, trades, IT, etc.), business, employability, and soft skills
- Mix of public, private, and CSO training institutions, covering urban and rural areas, offering formal and non-formal education/ training opportunities, short and long-term, to people from lower to higher education backgrounds, for various in-demand sectors and job profiles, and for microbusiness and placement in wage employment
- No yet partnering with IOM and ERRIN – or only for recent, limited, or short-term collaborations.

Organisations are sorted below by alphabetical order. Additional information is available in Annex A (see corresponding organisational infosheet number indicated in the table below).

¹ Based on the following: CTVET accreditation; training curricula and whether they are competency-based; availability of post-training mentoring, follow-up support and networking (e.g. alumni association); on-going or past collaboration with or technical and financial support they have received from international partners, and feedback from them; post-training monitoring and percentage of training graduates gaining employment or starting-up their own business, when such statistics are available.

Table 2: Training institutions that could be involved in returnees' reintegration

Institution	Type of training				Geographic location	Info-sheet #	Short description / reasons for shortlisting
	TVET	Entrepreneurship	Soft skills	Employability			
Accra Technical Training Centre	X				Greater Accra	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public training institution at tertiary level, in operation since 1966 ▪ Trains workers and secondary school graduates for various trades and occupations, including some through the competency-based approach ▪ Has full and part time trainings and can tailor programme duration and entry requirements to partner/client's needs ▪ (Limited) accommodation available for students from outside Greater Accra ▪ Established with support from Canada; a UNESCO-UNEVOC partner centre since 2002; has worked for GIZ and the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), but not IOM ▪ Has an alumni association ▪ http://www.attcghana.com
Anointed Technical Training Institute	X				Accra and Kumasi (Ashanti region)	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private TVET institution created recently in 2019, registered by CTNET with competency-based curriculum, and accredited by the Energy Commission of Ghana ▪ Training at secondary and tertiary levels ▪ Short courses (3-5 days), refresher courses (6 months), and long courses (1-2 years) in various trades; focus on practice; part-time training classes available ▪ Can work for private companies seeking to recruit or train their staff ▪ Paid classes, no stipend provided ▪ Over 70% of graduates become self-employed; job placement service available; graduates are tracked after training ▪ https://www.attigh.com

Don Bosco Technical Institute	X				Tema (Greater Accra), Sunyani (Bono region), Tatale (Northern region)	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Faith based, non-profit TVET institution managed by Salesians of Don Bosco (Catholic Church), a transnational organisation with international reach ▪ Provides non-formal education training of short duration (3-6 months) in various sectors, targeting the economically and socially marginalized youth ▪ Courses free of charge except an equipment usage fee for certain courses (USD 80); accommodation and food provided, but no stipend except if sponsored by partners ▪ GIZ partner. IOM TVET partner for a batch of returnees in 2018 ▪ Keeps contact with graduates, reports a 50-60% post-training employment rate
Field Ready	X		X	X	Accra, and Kumasi (Ashanti region)	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Small size, international, private sector organisation with presence in other countries; non-formal education; no CTVET accreditation ▪ Works for/with both MDAs (e.g. NSS) and private sector clients (e.g. Danone, Coca Cola, Miro Forestry Ghana); no collaboration with IOM, GIZ, or GCC ▪ Services: worker skills upgrading, recruitment, and placement in wage employment in the industry and manufacturing sectors primarily; tailors training programmes/curricula to client's needs and trainees' profile to ensure direct employability and placement ▪ Typical training duration: 3-6 months; focus on practice; includes soft skills training ▪ Can work almost anywhere through local training partners (uses the facilities and staff of different vetted and trained TVET centres) but tends to focus on urban areas ▪ Focus on women and vulnerable youths with junior or senior high school certificate ▪ Training (and stipend) paid by clients, not by trainees ▪ Approach, competitive beneficiary selection process, and high training quality, results in high post-training placement/employment rate (98%). M&E system in place ▪ https://www.getfieldready.com
iCode	X				Takoradi (Western region)	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private training company founded in 2015 ▪ Provides various types of IT/tech/digital skills training to individuals and companies ▪ Training duration ranges from 12 to 20 weeks depending on the course ▪ Worked with/for numerous MDAs and DPs incl. NEIP, World Bank, UNDCF & SNV (GrEEen project), AFD, MasterCard Foundation, British Council, MTN, AfriLabs ▪ No M&E and post-training employment statistics readily available ▪ http://icodegh.com

Kwadaso Agricultural College	X	X	X		Kumasi (Ashanti region)	6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public, tertiary education institution created in 1922, specialised in agriculture and livestock farming, offering short and long training courses incl. entrepreneurship training ▪ Target mostly youth in rural areas, with an emphasis on women; can design and deliver tailored technical trainings for a specific programme or population ▪ Developed a 'Mobile Certificate in General Agriculture' to cater to smallholder farmers, who cannot afford to travel to the College to receive instruction; rather, College instructors travel to the communities requesting the training and deliver a 6-week competency-based courses. E-learning also available for some courses. ▪ Partnered with various DPs on short-term training (paid for by DPs) with certification and placement, incl. SNV and EUTF-funded ARCHIPELAGO project. Upgraded ICT equipment. ▪ https://kca.edu.gh
University of Cape Coast	X	X			Cape Coast, Central region	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public, tertiary education institution, with a TVET department established in 1993 with UNDP support and became a UNESCO-UNEVOC partner centre in 2010 ▪ Ranked 4th African university by Time Higher Education World University Ranking 2022 ▪ Beyond the traditional academic programmes, the department periodically offers training programmes to train and upgrade skills in various trades for the informal sector, and has an e-learning programme; includes entrepreneurship training ▪ Recently modernised by CTVET ▪ https://ucc.edu.gh and TVET department webpage
Volontariato Internazionale per lo Sviluppo (VIS)	X	X			Accra, Sunyani and Kranka (Brong Ahafo region), Berekum (Bono region), and others	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Italian NGO present in Ghana since 2015, active in the irregular migration, reintegration, TVET, and agriculture sectors (particularly organic agriculture and livestock production) ▪ Worked on EU projects and others; experience with returnees ▪ Non-formal education but collaborates with the University of Ghana Business School and Don Bosco Training Institute Sunyani and planned to get CTVET accreditation ▪ Short training (few months), includes entrepreneurship class ▪ No entry requirement; focus on youth and vulnerable groups; training free of charge (sponsored by donors), stipend only if donor funded; food provided ▪ Post-training mentorship and monitoring programme ▪ https://www.volint.it/vis-nel-mondo/ghana

Whizzy Academy	X	X	X	X	Kumasi (Ashanti region)	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private training provider and consultancy – non-formal, not accredited by CTVET (tbc) ▪ Designs, develops & implements youth employability initiatives, soft skills curricula and training for clients, and undertakes consultancy assignments for MDAs (e.g. NEIP) and DPs (e.g. GIZ, SNV, British Council, SOS Children’s Villages) ▪ Focus on ICT, coding, digital and social media marketing, and entrepreneurship ▪ 3 to 4-month training, paid but free if sponsored by partners/donors ▪ Post-training monitoring of graduates; 50% employment rate after short course ▪ https://whizzyacademy.org and https://www.facebook.com/whizzyacademy/
YMCA	X				Accra and Achimota (Greater Accra), Takoradi (Western region)	10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Non-profit, faith-based organisation with first TVET centre established in Ghana in 1966 ▪ Non-formal education but with CTVET accreditation and certification for various trades ▪ Training duration ranges from 18 months to 3 years ▪ Paid training (around GHS 2 000 per course depending on the duration and trade) ▪ Partnered with & supported by a few German organisations such as Bread for the World ▪ No M&E department or system ▪ https://ymcaghana.org

4.1.3. KEY GOVERNMENT AND DONOR PROGRAMMES IN THE SKILLS DEVELOPMENT SECTOR

There are numerous MDAs and donors promoting skills development for youth in Ghana including in high emigration and return areas. They do not directly provide skills training but manage programmes and support training institutions that do so in specific regions or sectors, and sponsor target beneficiaries. The ones listed below are or may be able to enrol returnees sponsored or just referred by reintegration actors and programmes, with an adapted application and screening process. In any case, it is recommended that the EU facilitates or incentivises such collaborations and referrals. There are also experiences to be shared (e.g. on the best training institutions in certain regions or sectors, and best practices to boost post-training employment rates) and synergies and complementarities to be created in policy and institutional support.

Table 3: Other key actors involved in TVET/skills development for youth with whom increased coordination or referrals is recommended

Structure	Project	Geographic location	Projects' status
Government			
MoTI	<p><i>Rural Enterprises Programme (REP):</i> Offers farming and agro-business related TVET to unskilled or low-skilled youth and women and helps them start-up or develop their business. On-going since 1995. Current phase co-funded by the AfDB and IFAD. Further information: project website, component details, AfDB webpage, IFAD webpage</p>	Nationwide, focus on rural areas	On-going (current phase planned to end in 2024)
NEIP / MoBD	<p><i>Ghana Skills Centre:</i> Offers or will offer free, online technical, entrepreneurship and employability skills training in English and local languages. https://ghanaskillscentre.gov.gh/</p>	Nationwide	Upcoming
NYA	<p><i>Skills Towards Employability and Productivity (STEP):</i> Provides semi-skilled and skilled youth in the informal sector with artisanal trade, vocational and entrepreneurial skills as well as soft skills. https://www.nya.gov.gh/programmes/employment-entrepreneurship</p>	Nationwide	On-going
YEA	<p><i>Youth skills development and placement programme / 'training modules':</i> Facilitates a 2-year paid placement for low skilled youth aged 18-35 to gain on-the-job experience in partnering institutions in the following sectors: entrepreneurship (manufacture, trade, ICT), agriculture, education and community service, health, sports, sanitation & environment, garment & fashion, security services. Web page: https://www.yea.gov.gh/index.php/yea-modules</p>	Nationwide	On-going since 2016 (no set end date)
Development partners			
AfDB	<p><i>Post-Covid-19 Skills Development and Productivity Enhancement Project:</i> Develops and modernises health education and TVET centres; TVET, entrepreneurship and financial literacy</p>	Nationwide	On-going (2022-2027)

	<p>training for youth and women, and helps them start up or formalise their business.</p> <p>Project webpage, and press release</p>		
	<p><i>Eastern Corridor Road Development:</i></p> <p>The community development component of this infrastructure project includes TVET (in construction) and entrepreneurial skills training for youth in intervention communities.</p> <p>Project webpage</p>	Eastern regions	On-going (2020-2024)
Canada	<p><i>INVEST in Her:</i></p> <p>The Innovation in Non-traditional Vocational Education and Skills Training (INVEST) for Women project targets women for TVET and entrepreneurship training, apprenticeship/job placement, coaching and/or financial support to help them enter in selected, high-growth, and male-dominated trades. Includes a sensitisation & advocacy component. Implemented by World University Service Canada.</p> <p>Project leaflet</p>	Greater Accra, Ashanti, and Western regions	On-going (2020-2025)
EU	<p><i>Ghana Skills Development Initiative, phase 4:</i></p> <p>Promotes institutional framework for TVET; develops occupational standards and competency-based training programmes in agriculture and construction, provides training & equipment to TVET providers, support financing schemes. Co-funded by Germany and Switzerland and led by GIZ (see below).</p>	Nationwide	On-going since 2019
	<p><i>Boosting green employment and enterprise opportunities in Ghana (GrEEn project):</i></p> <p>Promotes youth, women and returnees' employment and environmental protection through technical, entrepreneurial, life, and employability skills training, cash for work, financing schemes for start-up businesses, incubation, and job placement in green jobs. Jointly implemented by SNV and UNCDF.</p> <p>Project webpage</p>	Ashanti and Western regions	On-going (2019-2023)
	<p><i>Developing a thriving and inclusive Green Economy in Ghana (part of ARCHIPELAGO programme):</i></p> <p>TVET, mentoring, and help with job search for selected women and returnees, and support to TVET centres. Target sectors: waste management and sustainable forestry. Implemented by Inclusive Business Sweden, YMCA Ghana, Social Enterprise Ghana</p> <p>Project factsheet, webpage, and progress update</p>	Kumasi (Ashanti region), Koforidua (Eastern region), Accra	On-going (2019-2022)
	Several other projects listed below and in section 4.2.3 comprise a skills development component	Various regions	On-going
GIZ	<p><i>Ghanaian-German Centre for Jobs, Migration, and Reintegration (GGC):</i></p> <p>Supports both the general youth and returnees with job counselling, skills training, short- and long-term employment opportunities, business start-up support, and other services specifically targeted at 'potential/prospective migrants' and returnees (esp. those from Europe)</p> <p>GGC website</p>	Greater Accra	On-going since 2017 (not set end date)

	<p><i>Programme for Sustainable Economic Development (PSED) - Ghana Skills Development Initiative (GSDI) phase IV:</i></p> <p>Supports the expansion and strengthening of Ghana's TVET system incl. through capacity building of CTVET, support to other umbrella organisations, revision of the national qualifications framework, recognition of prior learning, certification of workplace trainers, development of TVET in agriculture, and provision of competency-based training to trainers, job seekers, and agri-entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Project webpage, factsheet, and website</p>	Nationwide	On-going since 2019
ILO	<p><i>Skill-Up Ghana project:</i></p> <p>Aims to make the TVET system at national level more responsive to labour market needs through capacity building of CTVET, identification of skills gaps, creation of the Sector Skills Bodies, definition of industry standards, and revision of TVET curricula; and more inclusive of youth, women, migrants, and low-skilled workers.</p> <p>Project webpage</p>	Nationwide	On-going since 2018, phase 2 is planned to end late 2022
	<p><i>Initiative for Labour Migration, Employment and Reintegration in Ghana and Nigeria:</i></p> <p>Promotes fair and effective labour migration governance and enhances employment and income generating opportunities of potential and return migrants through studies, advocacy, and training & support to the MELR PECs and GGC. In partnership with GIZ.</p> <p>Project webpage</p>	Nationwide	On-going since 2019 – planned end date: April 2023 (tbc)
Mastercard Foundation	<p><i>Transforming Youth TVET Livelihoods for Sustainable Jobs:</i></p> <p>High-quality precision fabrication training, and employability and entrepreneurship skills training to young job seekers, master craft persons, and MSMEs; rollout of competency based TVET in training centres and teaching of teachers. Implemented by Design and Technology Institute.</p> <p>Press release for further info on the project</p>	Nationwide	2021-2023
World Bank	<p><i>Ghana Jobs and Skills Project:</i></p> <p>Sponsors apprenticeships, technical and entrepreneurship training, coaching, and grants to job seekers aged 18-40 and enterprises. At the institutional level: supports the GLMIS implementation, upgrades district PECs, reviews youth employment and skills development programmes, and builds capacity of sector stakeholders. Implemented through CTVET, MoTI/Ghana Enterprises Agency (GEA), and MELR.</p> <p>Project website</p>	Nationwide	On-going since 2022, planned to end in 2026

2. ENTREPRENEURSHIP AND FINANCIAL SERVICES

4.2.1. SECTOR OVERVIEW

The national development plans, sectoral policies, and reintegration SOPs all emphasise the role of MSMEs and the need for easing the numerous constraints faced by entrepreneurs – including returnees supported in starting up a microbusiness. They point to the institutional fragmentation and poor governance and coordination among MDAs involved in entrepreneurship

regulation and promotion¹; heavy business registration procedures and tax system, which disincentivise business start-up and formalisation; low entrepreneurship skills and culture among the youth; and insufficient access to markets, infrastructure, and affordable credit, even in urban areas^{xxiii}. Despite the additional, targeted support they received from reintegration partners, returnees have equally suffered from this uncondusive business environment. Their individual and collective projects have struggled to start-up and become profitable. On the other hand, the completeness and quality of EU-funded economic reintegration assistance could be improved^{xxiv}. The government aims to make Ghana the most business-friendly country in Africa, and the rapidly evolving context provides great opportunities for future programming, even more so since the COVID-19 crisis.

The recent reforms, progress, and opportunities in Ghana and for returnees include:

- *Improved regulatory and policy framework:* As part of the donor-supported Business Regulatory Reforms launched in 2017 and implemented across 40+ MDAs, the Companies Code and the Corporate Governance Code were respectively updated in 2019 and 2020, an e-registration procedure was introduced, and other legislations and procedures streamlined. A new MSME and entrepreneurship sector policy is being drafted.
- *Institutional reforms and decentralised business support services:* In 2021, NBSSI was transformed into the Ghana Enterprises Agency (GEA) with a new status and the mandate to bring various MSME support initiatives under a single umbrella, encourage youth entrepreneurship and innovation, and facilitate access to finance. Its local Business Advisory/Resource Centres (BRC/BACs) are one-stop shops offering a range of services². They currently have about 190 locations, one in almost every district, and more are being built. They are involved in returnees' reintegration by reviewing and validating their business plans. Local Technology Solution Centres are also being multiplied by the MoTI to provide business development and technology services. The Ghana Economic Transformation Project launched in 2020 and funded by the World Bank set out to create new entrepreneurship hubs and support organisations which could play a role in reintegration assistance^{xxv}.
- *Continued infrastructure improvement:* The government, with support from donors, is developing and modernising road, energy/electricity, water supply, and internet networks and services to increase coverage and reliability, including through public-private partnerships. The Economic Transformation Project will also expand special economic zones, industrial parks, and last mile infrastructure.
- *New nationwide entrepreneurship development programmes:* The GEA and the Economic Transformation Project are only two of the many on-going government and donor initiatives that work to improve the enabling environment and provide direct technical and financial assistance to existing and start-up entrepreneurs. Numerous programmes were launched as part of the response to the COVID-19 crisis, with a focus on ICT, green technology, and women-owned businesses³, and on consolidating value chains in priority sectors. Coordination with and referrals of returnees to these programmes could be arranged.
- *Facilitating access to finance:* To mitigate the impact of the crisis and improve the financial inclusion of entrepreneurs, including those in the informal sector, the government requested that financial institutions simplify their processes and procedures and offer more affordable credit with the aim to

¹ A World Bank inventory conducted in 2016 found 22 main public sector-led youth entrepreneurship and employment programmes.

² Including management and entrepreneurship training, business counselling and advisory, business plan preparation, facilitation of access to finance/credit, business health checks/business diagnostics, productivity improvement programmes, identification of new business opportunities, and capacity building for institutions.

³ Including helping small businesses maintain their staff or recruit new ones and acquire ICT equipment and skills.

nearly double their lending to MSMEs. It also introduced new loan and grant schemes¹. In 2022, it officially launched the Development Bank Ghana (DBG) to support financial institutions in providing long-term lending and business advisory services to small and medium enterprises in agribusiness, manufacturing, ICT and high-value services.

- *Additional financial services available:* Additional funding opportunities or financial intermediation services are not included in economic reintegration assistance and are what returnees report lacking the most. There are misperceptions and information gaps among microentrepreneurs in general, yet financing opportunities exist. There is a wide range of non-bank financing institutions with different lending conditions and modalities, from higher-interest, high-collateral microfinance institutions, to lower-interest credit unions and financial NGOs specifically targeting micro-entrepreneurs of the informal sector, to smaller-scale, more local and informal cooperatives and village savings and loan groups, to non-interest thrifts. The list of all registered institutions is available on the Bank of Ghana [website](#), and a brief sector overview on the [website](#) of the network of Ghanaian non-bank microfinance institution (Ghamfin)². Other relevant service providers and programmes offer financial information, financial literacy training, bookkeeping apps, and facilitation/intermediation services.
- *Additional entrepreneurship support available:* Ghana also hosts an estimated 200+ non-financial organisations which provide a wide range of services focusing on early-stage businesses, from one-off and targeted support to longer-term, integrated business support. These include the business associations/networks and entrepreneurship hubs mentioned above as well as co-working spaces, entrepreneurship training providers, business development coaches/consultants, and full-fledge business incubators / accelerators. They have blossomed in the past five to ten years^{xxvi}. Many of them are being supported by the EU, Member States (BMZ/GIZ), as well as the World Bank and the Mastercard Foundation (see directory in Annex B). EU reintegration programmes have not enough, or not yet leveraged the opportunities offered by these actors.

4.2.2. PROVIDERS OF ENTREPRENEURSHIP SUPPORT RELEVANT FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

Due to the high number of actors providing various types of services, and the diversity of needs of returnees at the various stages of development of their microbusinesses, the list of service providers suggested below for future reintegration programming is to be considered as a starting point: it should be further reviewed and expanded. Service providers were selected based on the following criteria:

- Relevance of services for returnees' economic reintegration, based on the experience of the EU and the JI in Ghana
- Mix of different types of entrepreneurship support services: business skills training and advisory for micro-entrepreneurs, follow-up coaching/mentoring, access to workspace and infrastructure, market facilitation, networking, grants, loans, and financial intermediation services
- Accessibility and quality of services for returnees, e.g. geographic location/coverage, affordability, overall management and absorption capacity, support received from international partners and feedback from them, and ability to adapt to the specific and varied profiles and needs of returnees
- Mix of public, private, and civil society organisations
- No yet partnering with IOM and ERRIN – or only for recent, limited, or short-term collaborations.

¹ For example, GIRSA's Interest Rate Subsidy Initiative launched in 2021 grants a 50% subsidy on financial institutions' interest charges for loans advanced to qualified agribusinesses in selected value chains and activities. The GCX and Venture Capital Trust Fund (VCTF) have jointly set-up an Aggregation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund to provide funding for commodity aggregators to buy produce from smallholder farmers. More schemes/programmes are presented below in section 4.2.3.

² The microfinance sector has been 'cleaned' by the government of Ghana in 2018-2019, and little information is available online on the existing/remaining institutions. As a result, recommendations on the most relevant financial institutions from a reintegration programming perspective could not be made within the scope and period of this mapping study.

Organisations are sorted below by alphabetical order. Additional information is available in Annex A (see corresponding infosheet number indicated in the table below), except for GEA which is already known from the EU and its reintegration IPs, and MDF and MDPI that could not be interviewed for the study.

Table 4: Business service providers EU’s implementing partners could refer returnees to or step up their collaboration with

Organisation	Type of services				Geographic location	Info-sheet #	Brief presentation
	Training	Coaching, mentoring	Workspace, infrastructure	Access to financial services			
Ghana Enterprise Agency (GEA)	X	X		X	Nationwide	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government institution under the MoTI promoting entrepreneurship, providing business support services to all types of MSMEs, and facilitating access to grants and loans. Free services and nationwide coverage through its BAC/BRCs ▪ Manages several programmes incl. COVID-19 relief ones; between September 2021 and March 2022, disbursed USD 5 million in COVID-19 response grants to 370 SMEs and another USD 5 million are earmarked for 2023-2025 (see more GEA programmes below) ▪ IOM partnered with GEA in April 2021 to train selected returnees; numerous other DPs including the World Bank support and work with/through the Agency, which reinforces national systems and ensures government ownership over their interventions ▪ https://gea.gov.gh
Microfinance and Loans Centre (MASLOC)				X	Nationwide	11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Government apex body established in 2006 providing microcredit, small individual and group loans, equipment, market information and other advisory services to start-ups and small businesses, cooperatives, associations, and individuals (focus on youth and women). ▪ Lending nationwide through its 16 regional offices, and local offices in most districts ▪ Nearly 200 000 customers and USD 23 million lending in the period 2017-2020 alone; receiving additional funding since 2019 to expand its lending capacity ▪ Low interest rates (as low as 1% per month = 12% per year) for typical loan amounts of USD 20 to 2 000, for a duration of up to 1 year ▪ Substantial technical and financial support being received from the AfDB. No known partnership with reintegration partners

						<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ https://www.masloc.gov.gh
Management for Development Foundation (MDF)	X	X		Accra / nationwide	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Private training and consultancy company based in the Netherlands with offices in other countries including in Ghana. Offers advisory, training, and enterprise development services; collaborates with numerous entrepreneurship centres and tech hubs (see Annex B) ▪ Assisted IOM Ghana in setting up a microcredit schemes for returnee reintegration as part of the Remploy III project (2012-2016) – see related IOM publication ▪ https://www.mdf.nl
Management Development and Productivity Institute (MDPI)	X	X		Nationwide	-	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sub-vented Agency under the MELR. Involved in implementation of multiple DP programmes (including the GIZ-ILO ‘Invest for Jobs project’) by providing the ILO SCORE training, management training, and in-factory coaching to small entrepreneurs and supporting institutions nationwide since 2013 ▪ https://www.mdpi.gov.gh
OZE	X	X	X	Nationwide	12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Multifunction, paid, FinTech mobile app designed for micro and small businessowners and available on Google Play since 2018. Founded and based in Ghana, expanded to Nigeria ▪ Offers multiple financial and non-financial services: Users can receive payments from mobile money and card, generate invoices and payment reminders, keep records of all transactions (bookkeeping), build their financial history and creditworthiness, directly apply within the app for loans from partner microfinance banks with subsidised interest rates and no collaterals, and manage loans; also provides online financial education and group and individual business coaching ▪ 215 000 registered clients in Ghana and Nigeria as of mid-2020; since it is online, it can help reach a scattered, remote target population ▪ On-going partnership with GIZ, UNCDF, and Ecobank (under the ‘GrEEN’ project) ▪ https://getoze.com
Social Enterprise Ghana (SEG)	X		X	Nationwide	13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ National network organisation providing policy advocacy, networking, training, research, financial intermediation, market facilitation (e.g. through fairs), and other services to social entrepreneurs, hubs, accelerators, impact investors, and business organisations ▪ Reports ~840 member organisations from diverse sectors: climate-smart agribusiness, TVET and education, green jobs, health, inclusive financial services, etc. ▪ Has goal of catalysing USD 1 billion for social enterprises by 2030 ▪ Works with SNV and UNCDF on the EUTF-funded ‘GrEEN’ project in the Ashanti and Western regions; no collaboration with other EUTF implementing partners ▪ https://seghana.net

4.2.3. KEY GOVERNMENT AND DONOR PROGRAMMES

The following government and donor programmes tackle youth unemployment through entrepreneurship promotion and facilitating access to markets and finance. They help job seekers start up a small business and/or support existing businesses in selected regions and sectors (age of target group: 18–35, typically). They can benefit returnees as long as their intervention sectors/areas qualify. Most of these programmes also have a policy and capacity development component. Coordinating actions, organising referrals, and sharing lessons would be mutually beneficial.

Table 5: Entrepreneurship support programmes with whom increased coordination and/or referrals are recommended

Structure	Project	Geographic location	Projects' status
Government			
Ghana CARES	<p><i>Ghana COVID-19 Alleviation and Revitalization of Enterprises Support (CARES) “Obaatan pa” programme:</i></p> <p>Its entrepreneurship support component includes increased loan and grant allocations to existing MSMEs and employees affected by the crises; supporting commercial farming and attracting and training youth into agriculture; equipping companies with engineering/machine tools and ICTs; targeted support to MSMEs in agriculture, pharmaceuticals, ICT, textile, and construction; grants and subsidised loans. Also has a Youth in Innovative Agriculture Support component offering training for 1 month, and best training graduates will receive business start-up funding and support.</p> <p>Implemented by NEIP and several other MDAs (see below), co-funded by the World Bank</p> <p>Further info: https://www.ghanacares.gov.gh and https://www.ghanacares.gov.gh/resources</p>	Nationwide	2020-2023
MoBD / NEIP	<p><i>National Entrepreneurship and Innovation Programme (NEIP):</i></p> <p>Integrated, youth-focused entrepreneurship support programme placed under the Ministry of Business Development, which includes several components: incubation/acceleration programme for selected, innovative business ideas and support to existing incubators; training, advisory/coaching, and low-interest financing (primarily through a dedicated fund) for potential or start-up entrepreneurs, cooperatives, and youth-led organisations; facilitation of access to markets through an online marketplace; policy reforms and ecosystem strengthening.</p> <p>Programme website: https://neip.gov.gh</p>	Nationwide (with 16 regional offices)	Started in 2017 (no set end date)
	<p><i>Ghana Skills Centres:</i></p> <p>This new NEIP programme component offers or will offer free, online entrepreneurship and employability skills training in English and local languages.</p> <p>Website: https://ghanaskillscentre.gov.gh/</p>	Nationwide	Started in 2022 (no set end date)
MoFA	<i>Youth in Agriculture Programme (YIAP):</i>	Nationwide	N/A

	Provides equipment, inputs, training, and technical support to farmers in crops/block farm, livestock & poultry, fisheries/aquaculture, and agribusiness. https://mofa.gov.gh/site/programmes/youth-in-agriculture		
MoTI	<i>Rural Enterprises Programme (REP):</i> (Also referred above among TVET programmes) Focus on farming and agro business. Targets rural MSMEs with a focus on youth and women with low skills and starting capital. In addition to TVET, offers entrepreneurship training, grants, loans, equipment, and access to business development services from the district BRC/BACs and Technology Solution Centres. Also targets these support institutions as well as business umbrella organisations. Project website , component details , AfDB webpage , IFAD webpage	Nationwide, focus on rural areas	On-going (current phase planned to end in 2024)
	<i>One District One Factory programme:</i> Aims to build one private-sector built and operated factory in every district, or expand existing ones, and create massive employment particularly for the youth in rural and peri-urban communities. Offers training, business support services, and access to finance. Its 'Enable Youth' component targets young start-up entrepreneurs and provides a range of training and business start-up support equipment/services. Supported by various DPs (GIZ, USAID, AfDB) Programme website: https://1d1f.gov.gh	Nationwide	On-going since 2017, no set end date
NYA	<i>Skills Towards Employability and Productivity (STEP) and Youth Agri-Enterprise Support (YAES) programmes:</i> Provides artisanal trade and vocational skills training or training in agriculture to semi-skilled and skilled youth in the informal sector, as well as financial literacy, marketing & branding, leadership, cooperative, and entrepreneurship skills training, and business start-up support. Links: https://www.nya.gov.gh/programmes/employment-entrepreneursip and https://www.nya.gov.gh/frequently-asked-questions	Nationwide	Started 2022, no set end date (tbc)
Development partners			
AFD	<i>Accompagner l'accélération d'entreprises inclusives et digitales en Afrique continentale (AFIDBA):</i> Provide grants, loans, capacity building and technical assistance to incubators and start-ups in Ghana, Morocco, Senegal, and Burkina Faso. Webpage of the project	Nationwide	On-going since 2019
AfDB	<i>Post-Covid-19 Skills Development and Productivity Enhancement Project:</i> (Also referred among TVET projects) Its entrepreneurship component provides entrepreneurship and financial literacy training to youth and women; helps them set up, register or formalise their business; modernises MASLOC management systems; and offers loans to youth and women led MSMEs through MASLOC. Project webpage and press release	Nationwide	On-going (2022-2027)

	<p><i>Savannah Agriculture Value Chain Development Project:</i> Will provide equipment and inputs to farmers, support the production of seeds, maize, rice and soybean, strengthen the poultry value chain, and sensitise communities about agriculture and water management regulations and modern practices Press release</p>	Savannah region	Upcoming (2023-2027)
	<p><i>Boost Africa / Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab:</i> Capacity building to enterprise-supporting organisations (ESOs) incl. incubators and accelerators through workshops, trainings, funding, and strengthening their service offer; mentoring services and platforms for start-ups; online platform, networking events and interactions between ESOs, investors, start-ups, existing companies, and academia in order to strengthen the linkages within the ecosystem, knowledge exchange and innovation; small-scale financing for start-ups; capacity building and advocacy to financing institutions and funds manager to increase funding for start-ups in agriculture, ICT, energy, financial services, health, education. Project webpage and here</p>	Nationwide	On-going (2019-2024)
	<p><i>Strengthening the financing pillars of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Ghana:</i> Strengthens the financial component of the entrepreneurship ecosystem (policy, regulations, stakeholder dialog, information system, seed capital, sensitisation, and capacity building of MSMEs) to improve access to finance for women- and youth-led start-ups (18-35) and MSMEs. Project webpage</p>	Nationwide	On-going (2020-2023)
DANIDA	<p><i>We Grow:</i> Testing the commercial viability of certain digital agricultural services for Ghanaian farmers, promoting business models for youth enabled by connectivity, and training of farmers. Implemented through Care and Bluetown Ghana. Project webpage</p>	Asunafo (Ahafo region)	On-going (2019-2024)
GIZ	<p><i>Programme for Sustainable Economic Development / Migration & Employment Promotion (MEP) component:</i> Promotes (self)-employment for disadvantaged population groups, including returning and potential migrants, through short TVET, entrepreneurship and financial literacy training, start up support, incubation/mentoring, and facilitating access to finance. Also provides material support to MELR PECs, GGC, and NVTI. PSED webpage and factsheet, and MEP project factsheet</p>	Greater Accra, Bono, Bono East, Ahafo and Ashanti regions	On-going since 2017
	<p><i>Programme for Sustainable Economic Development / Financial System Development:</i> Helps microfinance institutions, rural banks and other providers of financial service to MSMEs improve their service offer and their management; supports improvements in the regulatory framework. Project factsheet</p>	Nationwide	2019-2022

	<p><i>Sustainable Employment through Agribusiness (AgriBiz):</i> Strengthens the quality of agricultural production/processing and business management of 500 MSMEs in seven value chains (cashew nuts, peanuts, vegetables, mangos, rice, soya and sorghum) in North-West Ghana; improves supply chain integration; support organisations providing business advisory/development services and business associations. EU co-funding. Project webpage</p>	North-West regions, focus on rural areas	On-going (2021-2024)
	<p><i>Digital Transformation Centre:</i> Develops digital platforms, skills, and entrepreneurship in rural areas through a network of already existing community ICT centres and innovation hubs, themselves being financially and technically supported by the project; contributes to related GIZ initiatives (Make-IT in Africa; eSkills4Girls...); capacity building, policy advocacy, and system strengthening. Project factsheet</p>	Nationwide	2020-2022
	<p><i>Make-IT in Africa:</i> Trains, supports and connects start-ups focusing on green technology, smart city solutions, and promoting women entrepreneurs; strengthens services offered by enterprise networks, innovation hubs and entrepreneurship support organisations; advocates to improve the policy and institutional framework for digital innovation. Project webpage</p>	Nationwide	On-going (2020-2024)
	<p><i>Invest for Jobs (Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation):</i> Helps develop business parks and industrial estates and supports existing SMEs, business associations, and training centres in growth sectors (esp. automotive sector and agriculture). Project webpage and website</p>	Nationwide	2019-2025
EU	<p><i>Boosting green employment and enterprise opportunities in Ghana (GrEEEn project):</i> (Also referred in the TVET section) GrEEEn offers entrepreneurship and financial literacy training and support to existing or new entrepreneurs (incl. through the app OZE mentioned above) and supports MSMEs creating 'green jobs' as well as incubation centres. Project webpage</p>	Ashanti and Western regions	On-going (2019-2023)
	<p><i>Developing a thriving and inclusive Green Economy in Ghana (part of ARCHIPELAGO programme):</i> (Also referred in the TVET section) Includes entrepreneurship training, MSME mentorship, and support to incubation centres (equipment, training, development of their service offer).</p>	Kumasi (Ashanti region), Koforidua (Eastern region), Accra	On-going (2019-2022)
	<p>Multiple other projects supporting the agriculture / agrobusiness / fisheries sector among others; technical, entrepreneurial, and green skills in rural areas; incubation and access to finance for MSMEs through business</p>	Multiple regions	On-going

	associations and advisory services as well as village saving and loan associations; intervening in various regions (List and details of projects)		
ITC	Multiple projects in trade, agriculture, fashion & textile, digital technology, value chain development, and entrepreneurship See webpage	Nationwide	On-going
JICA	<i>Kaizen project.</i> Diagnostic of existing MSMEs, improvement plan, entrepreneurship training and mentoring, and additional business support services provided through the GEA's BRCs and targeting manufacturing MSMEs. Support to BRCs, incubators/accelerators hub, and other institutions. Project webpage	Nationwide	On-going since 2012 (no set end date)
MasterCard Foundation	<i>Young Africa Works:</i> Entrepreneurship development and employment programme targeting youth esp. women. 3 components: 1) TVET & entrepreneurship training, business start-up kit and registration, mentoring, seed funding for selected start-up entrepreneurs (target group aged 18-35); 2) apprenticeship programme incl. business and financial literacy training and certification of acquired skills, start-up kit, mentoring for one year (target: unskilled youth aged 16-35); 3) training and facilitating access to markets and finance for existing MSMEs; support to incubation centres and financial institutions to improve their service offer. Project webpage and website)	Nationwide	On-going (2020-2023)
UNDP	<i>GEF Small Grant Programme and Post-COVID support to MSMEs:</i> Grant, training, business advisory to farmers (webpage); and integrated interventions incl. communication & marketing training, business support and seed funding, to selected innovators and MSMEs (webpage).	Bono region and others	On-going
USAID	Multiple projects in agriculture (support to farmers and agrobusiness: webpage), and entrepreneurship & finance (facilitating access to finance, energy, and local and international markets for farmers and agriculture MSMEs: webpage).	Nationwide	On-going
World Bank	<i>Ghana Jobs and Skills Project.</i> (Also referred above under TVET programmes). Its entrepreneurship support component provides entrepreneurship training, coaching/mentoring and grants to micro and small businesses and people interested in starting a business. Project website	Nationwide	On-going since 2022, planned to end in 2026
	<i>YouStart Campaign:</i> This new component of the World Bank-funded Ghana Jobs and Skills Project targets start-ups with founders under the age of 35 and school graduates. It will support them with training (skills development, entrepreneurial support, and business advisory services), funding (access to competitive credit and starter packs), and enterprise promotion (mentoring and access to markets including	Nationwide	Started in 2022

	portals to facilitate 'digital linkages' between youth-led enterprises and other businesses and relevant MDAs). Website: https://youstartgisp.gheaonline.com		
	<i>Jobs for Youth through Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship Support.</i> Policy reforms; provision of common services and productive assets to MSMEs and private investors (e.g. specialised infrastructure and logistics, pilot production and product testing facilities, common training facilities); capacity building to business organisations, and value chain development; training, business advisory and grants to MSMEs. Focus on automotive assembly, components manufacturing, ICT, textile & garments. Project webpage	Nationwide	Upcoming (in 2023)
	<i>Ghana Economic Transformation Project.</i> Institutional reforms, development of last-mile infrastructure, support to new and existing IT training centres, entrepreneurship hubs and business support organisations, expansion of special economic zones and industrial parks, and provision of direct technical and financial assistance to MSMEs. Project webpage	Nationwide	On-going (2019 – 2025)

More entrepreneurship programmes can be searched on the entrepreneurship ecosystem mapping [webpage](#) created by the Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs in 2020-2021.

3. WAGE EMPLOYMENT AND THE PRIVATE SECTOR

4.3.1. SECTOR OVERVIEW

As described above, while numerous MDAs and DPs work to support private sector development, MSME formalisation, and job creation, wage employment is still difficult to access for low-skilled and unskilled youth – and even more so for returnees – and labour market intermediation mechanisms are fragmented and weak overall. EU reintegration and youth employment partners (IOM, ICMPD, SNV, Inclusive Business Sweden, etc.) have focused on providing training and in-kind support to returnees to establish their own businesses. They have not been successful so far in organising direct placements in wage employment – for multiple contextual, operational, and financial reasons. In 2021, IOM stepped up its approach in this area by partnering with YEA. Other employment service providers such as private employment agencies, recruitment platforms and HR consultancies have not been mobilised so far.

4.3.2. SELECTED EMPLOYMENT SERVICE PROVIDERS POTENTIALLY RELEVANT FOR FUTURE PROGRAMMING

In addition to the key public and private sector actors already listed above (YEA, NSS, PECs, GGC, NABCO, NYA, TVET centres, Field Ready, business associations and networks), the following ones could be involved in future reintegration programming.

Table 6: Recruitment/employment service providers EU implementing partners could refer returnees to or step up their collaboration with

Organisation	Brief presentation
Jobberman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 10 years in operation in Ghana ▪ Publishes job vacancies, reviews CV of registered job seekers, and provides individualised job search assistance; also publishes tips to increase employability and boost career development, and offers HR recruitment & management services to employers, incl. testing & pre-selecting job applicants ▪ Partnered with/worked for MDAs, GIZ, NGOs and private sector companies on employability training and job placement initiatives, with a focus on low skilled youths ▪ Private company originally based in Nigeria, where it is the largest private recruitment platform and employment agency and partners with numerous DPs on youth employment skills development programmes ▪ https://www.jobberman.com.gh
JobHouse	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ghanaian private company founded in 2010, with offices in Ghana and Northern Ghana ▪ Offers various services: recruitment, job placement programmes, CV writing support, HR consultancy, contract staffing, outsourcing, payroll management services, web design & web services ▪ https://jobhouse.com.gh
Manpower	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Local branch of the international, private company Manpower ▪ Offers various services: local and international job vacancies and recruitments; training and support with CV writing and interview preparation; HR advisory & services for employers in numerous/all sectors ▪ Works with large and small private companies ▪ https://manpowerghana.com
New Career Platform	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Online platform created in 2019 and funded with participation of the Dutch cooperation, and maintained by the Ghana Netherlands Business and Culture Council ▪ Provides online and in-person information and organises training workshops and events to equip young job seekers with job market information, technical skills, employability, and business skills (job orientation, job search, CV writing, business ideation & incubation, business branding & pitching, digital skills, access to finance...), etc. ▪ Partners with training and incubation centres, and private organisations and academia ▪ https://newcareerplatform.net/

When designing and budgeting its future reintegration programmes, the EU should consider the following recommendations:

- **The EU needs to set up processes and incentives for increased synergies, cross-learning, and referrals between its IPs and with the other relevant MDAs and donors, as these will not naturally occur.** To achieve tangible results in this area, the EU should explicit how it expects them to be achieved; establish specific monitoring indicators and reporting requirements; put special emphasis on these aspects in every reintegration coordination meeting; and directly engage with stakeholders to create an adapted path for returnees into broader youth employment initiatives and avoid singling them out from other job seekers. This seems to be missing in current plans.
- **Programme adaptations will be needed for returnees enrolled in such broader initiatives, with budget implications.** For example, the EU may need to sponsor a training stipend top-up and extra in-kind and monetary start-up support for returnees (in addition to initial budget allocations) due to their particularly disadvantaged economic situation; additional support for job placements, due to the reluctance of some employers to take returnees in jobs, internships or apprenticeships; and more coaching and networking for returnees to set up and sustain their microbusiness, due to more limited social networks and geographic stability and an overall lower level of commitment. Moreover, psychosocial support should be made available to particularly vulnerable returnees throughout their reintegration process, incl. during training; and complementary sensitisation provided to programme managers and training providers on returnees' specific situation and needs.
- **Placing relevant MDAs more at the centre of the reintegration assistance process involves offering them increased support, because they will need to enhance some aspects of their organisation and capacities.** In addition to the abovementioned aspects, they will need to strengthen their management and absorption capacity; expand their network of partners (for instance to the organisations suggested above); review their quality assurance processes; and upgrade their internal information, monitoring, and reporting systems to meet with EU and IP requirements. GIZ is well placed to provide such assistance due to its experience with them and expertise in this area.
- **TVET, digital, entrepreneurship, financial literacy, employability, and soft skills training should be made available to returnees more systematically** since it has been found to increase reintegration effectiveness and sustainability. Moreover, Ghanaian national policies request them to be mainstreamed into all economic and employment programmes. The timing and sequencing of such support within the reintegration assistance process should be reviewed and improved by EU IPs and partner MDAs. Returnees who have already acquired those skills should continue to be supported through the CTVET *Recognition of Prior Learning* initiative.
- **The EU, IPs, and partner MDAs should aim for a more diverse TVET offering** (in terms of formal/non-formal training, sectors/job profiles, education entry level, duration, etc.) based on periodic labour market needs assessments and on the desires and needs of unemployed youth and returnees. Collaboration with TVET Service and CTVET will be essential in that regard. More training providers should be identified and supported in rural and remote return areas where they are scarce and less entrenched, but where skills development needs are great. Based on the education profile of returnees and the Ghanaian youth, training institutions at the secondary level should be prioritised. Among them, priority should be given to those upgraded by MDAs and DPs through competency-based curricula and modern equipment,

having an active collaboration with private sector employers, and able to demonstrate a high post-training employment rate.

- **The EU could consider funding/promoting the creation of financial cooperatives, revolving funds, or community saving and loans associations in communities of high departure and return (and among returnees specifically) or provide matching funds** to those managed by returnee associations and other groups, when they exist. This could be tested as a pilot initiative through reintegration IPs or other relevant agencies/programmes, with close field monitoring – along with partnerships with microfinance institutions ready to play a role in reintegration assistance. Lack of funding has been one of the major constraints faced by returnees.
- **The above means that the EU should increase its overall budget per returnee**, factoring in some additional level of flexibility to adapt to the unforeseeable evolution of return flows. This applies even if future EU funding focusses on institutional strengthening and on the most vulnerable returnees as opposed to directly supporting all returnees individually. Budget rationale and assumptions should be discussed with the concerned stakeholders (MDAs, IPs).
- **To complement the EU budget, which is likely to remain insufficient, the EU and its partners should tap into other, existing funding opportunities and financial services targeting young microentrepreneurs**, including those organisations and programmes listed further above, and others to be identified. The EU and other DPs could map those opportunities and, if separate funding streams are available, increase their lending capacity, subsidise micro-loans through a guarantee fund, provide co-funding for approved loans, or match grant schemes.

ⁱ Sources: Ghana Rising – Accelerating Economic Transformation and Creating Jobs, World Bank, 2021; and ‘Preserving the future: rising to the youth employment challenge’, Ghana Economic Update, World Bank, June 2022

ⁱⁱ *Ibid*

ⁱⁱⁱ ‘Preserving the future: rising to the youth employment challenge’, Ghana Economic Update, World Bank, June 2022. It is to be noted that unemployment, youth unemployment and underemployment rates and underlying definitions greatly vary accordingly to the source.

^{iv} *Ibid*

^v Ghana population and housing census 2021, Ghana Statistical Services, 2021

^{vi} Assistance to voluntary and humanitarian return to West and Central Africa: Profiles of migrants assisted to return to their country of origin between 2017 and June 2021, IOM, 2021

^{vii} Illegal Border Crossing database, Frontex, October 2022 update

^{viii} Libya Migrant Report, Displacement Tracking Matrix, IOM, October 2022

^{ix} Altai Consulting’s Monitoring and Learning System (MLS) for the EUTF.

^x Assistance to voluntary and humanitarian return to West and Central Africa: Profiles of migrants assisted to return to their country of origin between 2017 and June 2021, IOM, 2021

^{xi} Number of returnees benefitting from economic reintegration support JI provided by IOM Ghana.

^{xii} Lessons relevant for this mapping study. Based on: Third Party Monitoring & Learning Mechanism (TPML) for the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: Ghana country report and synthesis report for the Sahel and Lake Chad region, Altai Consulting, May 2021.

^{xiii} Sources are i) national development plan documents: National development plans Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies 2017-2024; Medium-Term National Development Policy Framework 2022-2025; Ghana Beyond Aid charter and strategy 2019; ii) sectoral policy and strategy documents: National Employment Policy, 2015; National Green Jobs Strategy, 2021-2025; and sector diagnostics: Ghana Rising – Accelerating Economic Transformation and Creating Jobs, World Bank, 2021; Preserving the future: rising to the youth employment challenge’, Ghana Economic Update, World Bank, 2022; Labour market and sector analysis, African Union/NEPAD, 2020; and TVET report for Ghana, CTVET, 2021.

^{xiv} Third Party Monitoring & Learning Mechanism (TPML) for the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: Ghana country report, Altai Consulting, May 2021

^{xv} “To the extent possible, actors covering the whole range of reintegration needs and preferences, including agencies (...), employment agencies, youth employment programmes, education and vocational training institutions, microfinance institutions, private sector and the like should be included in referral mechanisms. Existing ad-hoc referrals should be formalised.” Reintegration SOPs for Ghana, 2020.

^{xvi} Data reported by IOM in January 2023.

^{xvii} “In order to ensure adequate referrals, there should be an ongoing effort to identify the main services and programmes of potential relevance for returning migrants.” Reintegration SOPs for Ghana, 2020.

^{xviii} Based on interviews with key sector stakeholders, online research, and Youth employment programmes in Ghana, World Bank, 2020.

^{xix} An Inventory of Youth Employment Programmes in Ghana, World Bank, 2016

^{xx} These two points were highlighted in the report: ERRIN Technical Working Group on Reintegration & Development Operational Framework, ICMPD, 2022. The other sources for this paragraph are Ghana Migration Information Centre for Returnees (MICR): ERRIN Gov2Gov phase II project leaflet, 2020; Third Party Monitoring & Learning Mechanism (TPML) for the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa:

Ghana country report and synthesis report for the Sahel and Lake Chad region, Altai Consulting, May 2021; State of migration governance in Ghana, Altai Consulting, 2022

^{xxi} This section is based on: TVET Policy for Ghana, 2004; Ghana Youth Policies 2010 and 2022; Education strategic plan for Ghana 2018; Youth employment programmes in Ghana, World Bank, 2020; Ghana TVET report, CTVET, 2021; Medium-Term Development Policy Framework 2022; and Preserving the future: rising to the youth employment challenge', Ghana Economic Update, World Bank, 2022

^{xxii} Sources: UNESCO TVET country profile for Ghana: [Dynamic TVET Country Profiles \(unesco.org\)](https://unesco.org/); State of Skills in Ghana, ILO, 2020; and CTVET

^{xxiii} For more background information on the current economic and entrepreneurial context and on MSMEs' access to finance, see Ghana Rising – Accelerating Economic Transformation and Creating Jobs, World Bank, 2021; and Financial constraints to entrepreneurs in Ghana, Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs, 2021

^{xxiv} Third Party Monitoring & Learning Mechanism (TPML) for the EU Emergency Trust Fund for Africa: Ghana country report and synthesis report for the Sahel and Lake Chad region, Altai Consulting, May 2021

^{xxv} Project document available at: <https://documents.worldbank.org/en/publication/documents-reports/documentdetail/351101562378424349/ghana-economic-transformation-project>

^{xxvi} The main sources for this paragraph are the two reports published by Aspen Network of Development Entrepreneurs in 2021: Accra entrepreneurial ecosystem snapshot; and Financial constraints to entrepreneurs in Ghana