



RETURNING MIGRANTS' ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION: KEY STAKEHOLDERS AND POTENTIAL PARTNERSHIPS ACROSS WEST AFRICA & ETHIOPIA

REGIONAL SYNTHESIS

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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.

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ABBREVIATIONS

ACEFA: *Amélioration de la compétitivité des exploitations familiales agropastorales* (Improving the competitiveness of agro-pastoral family farms)

ADA: Austrian Development Agency

AECID: *Agencia Española de Cooperación Internacional para el Desarrollo*

AEJ (Côte d'Ivoire): *Agence Emploi Jeune* (Youth Employment Agency)

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

AfDB: African Development Bank

AFOP: *Programme d'appui à la rénovation et au développement de la formation professionnelle dans les secteurs de l'agriculture, de l'élevage et de la pêche* (Program to support the renovation and development of vocational training in the agriculture, livestock and fisheries sectors)

AGUIPE (Guinea): *Agence guinéenne pour la promotion de l'emploi* (Employment Agency).

ANAPEJ (Mauritania): *Agence nationale pour la promotion de l'emploi des jeunes* (Youth Employment Agency)

ANFP (Burkina Faso): *Agence nationale pour la formation Professionnelle* (National TVET Agency)

APEJ (Mali): *Agence pour la promotion de l'emploi jeune*

ANPE (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger): *Agence nationale pour l'emploi* (National Employment Agency)

ANPEJ (Senegal): *Agence nationale pour la promotion de l'emploi des jeunes* (Youth Employment Agency)

AVR: Assisted voluntary returns

AVRR: Assisted voluntary returns and reintegration

AVSF: *Agronomes et vétérinaires sans frontières* (Agronomists and veterinarians without borders)

BAOS (Senegal, Guinea): *Bureau d'Accueil, d'Orientation et de suivi* (Migrant Resource Centres)

BLEE (Mali): *Bureaux de Liaison École-Entreprise* (School-Business Liaison Offices)

BAC/BRCs (Ghana): Business Advisory/Resource Centres

CBs: Community banks

CECOJE (Guinea): *Centre d'écoute, de conseils et d'orientation pour jeunes* (Youth Resources Centre)

CFAO : Corporation for Africa & Overseas

CGC (Côte d'Ivoire): *Comité de gestion des cas* (Case Management Committee)

CIOP (Cameroon): *Centre d'information et d'orientation professionnelle* (Professional Information and Orientation Centre)

COOPI: *Cooperazione Internazionale* (Italian Development Agency)

CS: Certificates of Specialization

CSFP – BTP (Senegal): *Centre sectoriel de formation professionnelle – Bâtiment et travaux publics* (sector-specialized TVET centre – construction)

CSO: Civil society organisation

DBG: Development Bank Ghana

DFS: Digital financial services

EEU (Sierra Leone): Employment Exchange Unit

EIB (Ghana): Employment Information Bureau

ENABEL : *Agence belge de développement* (Belgian Development Agency)

EOJ (Niger): *Espace d'orientation jeunesse* (Youth orientation centre)

EPP IV (Sierra Leone): Employment Promotion Program (IV)

ESS : Entrepreneurship support services

EU: European Union

EU-IOM JI: EU-IOM Joint Initiative

EUTF: European Union Emergency Trust Fund

ESS: *Espace Senegal Services*

ESU (The Gambia): Employment Service Unit

FAO: Food and Agriculture Organization

FAISE (Senegal): *Fonds d'Appui à l'Investissement des Sénégalais de l'Extérieur* (Senegalese Foreign Investment Support Fund)

FCDO: Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office

FDIF (Niger): *Fonds de la finance inclusive* (Inclusive Finance Fund)

FISAN (Niger): *Fonds d'investissement pour la sécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle* (Investment Fund for Food Security and Nutrition)

FNE (Cameroon): *Fonds national pour l'emploi* (National Employment Fund)

3FPT (Senegal): *Fonds de financement de la formation professionnelle (Vocational Training Financing Fund)*

FSA: Financial Services Association

GDP: Gross domestic product

GEA: Ghana Enterprises Agency

GGAC: Gambian-German Advisory Centre

GGC: Ghanaian-German Centre for Jobs

GIZ: *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (German development agency)*

GLMIS: Ghana Labour Market Information System

ICMPD: International centre for Migration policy and development

ICT: information and communications technology

IECD: *Institut européen de coopération et de développement (European Institute for Cooperation and Development)*

IFAD: International Fund for Agricultural Development

ILO: International Labour Organization

IOM: International Organization for Migration

IP: Implementing partner

ISEP (Senegal): *Instituts Supérieurs d'Enseignements Professionnels (Superior Professional Learning Institutes)*

ITC: International Trade Centre

JEEN: *'Les jeunes entreprennent et s'emploient au Niger'* (Youth entrepreneurship and employment in Niger)

JI: EU-IOM Joint Initiative

JICA: Japanese International Cooperation Agency

LMIS: Labour Market Information System

LSETF (Nigeria): Lagos State Employment Trust Fund

LuxDev: Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency

M&E: Monitoring and evaluation

MCA: Millennium Challenge Account

MEFPAI (Senegal): *Ministère de la formation professionnelle, de l'apprentissage et de l'insertion (Ministry of Professional Training)*

MELR (Ghana): Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations

MFI: Microfinance institution

MHPSS: Medical and mental health and psycho-social support

MICs (The Gambia): Migrant Information Centres

MICR (Ghana): Migration Information Centre for Returnees

MIL (Senegal): *Mission locale pour l'emploi et l'entrepreneuriat (Local mission for employment and entrepreneurship)*

MLS: Monitoring and learning system

MMRAC (Ethiopia): Multipurpose Migrant Return Assistance Centre

MoLS (Ethiopia): Ministry of Labour and Skills

MoT (Ethiopia): Ministry of Trade

MoY (Sierra Leone): Ministry of Youth

MoYS (Ethiopia): Ministry of Youth and Sports

MoU: Memorandum of understanding

MoWA (Ethiopia): Ministry of Women Affairs

MSMEs: Micro, small, and medium enterprises

MRC (Nigeria): Migrant Resources Centre

NBR (Gambia): North Bank Region

NRM: National Referral Mechanism

NCTVA (Sierra Leone): National Council for Technical, Vocational and Other Academic Awards

NFF: National Financing Fund

NGO: Non-governmental organisation

NPC (Ethiopia): National Partnership Coalition

NRM: National Referral Mechanism

NYC (The Gambia): National Youth Council

OFII: *Office français de l'immigration et de l'intégration (French Office for immigration and integration)*

OPECOM: *Organisation Patronale des Entrepreneurs de la Construction du Mali (Malian Professional Union in the Construction Sector)*

OSSC (Ethiopia): One stop services centre

PAFISAM: *Projet d'amélioration de la formation et de l'insertion dans les secteurs Agricole et minier* (Project to improve training and integration in the agricultural and mining sectors, Guinea)

PARI-JEDI (Cameroon): *Programme d'aide au retour et à l'insertion des jeunes Camerounais de la diaspora*

PEAs : Public Employment Agencies

PECs (Ghana): Public Employment Centres

PEEJF (Senegal): *Pôles Emploi et Entrepreneuriat pour les Jeunes et les Femmes*

PEJEDEC (Côte d'Ivoire): *Projet emploi jeune et développement des compétences* (Youth employment and skills development project)

PIMELAN : *Projet Intégré and de Modernisation de l'Élevage et de l'Agriculture au Niger* (Integrated Project for the Modernization of Livestock and Agriculture in Niger)

POJ (Niger): *Plateformes d'orientation jeunesse* (Youth orientation platform)

PROMEL (Niger): *Programme de Promotion de l'Entrepreneuriat Local* (Local Entrepreneurship Promotion Program)

QEP: Qualifications and Employment Perspectives for Refugees and Host Communities in Ethiopia Programme

R&R: Return and reintegration

RIFAR: Réseau international de formation agricole et rurale (*International Network for Agricultural and Rural Training*)

RRS (Ethiopia): Refugees and Returnees Service

SAPZ: Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones

SEA: State employment agency

SHA: Sustainable Hospitality Alliance

SIDA: Swedish International Development Agency

SLC: Sahel and Lake Chad

SME: Small- and medium-sized enterprises

SNNP (Ethiopia): Southern Nations, Nationalities and People

SNV: Netherlands Development Organisation

SOPs: Standard Operating Procedures to assisted voluntary returns and reintegration (AVRR)

STEP: Sustainable Training and Education Programme

TEI: Team Europe Initiative

TPML: Third Party Monitoring and Learning

TVET: Technical and Vocational Education and Training

UN: United Nations

UNCDF: United Nations Capital Development Fund

UNDP: United Nations Development Programme

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNFPA: United Nations Population Fund

UNICEF: United Nations Children's Fund

UNIDO: United Nations Industrial Development Organization

UNPBF: United Nations Peacebuilding Fund

USAID: United States Agency for International Development

WCR (The Gambia): West Coast Region

WHO: World Health Organization

YEA: Youth Employment Agency

YAGEP (Nigeria): Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This study was commissioned by the European Union (EU) to make recommendations for future EU-funded programming related to the reintegration of returning migrants. It explores, in 12 countries (Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia), how current economic reintegration assistance could be strengthened, and which institutions and service providers should be involved in addition to the ones already in place. It capitalises on key lessons on migrant economic reintegration programming learned through Altai Consulting's recent work for the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) in the Sahel and Lake Chad (SLC) region as part of the Third-Party Monitoring and Learning mechanism (TPML) conducted between 2019 and 2021. The conclusions of this report only apply to the 12 countries under study.¹

Given upward current demographic dynamics in the 12 countries covered in this study and associated migration flows, the EU should move from an emergency-based response to irregular migration from these countries to longer-term, more strategic programmatic approaches aimed at helping governments create sustainable jobs, rooted in national political priorities and the interventions of youth employment actors. On the African continent, while 10–12 million youth enter the workforce every year, only 3.1 million jobs are created at the same time, leaving millions in search of economic opportunities. Labour markets are thus – and will increasingly be in the years to come – flooded by the millions of new job-seekers struggling to find sustainable economic opportunities in weak, mainly informal economies. This creates high levels of discontent among the youth, and threats to political stability. With stability, security, migration, and the fight against 'radicalisation' at stake, youth employment has become a key political priority, both for national governments and international development partners. Although the 'root causes' of migration are comprised of a wide set of interrelated factors, the preponderant weight of poverty and insufficient economic opportunities in the decision to migrate have now largely been documented, thus making youth employment actors key players on the migration agenda (see section 2).

At the same time, the management of return and reintegration (R&R) is currently largely project-based, inadequately mainstreamed into existing youth employment frameworks, and highly reliant on support from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and EU funding. The governance of R&R continues to rely almost exclusively on a series of standard operating procedures (SOPs) related to assisted voluntary returns and reintegration (AVRR) developed by the IOM under the EU-IOM Joint Initiative (EU-IOM JI or JI). This project-based approach limits their scope of application to IOM beneficiaries, their sustainability beyond EU funding, and overall coherence with youth employment and other government-led initiatives in favour of job creation. Other organisations dealing with returns rarely use AVRR SOPs drafted under the EU-IOM JI, which contributes to an absence of coordination among actors and a fragmentation of initiatives. The delivery of reintegration assistance, as detailed in the EU-IOM JI-sponsored SOPs, remained heavily dependent on EUTF funding and IOM does not appear to have been able to sufficiently focus on a gradual transition to stronger government leadership over AVRR. As a result, at the time of data collection, the diversification of economic reintegration options for returnees remained limited. In the 11 countries of the SLC region, as documented under the TPML exercise,ⁱ referrals were primarily achieved through a limited range of direct partnerships: most returnees were directed to entrepreneurship projects managed by IOM directly, or to non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and technical and vocational education and training (TVET) centres contracted by IOM, which contributed to the saturation of IOM's case management capacity. Outside of such 'sub-contracting', the few referral mechanisms that were set up

¹ Lessons learnt from past reintegration programming do not necessarily apply to Ethiopia as it was not covered as part of the TPML exercise.

with EUTF-funded projects and other development partners remained project-bound, limited in time and not steered by relevant national authorities (see section 3).

The primary objective of future EU-funded reintegration and youth employment programming should be to transition from project-based orientation and reintegration mechanisms to institutionalised structures that are progressively nationally funded and managed. To work towards the development of durable reintegration solutions and avoid discontinuities in the provision of reintegration assistance, the EU should consider investing in more strategic, continuous, and long-term capacity building of **national reintegration platforms open to all returning migrants (inspired by existing models like Tunesna in Tunisia)**, and **national labour market intermediation mechanisms** available to both the general population and returnees. However, given the uneven capacities of these structures, building centralised, sustainable reintegration platforms and referral mechanisms with government ownership will imply a gradual handover from IOM (and EU funding) based on both the capacities of existing national agencies and the caseload of returnees for them to absorb – as well as mid- to long-term capacity building and funding strategies. Strategic choices should be made for each country, based on analyses including feasibility, advantages and disadvantages/risks. With adequate support and capacity building, several countries (Ethiopia, Nigeria, Senegal and, to a lesser extent, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana.), could evolve, in the short- to medium-term, to examples of more nationally owned, reintegration systems. In countries where such an approach would not yet ensure sufficient quality, sustainable reintegration (notably in the Sahel countries and the most fragile coastal states – Guinea, Sierra Leone, The Gambia), the EU and its partners should continue developing coordinated *ad hoc* referral mechanisms, in parallel with efforts aiming to build longer term national capacities (see section 4).

In addition, the EU and its Member States should seek to bridge the gap between youth employment and migration programming. If correctly coordinated, collaborations with the large number of youth employment programmes funded and/or implemented by EU Member States, United Nations (UN) agencies and multilateral development banks could contribute to addressing both the main drivers of irregular migration and improve the quality of economic reintegration assistance.

At the normative level, to improve the coordination of interventions between and within the youth employment and migration sectors, it is key to invest in results-oriented action plans and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) systems, based on existing youth employment strategies.

At the operational level, this mapping exercise identified over 270 relevant youth employment programmes aiming to address the lack of productivity in the informal sector (thus suited to the needs of returnees wishing to start their own businesses).

- In the field of TVET and skills development, numerous international partners could contribute to diversifying options made available to returnees and increasing the quality of the trainings they receive. Many opportunities for collaboration and partnerships between reintegration and youth employment actors are highlighted in the 12 country reports produced as part of this study. Fifty-five projects dedicated to improving and strengthening national TVET and skills development sectors and 167 TVET and skills development providers supported by international donors were identified (see annex 6.2 and country reports), and dozens more working towards improving access to entrepreneurship include a TVET component.
- In the entrepreneurship sector, the number of incubators and business/start-up centres has significantly expanded in Ethiopia and across West Africa, thanks to multiple international, government and civil society initiatives. In parallel to local private and public structures, entrepreneurship development programmes directly implemented by international development actors (usually in partnership with local institutions) offer a diversity of services potentially well-suited to the needs of returnees.
- The agricultural sector concentrates the largest share of programmes implemented by youth employment actors and the highest number of potential opportunities for returnees identified in

this study. Linking returnees with opportunities offered by bilateral and multilateral donors in the agricultural entrepreneurship sector and/or agro-industry could contribute to increase the relevance, quality, and sustainability of reintegration projects. International partners active in the field of agriculture have developed innovative approaches and good practices that should be replicated and scaled-up in the main countries and areas of return.

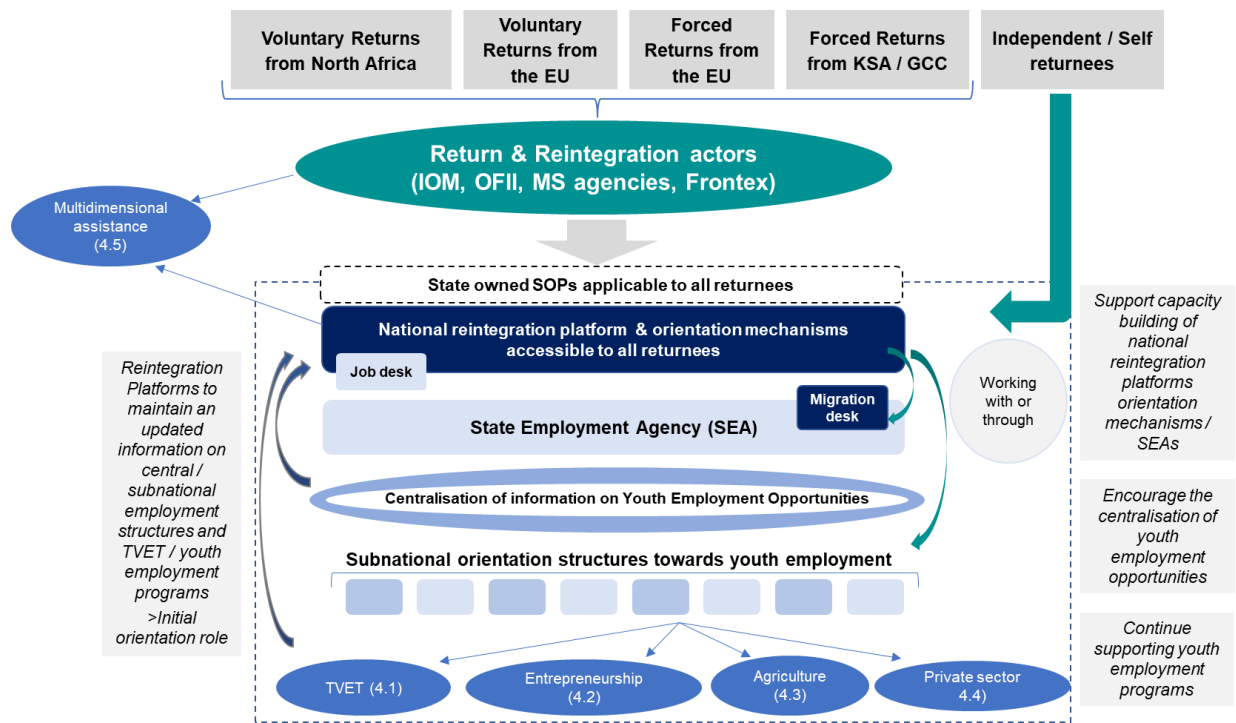
In the absence of centralised repositories of existing youth employment programmes, building referrals and partnerships entirely relies on ad hoc communication and coordination channels between reintegration and youth employment actors. This results in each reintegration manager essentially having to collect scattered information on the measures other agencies take to identify referral opportunities. It requires significant time and resources that programme managers usually do not have. As a result, the information gathered is usually incomplete and rapidly outdated. Diminished funding to IOM in the next phases of programming may exacerbate this situation.

As a direct result of this study, opportunities of collaboration were identified with over 350 potential partners and services in West Africa and Ethiopia. These structures include TVET providers, entrepreneurship support structures, financial service providers, private companies (including private recruitment agencies and state-owned enterprises) and structures (public, private, national, and international) supporting vulnerable migrants. They are presented in the 12 country reports that were delivered in parallel with this regional synthesis, with additional details provided in the annexes of the country reports.

For young people (in particular returnees) to benefit from existing programmes that best match their needs and aspirations (from an often wide range of such programmes), the development of transparent databases that centralise available opportunities is essential. The development of information systems able to capture opportunities made available by international partners and centralise them in a database visible and accessible to everyone would offer multiple advantages. It would contribute to the transparency of the labour market, and it would increase the relevance of programmes to the profiles of beneficiaries: the more visible the opportunities, the more youth, including returnees, would be able to make choices according to their needs and expectations. It would also increase and encourage professional mobility: a returnee from Ségou (Mali) should be able to apply to an offer in Bamako, and an opportunity offered in a livestock project in Mamou (Guinea) may be of interest to a returnee located in Conakry. In addition, this would provide donors and implementing partners (IPs) with more reliable data on needs, demand, and geographical gaps.

In this arrangement, reintegration actors should position themselves more strategically in an orientation role at the screening phase, upon arrival, and refer returnees either to government-owned structures for economic reintegration, or to dedicated support structures providing multi-dimensional types of assistance to vulnerable beneficiaries(Figure 8).

Figure 1: Building sustainable linkages between reintegration systems and youth employment programmes



1. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

1.1. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY AND OF THIS REPORT

This study was commissioned by the European Union (EU) to make recommendations for future EU-funded programming related to the reintegration of returning migrants. It explores, in 12 countries, how current economic reintegration assistance could be strengthened, and which institutions and service providers should be involved in addition to the ones already in place. The study objectives were to:

- capitalise on key lessons on returnee **economic** reintegration programming learned through Altai Consulting's recent work for the European Union Emergency Trust Fund (EUTF) in the Sahel and Lake Chad (SLC) region 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 economic reintegration programmes;
- identify and assess other national and local actors and services (public, private and civil society) that could be integrated into future programming to build sustainable economic reintegration systems over the medium- and long-term; and
- make strategic recommendations for future reintegration programming of the EU and its current and future IPs.

1.2. SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY

The 12 countries covered by this study are: Burkina Faso; Cameroon; Côte d'Ivoire; Ethiopia; Ghana; Guinea; Mali; Niger; Nigeria; Senegal; Sierra Leone; and The Gambia (see Figure 1). Data collection, which involved both desk research and in-country missions led by national and international consultants, was carried out from February to November 2022.¹

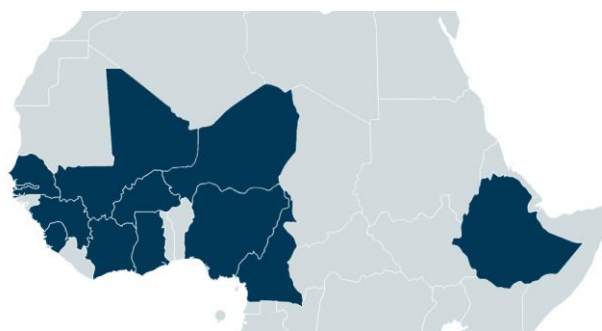


Figure 2: Geographical scope of this mapping study

Potential partners and services recommended for future programming were shortlisted based on the relevance, accessibility, and quality of their services. Selection criteria included: 1) the relevance and quality of the support provided; 2) the adequacy of beneficiaries' selection criteria with the profile of returnees; 3) the experience of these structures in providing support to vulnerable groups; and 4) the availability of these institutions in the short- or medium-term to integrate returnees into their programming.

Stakeholders were mapped, assessed, and selected based on a review of documents and data they provided and on other information available online, semi-structured interviews with management and field staff, reports from clients and partners, and direct field observations. More specifically, data was collected, triangulated, and analysed from the following sources:

¹ This study mainly focuses on the economic dimension of reintegration. In this report, the term 'reintegration' should thus be understood as referring to economic reintegration. This focus does not mean, however, that other aspects of reintegration are any less important.

- **1 024 documents**, including programme documents and relevant studies and reports on migrant reintegration, technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and skills development, youth employment entrepreneurship, and financial services for youth and microentrepreneurs in Ethiopia and West Africa;
- **740 interviews with key informants** from government ministries, departments, and agencies, development partners, employment agencies, training institutions, innovation hubs, financial institutions, and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and civil society organisations (CSOs) listed in the country reports' annexes, as well as testimonies collected with verbal consent and in accordance with the principles of confidentiality and anonymity; and
- **field visits** to, and **direct observations** of, employment agencies, training centres, innovation hubs, NGOs, and CSOs.

Since the purpose of the study is to explore and suggest new partners and service providers, past and current ones were only included if their involvement in returnee reintegration was to be prolonged and sustained rather than short-term or one-off engagement, or if it was considered that the collaboration should be further strengthened in the future or extended to new areas/services for returnees.

1.3. KEY OUTPUTS

Altai Consulting recommended exploring collaboration options with a total of 369 potential partners and services as a result of this study. These structures are presented in the country reports, with additional details provided in the annexes of the country reports.

- 167 TVET providers (public and private);
- 67 entrepreneurship support structures (private and public – some of which directly provide financial services);
- 41 financial service providers (private and public);
- 36 companies (including private recruitment agencies and state-owned enterprises); and
- 58 structures (public, private, national, and international) supporting vulnerable migrants.

In addition, many international programmes and actors involved in vocational training, entrepreneurship and support to the development of the private sector were also identified as relevant partners. Besides providing opportunities for returnees as part of their programmes, coordination with these actors in the medium-term, could help increase labour market opportunities for returnees and help prevent irregular migration. These include 55 programmes active in the TVET sector¹ and 215 entrepreneurship support programmes. These programmes are presented both in country reports and in this report (annexes 6.2, 6.3, and 6.4).

1.4. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Given the high number of skills development, employment and entrepreneurship programmes and actors in the 12 countries covered by the study (despite significant disparities), the proposed shortlist is necessarily non-exhaustive.

In addition, a significant portion of shortlisted programmes are set to come to an end by 2023, whilst many more were in development at the time of data collection and are not included in our reports. The short-lived cycle of programming therefore requires that this exercise be updated regularly.

¹ A significant number of programmes active in the entrepreneurship sector also include a TVET component.

2. MIGRATION DYNAMICS AND YOUTH EMPLOYMENT CONTEXT

2.1. YOUTH EMPLOYMENT: A POLITICAL PRIORITY

While 10–12 million African youth enter the workforce every year, only 3.1 million jobs are created on the continent annually, leaving millions in search of economic opportunities.ⁱⁱ Africa is the world's most youthful continent and counts the highest proportion of young people entering the labour market every year.ⁱⁱⁱ It is the only continent where the youth labour force is expanding:^{iv} its population is expected to more than double by 2050, from 1 billion to nearly 2.4 billion inhabitants^v and half of that population will be under 25 years old.^{vi}

Labour markets are thus – and will increasingly be in the years to come – flooded by millions of new job-seekers struggling to find sustainable economic opportunities in weak, mainly informal economies. Contrary to a widespread perception, youth unemployment rates remain lower across Africa than in most developed economies,^{vii} although the continent registers the lowest gross development product (GDP) per capita. Indeed, the limited absorption of youth into African labour markets does not manifest itself through unemployment, but rather through poor job quality within informal economies.¹ In the absence of social safety nets, young people cannot afford to be unemployed and instead are forced to take on low-productivity, low-wage jobs for their survival, a situation leading to high levels of discontent among the youth and threatening political stability.^{viii}

With inter alia stability, security, and the fight against poverty and 'radicalisation' at stake, youth employment has become, both for national governments and international development partners, a key political priority. Youth in urban areas are becoming increasingly vocal about their dissatisfaction, and social protests related to the lack of economic opportunities are growing in frequency, raising concerns among political leaders.^{ix} Although the cause of such tensions includes factors broader than employment status (lack of democratic transparency, political violence, dysfunctional rule of law systems, etc.), dissatisfaction with economic opportunities, remain a central contributing factor.^x In Sahelian rural areas, poverty and the lack of jobs contribute to the youth's vulnerability to the ideologies of violent armed groups. The fight against radicalisation now involves multidimensional strategies, including resilience and economic opportunities for youth. In coastal states, where a 'spillover' from the Sahel is becoming a growing concern, preventative strategies include the creation of economic opportunities, bolstering the importance of youth employment on political agendas across West Africa.

Given the economic and demographic context in all 12 studied countries and the prioritisation of youth employment, it is essential that the emergency-based response implemented under EUTF's first strategic objective (creation of economic and employment opportunities) evolves into a longer-term programmatic approach aimed at creating sustainable jobs, rooted in national political priorities and youth employment interventions, and well connected to reintegration programming, where relevant. If correctly leveraged, governments' will to address the youth employment challenge, combined with the significant resources invested by international actors in favour of developing economic opportunities for youth, could offer multiple advantages for both the governments and the EU. The 12 countries of the study host numerous state and non-state actors and programmes that understand, create, and promote local economic and labour market opportunities and, together, offer options for various profiles of youth, including returnees.

¹ It is estimated that 94.9 per cent of youth aged 15–24 years in Africa and up to 97.9 per cent in West Africa work in the informal economy. See International Labour Organization, *Women and Men in the Informal Economy: A Statistic Picture*, 2018.

2.2. MIGRATION DYNAMICS

Although the ‘root causes’ of migration are comprised of a wide set of interrelated factors,^{xi} poverty and insufficient economic opportunities have been generally confirmed as the overriding factors in the decision to migrate.^{xii} Pervasive underemployment and the multiplication of precarious jobs constitute major drivers of internal and international migration from (and within¹) West Africa.^{xiii} While most young people still live in (semi-)rural areas, the lack of economic opportunities and the limited appeal of jobs in the agricultural sector, together with the degradation of the environment, all accelerate their rural exodus, and contribute to the increasing saturation of job markets in capital cities. The EUTF funded many programmes aiming to tackle the ‘root causes of migration’ through economic resilience and job creation; this approach was relevant but alone was too limited in scope, scale, and timing to provide a long-term response to address core issues, such as youth unemployment and its consequences, including irregular migration flows.

In the SLC region, the most significant trends in terms of migration flows are now well-documented but not sufficiently mainstreamed into employment programming. Across the region, over 118 000 migrants² were assisted by IOM to return to their countries of origin between 2017 and 2021.^{xiv} More than half of them (about 64 500) came from Nigeria, Mali, and Guinea. Upon arrival, resettlement areas do not always coincide with those of origin: while returnees in Sahelian countries (Burkina Faso, Niger) tend to elect agricultural-based reintegration paths in their regions of origin, youth in coastal states, such as Cameroon, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea, or Sierra Leone, massively relocate in the main cities, contributing to the saturation of already crowded job markets (see table 1). As developed below, reintegration opportunities are not always located in the main areas of return.

In Ethiopia, the reintegration of returnees has become a major challenge for the Government, particularly due to successive waves of mass deportations from the Gulf.^{xv} Around 263 000 Ethiopian labour migrants returned from the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia in two waves, in 2013/2014³ and 2017/2018.⁴ More recently, in 2021, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, over 70 000 irregular Ethiopian migrants were deported from Saudi Arabia.^{xvi} In March 2022, a new agreement was reached between the Government of Ethiopia and the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia to return another 100 000 Ethiopians in the space of seven months.^{xvii} In addition, thousands of Ethiopians are being forcibly returned or come back in dire conditions from neighbouring countries, such as Djibouti, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen, but most importantly from Tanzania and Malawi.^{xviii} The EU-IOM Joint Initiative (EU-IOM JI or JI) helped over 10 000 Ethiopians with assisted voluntary returns (AVR), mostly from Yemen.

Available information and data on current migration trends suggest that the migration flows and foreseeable AVR will operate along similar dynamics, although widely dependent on external security and political dynamics in transit (or destination) countries, such as Algeria and Libya.

- In Libya, IOM recorded a large number of migrants originating from the countries under study. In December 2022, Nigeriens constituted the largest community of migrants in Libya (170 903), followed by Nigerians (29 163), Malians (13 189), Senegalese (3,288), Burkinabè (3 272), Ivoirians (2 436); Ethiopians (1 275), Cameroonians (1 156) and Guineans (1 128). Precise data (and breakdowns per nationality) concerning the intentions of migrants currently in Libya to stay and seek work, return home, or continue their journey, was not available at the time of data collection. However, according to IOM, only a minority reported having a permit for work or residency in Libya; a quarter were unemployed and remained in precarious situations.^{xix}

¹ The vast majority of international migration flows remain in the sub-region.

² This figure only includes migrants returning from Africa and does not include returnees from Europe.

³ The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia started deporting irregular Ethiopian migrants as part of its ‘Saudization’ policy, aimed at creating job opportunities for Saudis and regularising the labour market.

⁴ Following the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia’s announcement of a ‘Nation Free of Violators’.

- **Forcible expulsions from Algeria to Niger are ongoing, and expelled West Africans from Algeria account, at present, for the majority of AVRIs starting in the SLC region.** While the precise numbers of migrants in an irregular situation in Algeria are not readily accessible, the frequency and large number of expulsions from Algeria have overwhelmed IOM's protection capacities in Niger.^{xx} In March 2023, within the space of ten days, nearly 3 000 West African migrants were forcibly taken back to the Nigerian border.^{xxi} The nationality of migrants driven back from Algeria reportedly follow, in proportion, the same trends as they did under the EU-IOM JI, with high numbers of Malians, Guineans, and Nigerians among returnees.
- **In 2022, 3 552 migrants requested assistance for voluntary return from Morocco. IOM organised 2 457 of these returns, including in several of the 12 studied countries.** From Morocco, returns were organised to Côte d'Ivoire (657), Guinea (598), Senegal (367), Cameroon (152), Nigeria (146), Mali (117), The Gambia (46), Burkina Faso (32), Ghana (15), and Sierra Leone (9). According to IOM, in 2022, 61 per cent of surveyed AVR beneficiaries from Morocco declared that they wanted to return to their country of origin due to a lack of financial resources, while 15 per cent indicated that they decided to return after not being able to continue their journey towards their intended destination.^{xxii}

Given the foreseeable caseloads of returnees, there is a continued need to exploit available – and gather additional – data on current and anticipated migration patterns at the regional, country, and local levels to better inform future AVR and youth employment programmes. Regular research and surveys should be conducted to anticipate the number of likely future returnees currently located in North Africa and in Gulf countries, their nationalities, areas of origin and of intended return, as well as their educational and professional backgrounds. This information would be key to building relevant AVR and youth employment programmes, more efficiently target priority countries and regions of return and adequately anticipate the needs for future referrals.

Although arrivals of undocumented migrants at EU borders have sharply decreased since 2016,^{xxiii} the new Frontex mandate to assist forced returns from Europe calls for a coordinated European approach to organising returns. The mandates, programmes, and available budgets of the different organisations in charge of operating returns (whether forced, by Frontex or dedicated EU Member State agencies; or voluntarily assisted, by IOM, French Office for immigration and integration (OFII) or other Ips) have de facto created different reintegration pathways through varying methods, budgets and/or partnerships. This situation contributes not only to a fragmentation of the reintegration space but, more generally, tends to create unfavourable conditions for the creation of pathways and common strategies with national and international youth employment actors (see section 4). Reuniting the different reintegration paths with the youth employment system (among others), through increased capacity building of national institutions, will be key to foster national ownership, international partners' involvement, and overall sustainability of return and reintegration (R&R) approaches.

Table 1: Number of AVR per country in the SLC region as of June 2021 (source: IOM)

Countries	Number of AVR	Main areas of origin	Main areas of return ¹
Mali	22 436	Bamako (41%) Kayes (32%) Koulikoro (12%)	Areas of return mainly coincide with regions or origin, but significant disparities have been noted within the regions of return (with certain localities hosting most returnees).
Guinea	21 203	Conakry (76%) Kankan (6%) Nzérékoré (4%)	Regardless of the areas of origin of the returnees, a significant percentage of returnees resettle in Conakry.
Nigeria	20 291	Edo (35%) Lagos (17%) Delta (10%)	Regardless of the areas of origin of the returnees, a significant percentage of returnees resettle in Lagos.
Côte d'Ivoire	9 464	Lagunes (71%) Marahoue (6%) Bas-Sassandra (5%)	Regardless of the areas of origin of the returnees, a significant percentage of returnees resettle in Abidjan.
Niger	9 033	Tahoua (42%) Zinder (20%) Maradi (14%)	Areas of return coincide with regions or origin, but significant disparities have been noted within the regions of return (with certain localities hosting most returnees).
Senegal	7 647	Kolda (30%) Dakar (25%) Tambacounda (14%)	Migrants mainly resettle in the regions of Dakar, Ziguinchor, Kolda and Tambacounda. Casamance is the first destination of return for migrants, the region from which they most often originate.
Sierra Leone	5 265	Unknown	Most returnees resettle in Freetown.
The Gambia	5 230	Western (50%) Greater Banjul (28%) Upper River (11%)	The main areas of return are Brikama Local Government Area (LGA) in the West Coast Region (WCR), Kanifing LGA, and Basse LGA in Upper River Region (URR).
Cameroon	5 125	Littoral (54%) Centre (52%) Ouest (1%)	90% of returnees resettle in Douala and Yaoundé.
Burkina Faso	3 605	Centre-Est (63%) Centre (20%) Centre-Sud (6%)	Returnees return to their regions of origin (Centre-Est, Centre).
Ghana	2 416	Brong Ahafo (27%) Greater Accra (26%) Ashanti (18%)	Once in Ghana, most returnees resettle in Greater Accra and the central regions.

¹ Data in this column is derived from documentary research and key informant interviews conducted by Altai Consulting.

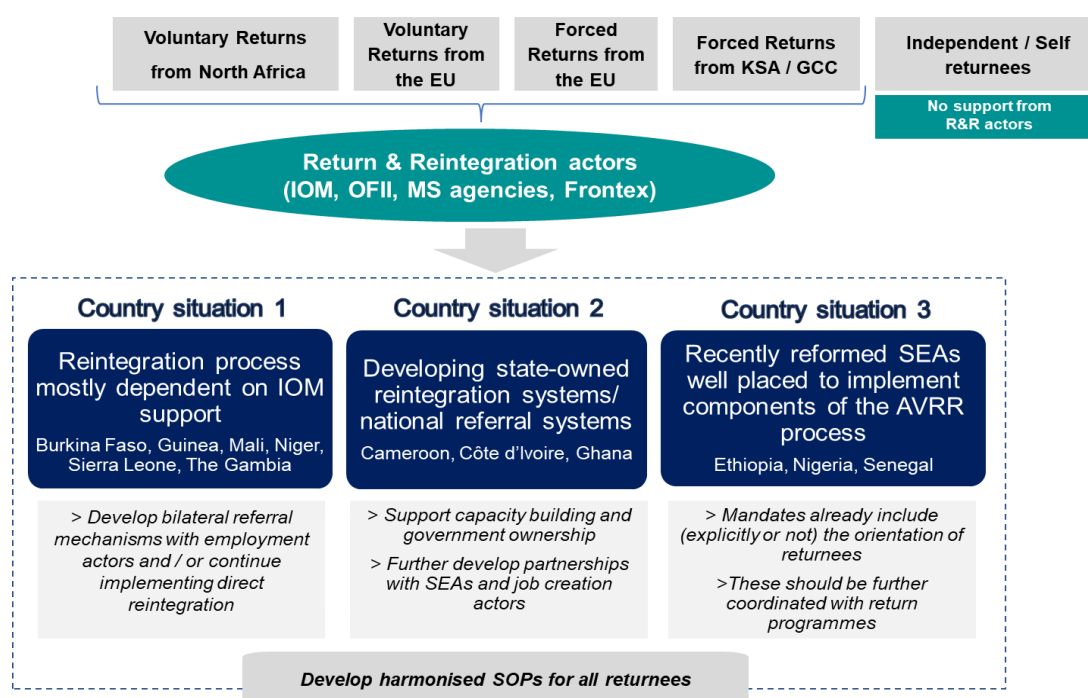
3. GOVERNANCE AND STRUCTURES OF RETURN AND REINTEGRATION

Given the expected caseloads of returnees (both voluntary and forced), the primary objective of future EU-funded reintegration programming should be to expand the scope of standard operating procedures (SOPs) on R&R to all returnees and transition from project-based orientation and reintegration mechanisms to institutionalised, progressively nationally funded and managed structures. To avoid discontinuities in the provision of reintegration assistance, the EU should consider investing in more strategic, continuous, and long-term capacity building of national reintegration and referral systems and/or state employment agencies (SEAs). In this arrangement, reintegration actors (IOM, Member States development agencies, etc.) would become less directly involved in the day-to-day operations and individual case management, and position themselves more strategically in a capacity building, technical support, coordination, and monitoring role, with national governments and youth employment actors placed at the centre of the reintegration process.

The levels of modernisation, capacity, and geographical outreach of labour intermediation mechanisms and reintegration structures in the 12 countries cover a wide spectrum. Almost all countries are currently engaged (or have been in the recent past) in the reform of their SEAs, with international support. However, the scale, approach and speed of these reforms vary widely across countries, and some countries are not yet able to effectively support enough returning migrants to absorb the caseload they are facing.

Three main types of situations are emerging and call for differentiated strategies (Figure 2): 1) countries still largely reliant on IOM support and EU funding to continue providing reintegration assistance; 2) countries in which state-owned reintegration structures have been set-up and, in coordination with SEAs, could gradually play a more important role in the provision of reintegration assistance; and 3) countries in which SEAs are already well-placed to implement, with adequate material and financial support, components of the AVRR process.

Figure 3: Variety of country situations and recommended approaches (short- to medium-term)



3.1. EXPANDING THE SCOPE OF STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES ON RETURN AND REINTEGRATION TO ALL RETURNEES

Under the JI, IOM mobilised country-level stakeholders for the R&R of migrants, established a national framework for action, streamlined processes and improved stakeholder coordination. These were key accomplishments of the JI, achieved through national SOPs for AVRR, which were adapted and technically validated in all 12 countries at the start of the JI or over the course of it. In most countries, stakeholders report that the output (national SOPs) as well as the meetings and local adaptation process brought together institutions that do not typically collaborate, helped develop a common understanding of AVRR, clarified respective roles and responsibilities, and positively impacted the way these institutions operate and cooperate in the field. In addition, the JI established, revitalised or supported coordination committees, technical working groups and/or case management/selection committees in all countries, at national and/or subnational levels. These groups, which typically involve national and local government representatives, NGOs, the EU delegation, IOM and some of its field partners (e.g., CSOs involved in reintegration assistance), helped contextualise IOM's framework SOPs, discuss strategic topics, review progress, and solve operational issues.

However, in practice, AVRR SOPs and coordination committees are used primarily for the JI rather than by all R&R actors beyond the JI and tend to exclude categories of returnees, based on the conditions and origins of their return. They do not apply to forced returnees, to migrants returning from non-eligible countries (i.e., countries not covered by the EU-IOM JI), or to returns organised by Member States agencies (e.g., OFII or the German development agency [GIZ]). This limited focus has been an issue, especially for countries in the Horn of Africa, including Ethiopia, whose stranded citizens are most likely to be found in the Middle East – or to a lesser extent on the way to South Africa – and not on the way to Europe. While EU-IOM JI beneficiaries were eligible for reintegration assistance in the 12 countries under study, many (forced) returnees from the Gulf and other areas were not. The AVRR SOPs developed in Ghana constitute an exception as they aim to 'provide a common understanding and ensure a consistent approach' for all types of returns to Ghana.

Moreover, the SOPs do not specify who should be in charge of the reintegration process, if not IOM; they only refer to 'IOM and its partners', 'national partners', or 'the relevant agency' and, in practice, AVRR SOPs and associated coordination committees were used primarily by IOM rather than by all R&R actors. The focus of these frameworks on JI activities, their dependency on EUTF funding and isolation from other projects/actors are the main limitations stressed by key informants. This situation – and, more generally, the scope of the EUTF support to AVRR – triggered political discussions in several countries (including Ghana, Guinea Bissau, and Senegal), and sometimes delayed the adoption of the SOPs and the start of the JI. In Ghana, the validation of the SOPs was delayed precisely because it addressed reintegration in a more comprehensive way (beyond the JI), and separate SOPs and/or processes/platforms were established for forced returns, as in The Gambia.

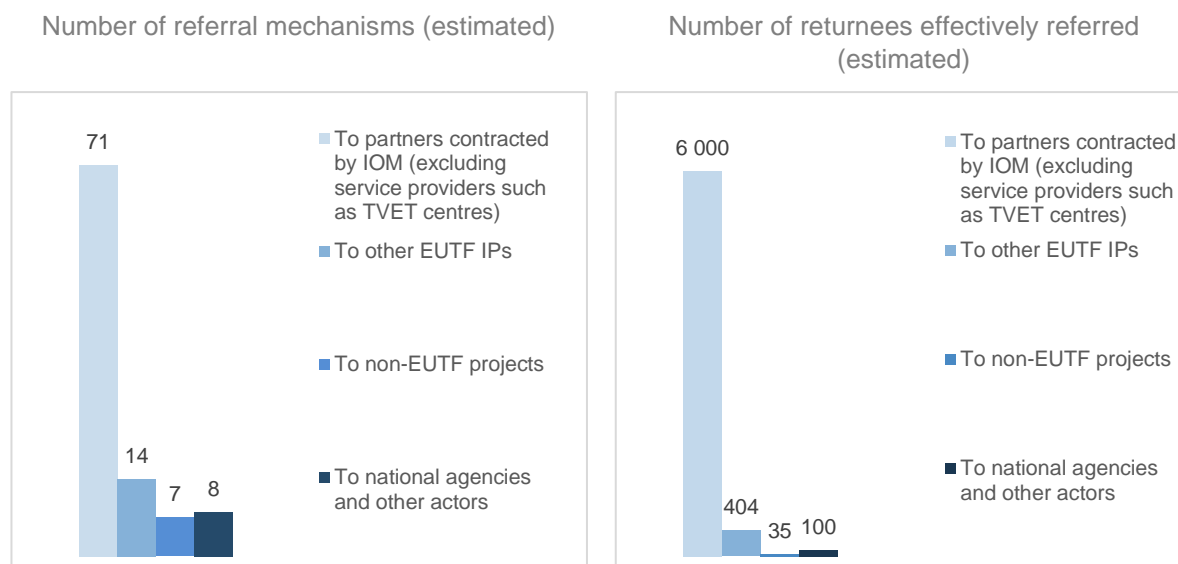
These documents, thus, would need to be updated and broadened to integrate other initiatives and continue being used beyond the scope and funding/duration of EU-IOM reintegration programming. The EU could support their revision and expansion in all 12 countries based on the experience and lessons learnt from the JI. The role of EU delegations in this process would be particularly important as they are the main funders of migration governance frameworks and reintegration programming. The revision process should also include youth employment agencies (see below) that are currently not involved enough in returnee reintegration.

3.2. STRENGTHENING LABOUR MARKET INTERMEDIATION MECHANISMS AND SUPPORTING NATIONAL REINTEGRATION STRUCTURES

Under the EU-IOM JI, the diversification of economic reintegration options was primarily achieved through a limited range of direct partnerships: most returnees were directed to entrepreneurship projects directly managed by IOM (Figure 3 – right side), or to NGOs and TVET centres directly contracted by IOM, which contributed to the saturation of its case management

capacity.^{xxiv} Outside such sub-contracting, the few referral mechanisms that were set up with EUTF-funded Ips (14) and other development partners (seven) remained project-bound, limited in time, and not steered by relevant national authorities. Most referral mechanisms consisted in lists of interested returnees sent by IOM to other Ips. Eight referral mechanisms were set up with national authorities across the 12 countries under study (Figure 3 – left side).

Figure 4: Referrals of IOM beneficiaries towards other projects or agencies in the SLC region

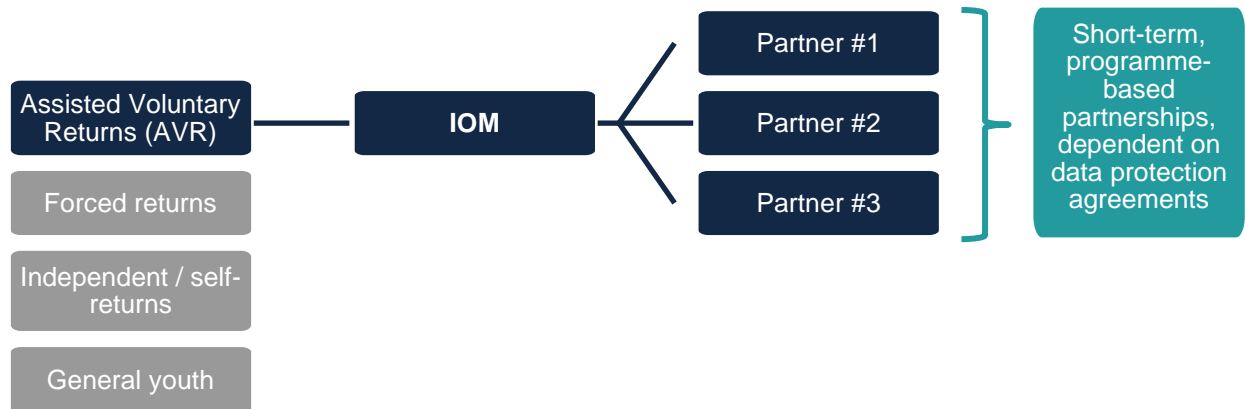


A set of combined contextual and structural factors, outlined below, contributed to the internalisation of many steps of the reintegration process by IOM, and the reliance on multiple short-term, programme-based partnerships (Figure 4).

- **The magnitude of the flows of returnees, which many countries in the SLC region faced during a short period of time,** left little time and space to create well-structured referrals and partnerships, at least in the first year of the programme.
- **There was an absence of centralised or updated data on existing programmes implemented by youth employment actors.** As a result, referrals and partnerships relied on ad hoc communication and coordination channels between reintegration and youth employment actors. Reintegration managers, thus, had to collect scattered information about the measures other agencies were taking to identify referral opportunities. This required significant time and resources that programme managers usually cannot spare, resulting in information gathered that was often incomplete and/or rapidly outdated. In addition, reintegration managers usually lack knowledge of local economic contexts and job market dynamics. Diminished IOM funding for subsequent phases of programming may exacerbate this situation.
- **There is a lack of institutionalised, state-owned reintegration structures that are in a position to efficiently use this data.** Although reintegration lies at the core of the mandates of these structures, in most countries, youth employment agencies were not involved in coordination platforms dedicated to R&R, JI technical committees or working groups. This is mainly because most of these structures are still in need of significant capacity building (albeit to varying degrees), which was usually not provided with EUTF programming. The limited integration of youth employment agencies into nationally owned structures or processes further contributed to singling out IOM beneficiaries from other job-seekers and limiting national ownership over the assistance provided.

- **Data protection principles** were often cited as an impediment to the development of effective referral mechanisms between IOM and other EUTF IPs and/ or development actors.

Figure 5: Multiple short-term, programme-based partnerships



As part of the next phases of programming, in order to facilitate the development of referrals, reintegration actors should seek to work with and through SEAs and/or national reintegration mechanisms and youth employment actors encouraged to systematically share information about their programming to these structures. Advantages of this strategy would include: more opportunities available to returnees; less case management for IPs; and less reliance on EU funding. Returnees would be in a more active position: instead of having their referral managed by IPs, returnees could be provided with up-to-date information about available opportunities and make informed decisions about the reintegration path they wish to take.

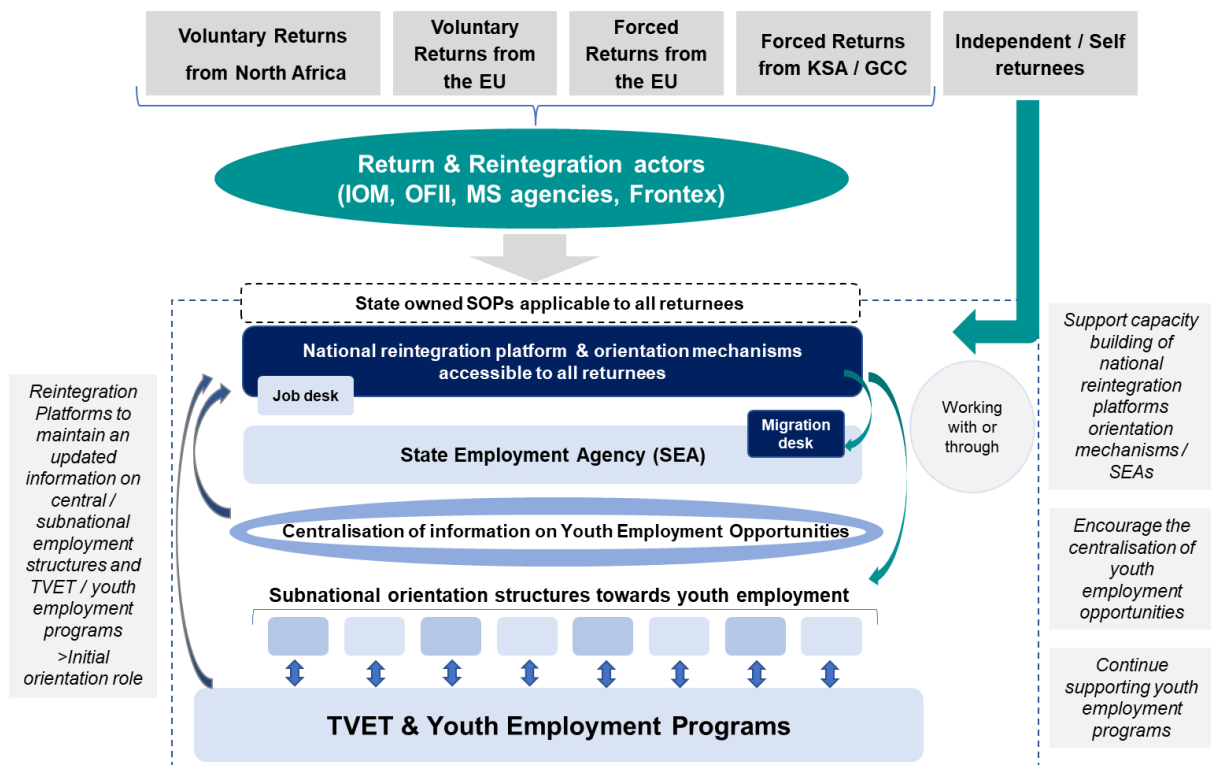
Relying on SEAs would also help better integrate all returnees (regardless of the location from which they are returning) with other unemployed youth and minimise the dependency of reintegration assistance on the multiple bilateral, time-bound service provision contracts managed and renewed by IOM, making reintegration assistance more continuous and sustainable. Finally, besides increasing programme stability and continuity for the EU and its IPs, it would also reduce the financial and human cost of managing these partnership contracts, and ease monitoring.

As suggested in the diagram below, this could be based on an improved capacity and coordination at three levels:

- **A national reintegration platform** could be designed to address the needs of all returning migrants, based on revised SOPs, taking into account all profiles and conditions of return to complement existing programmes (or cover for the absence of programmes) and mobilise protection services for the most vulnerable returnees (see also section 4.5 below on vulnerable migrants). While different platform options exist, the Tunesna model is currently the most advanced. These platforms should be well connected to SEA and job creation programmes, ideally through a dedicated desk or officer maintaining a well updated level of information on structures and programmes in place, to be able to provide returning migrants with a first level of orientation. The same reintegration and orientation service could also be provided directly by the SEAs or by subnational orientation structures, following the model of the migrant resource centres (BAOs), which will be integrated into Senegal's 45 subnational Espaces Sénégal Services (ESS).
- **A network of SEAs and orientation structures**, the capacity of which still needs to be strengthened in most countries, could be organised at the central and subnational levels, along with a **migration/return desk**, centraliz to address the specific needs and questions of returning migrants and to refer the most vulnerable cases to relevant protection organisations.

- **A centralized information system could gather information related to all TVET and youth employment opportunities.** This could be updated annually by a dedicated team (hosted in the SEAs) in charge of maintaining connections with TVET centres, private actors and programmes, which could be supported to identify gaps and advise international agencies on the priority needs expressed by job-seekers and labour market actors, to develop future programmes.
- **Strong linkages of the above-mentioned structures could be made with the broad range of TVET and youth employment opportunities already identified by this assessment.**

Figure 6: Evolving from short-term, programme-based partnerships towards a locally-owned reintegration and job referral system



The following section analyses the variety of situations faced in the different countries assessed, identifies best practices, and offers recommendation to move forward.

3.2.1. Situation 1: Countries most dependent on EU funding and IOM support to deliver reintegration assistance

In Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger) and fragile coastal states (Guinea, Sierra Leone, The Gambia), governments are still highly dependent on IOM support and external funding to provide reintegration assistance. Moving towards a government-led approach will require significant time and resources. In these countries, alternatives to IOM's direct implementation model are yet to be found. Reintegration structures / referral mechanisms developed as part of the EU-IOM JI are often entirely project-bound (and thus will require further funding to continue functioning) and are not always effective.¹ In addition, SEAs have very limited capacities and face structural challenges

¹ Such as the BAOS set up in Guinea, placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Guineans Abroad (MAEGE) and supported by IOM. To date, they only play a marginal role in the orientation of returnees due to their low visibility and the limited information they can provide.

(chronic underfunding, staffing issues, very limited territorial coverage, limited-service offer, lack of visibility and near-absence of digital tools).

In addition to their limited financial, technical, and human capacities, these SEAs are largely unable to offer integrated services suited to the informal structure of the economies in which they operate and where they are still very centralised. In addition to 'classic' intermediation services, SEAs in these six countries only started, with support from ad hoc international projects, to provide entrepreneurship support. In parallel, a wide range of institutions supporting entrepreneurship in the artisanal, services, or agricultural sectors have emerged and they too partner with international actors on ad hoc bases. In the absence of common frameworks and strategies, the multiplication of partnerships between international partners and national structures with overlapping mandates has resulted in complex institutional landscapes and scattered initiatives. The consequence for job-seekers and/or returnees is the absence of clearly identified venues to seek support. Their lack of accessibility is further exacerbated in rural areas: decentralisation of state structures remains partial, and the few existing regional antennas are usually inadequately equipped and benefit from limited levels of autonomy from central management in capitals.

Most of these SEAs have received limited support from international donors.¹ When support has been provided, the lack of coordination between partners has sometimes resulted in duplicates or overlaps. For example, in Sierra Leone, a few partners (including the British Council, GIZ and the EU) conducted a diagnosis of the Employment Exchange Unit's capacities and needs, but few ended up supporting it.² Recently, the Government of Sierra Leone and international partners, notably the EU, supported a study on the potential establishment of a Labour Market Information System (LMIS), which represents a first step before material, financial, training, and organisational support can be envisaged.³ However, at the time of data collection, no commitments had yet been made. On the contrary, in Niger, structures with similar mandates (ANPE, POJ/EOJ) and operating in the same areas have been funded by different international actors, without a common strategy or plans to create synergies.⁴

Nonetheless, good practices have emerged and could be further supported and/or replicated, depending on local needs and migrations flows, such as the 'Returning to New Opportunities' programme funded by Germany in the Gambia, further described below.

Focus Box 1: Gambian-German Advisory Centre (GGAC)

The 'Returning to New Opportunities' programme includes a Migration for Development component, which targets both returnees from Germany and other returnees, as well as young job-seekers in The Gambia. Over a period of three years (2020–2023), the programme has targeted 3,000 beneficiaries, of which 30 per cent are returnees (from Germany, other EU Member States, or other countries, including returns facilitated by IOM) and 70 per cent locals. The GGAC currently collaborates with IOM for referrals of beneficiaries in need of psycho-social support.

Other successful examples of EU-funded reforms exist in countries not covered by the study in the sub-region, such as the modernisation of Mauritania's SEA (ANAPEJ) under the Migr'Actions project (Table 5). The ANAPEJ was facing a set of structural, organisational, financial, and human resource challenges similar to those of the above-mentioned SEAs, which prevented it from

¹ In comparison with others, SEAs in Mali have received more support, but capacities remain equally limited.

² The VET Toolbox initiative and the British Council supported a diagnosis and trained the EEU to help build a LMIS.

³ A short concept note was also developed by the MLSS for a basic LMIS centralising the data entry points of ILO and the ministry.

⁴ For example, the World Bank (PEJIP) recently funded the recruitment of ANPE communal advisors, a geographic level where the POJ/EOJ are already present. No coordination of the activities carried out by the 10 ANPE communal advisors and those of the POJ/EOJ has been planned, to date.

conducting even the most basic missions. Following a 2018 organisational audit, conducted by the Migr'Actions project,¹ major reforms were carried out at all levels of the organisation. The development of a specific service offer for migrants and a dedicated team is an interesting example that could be replicated in other countries to improve their capacity to manage return migration flows.

Table 2: ANAPEJ, before and after the Migr'Actions project in Mauritania

Situation of ANAPEJ	Before Migr'Actions	After Migr'Actions
Territorial coverage	Headquarters, 2 agencies, 1 antenna	Headquarters / 18 agencies + reorganisation of the network
Numeric tools	Manual database	DELIL system, unique ID, registration off-site
IT equipment	Obsolete IT equipment (55%)	Renewal of 98% of IT equipment
Staffing	< 100 agents, short-term contracts	> 150 long-term contracts, internships, and short-term contracts
Budget	Based on international programmes for activities and running costs	Increased national budget
Coordination with donors	No coordination	Set up of a donor coordination group, including WB, AFD, EU delegations
Accessibility of job opportunities	Centralised at headquarters, paper-based advertisements (posters)	Accessible online, automatic preselection
Migration	No offer of services	Creation of a team dedicated to migration

3.2.2. Situation 2: State-owned reintegration systems available to all returnees

SEAs in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana also started to develop integrated services (combining 'classic' intermediation services and support to entrepreneurship) and several international actors are supporting their development.² For example, the French development agency (AFD) is supporting the youth employment agency in Côte d'Ivoire (AEJ) to develop its labour market information system and build the capacities of its human resources, particularly employment counsellors. Similarly, in Ghana, the Employment Information Bureau (EIB) is currently building, with World Bank support, a Labour Market Information System (LMIS), the online portal of which is intended to gather job and training opportunities and facilitate the recruitment of applicants. Nonetheless, further support is needed to render these SEAs fully operational: they still have a limited offer of services, modest networks of agencies of varying sizes, few staff, and digital tools that require further development.

In parallel, state-owned reintegration systems (being) set up with international support could evolve, in combination and coordination with SEAs, from project-based initiatives to more permanent mechanisms and/or structures able to deliver reintegration assistance. In countries where SEAs are still fragile and state-owned reintegration systems nascent, complementary capacity building approaches should be promoted. National referral mechanisms (NRMs), German-funded job centres (Ghana,³ The Gambia), and dedicated government programmes (Cameroon) have the advantage of being government-owned and accessible to all returnees. Similarly, the national

¹ Funded by the EU, the Migr'Actions project aimed to strengthen Public Employment Services in Cape Verde, Ghana, Mauritania, Senegal, and Togo.

² For example, the Employment Information Bureau (EIB) in Ghana received support from GIZ and the World Bank; the AEJ in Côte d'Ivoire is receiving support from AFD and the World Bank and received support from Pôle Emploi France and AMSEP.

³ In Ghana, it is expected that the German-funded centre will evolve into a European structure, the European-Ghanaian Centre. Similar German-funded structures have also been established in Senegal and Nigeria.

reintegration platform developed under the EU-IOM JI in Côte d'Ivoire could evolve into a more permanent structure and provide support to all returnees.¹ Although there is a risk that migrant-dedicated structures may add to the fragmentation of the intermediation sector (with international actors providing capacity building support to organisations with overlapping mandates), their advantage is that, if rightly coordinated with SEAs, they can provide pragmatic, short- to medium-term solutions to foster a gradual withdrawal from internationally-funded IPs.

Table 3: SEAs and migrant-dedicated structures / referral mechanisms in Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, and Ghana

Cameroon	FNE	<p>The mandate of the National Employment Fund (FNE) includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ intermediation services between employers and job-seekers; ▪ dissemination of information on the labour market; ▪ designing, financing, and monitoring programmes related to informal training and apprenticeship, formal training, self-employment, and support to the creation of microenterprises. <p>The FNE has relatively wide geographical coverage, but its resources are still too limited to fully carry out its mission (10 regional agencies and six local agencies with only 124 counsellors and 318 support staff).</p>
	PARI-JEDI	<p>In parallel, the PARI-JEDI² plays a key role in the economic reintegration of returning migrants. It was IOM's main governmental counterpart as part of the EU-IOM JI, overseeing all activities dedicated to Cameroonians of the diaspora and implementing several reintegration support programmes.</p> <p>Three reintegration pathways are made available to returnees under the PARI-JEDI: 1) the wage job pathway; 2) the entrepreneurship pathway; and 3) dedicated support to vulnerable migrants.</p> <p>However, the results of the PARI-JEDI are limited: since 2018, only 48 beneficiaries have completed the wage job pathway and 128 have completed the self-employment pathway. According to key informants, these low results were mainly due to budgetary constraints.</p>
Côte d'Ivoire	AEJ	<p>The mission of the Ivorian Youth Employment Agency (AEJ) is to implement strategies in favour of youth employment and provide support to job-seekers. After an initial screening, job-seekers can be referred to an employment pathway or to an entrepreneurship pathway (beneficiaries are supported in the maturation of a professional project, the structuring of business plans and the search for financing).</p>
	CGC	<p>In parallel, under the JI, IOM developed a network of partners through a reintegration platform structured around a case management committee (CGC). It is considered one of the main successes of the JI in Côte d'Ivoire.</p> <p>The CGC oversees a network of private companies, NGOs, consulting firms and TVET centres involved in the reintegration of returnees. The CGC meets quarterly and brings together the main ministries involved in reintegration. It is the main interface between IOM and the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and contributes, through a selection committee, to the identification of partners and the monitoring of reintegration projects.</p>

¹ At the time of data collection, discussions related to the evolution of the structure and mandate of the mechanism were ongoing.

² 'Programme d'aide au retour et à l'insertion des jeunes Camerounais de la diaspora'.

		Several key issues still need to be addressed for the CGC to be strengthened and maintained. The 'National Return and Reintegration Plan' will have to be adopted along with necessary budgets. In addition, a number of interviewed governmental stakeholders highlighted the need for the CGC to evolve from an IOM-led structure to a more government-owned mechanism. Its governance structure, thus, may need to be revised.
Ghana	PECs	<p>The Ministry of Employment and Labour Relations (MELR) Employment Information Bureau (EIB) works through and directly operates Public Employment Centres (PECs). The 64 PECs are located in 38 districts across the country, mostly in Accra and other major cities. GIZ, IOM, the International Labour Organization (ILO), and the EU have provided support since 2020 to meet significant equipment and capacity gaps and to familiarise employees with the needs of returnees.</p> <p>The EIB is currently building a Ghana LMIS (GLMIS), with World Bank support (see above).</p>
	NRM and GGC	<p>In parallel, under encouragement by the EU delegation in Ghana, the Ministry of Employment will be supported to develop a NRM (with GEC, the European-funded centre for jobs, migration, and development, at its core) to orient and support potential migrants and returnees, and facilitate reintegration, labour migration, and diaspora engagement in local development.</p> <p>In addition, the Accra-based Ghanaian-German Centre for Jobs (GGC) – soon to be renamed the European Migration and Reintegration centre (GEC) – is an initiative of the German cooperation launched in 2017. It is under the responsibility of the MELR and co-managed by GIZ.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This centre aims to support both general youth and returnees with job counselling, skills training, short- and long-term employment opportunities, business start-up support, and other services with emphasis on 'potential/prospective migrants' and returnees (e.g., information on regular and irregular migration, and social and psycho-social support). ▪ As a result of the significant financial, technical, and management support from GIZ and additional training from ILO, the GGC has become rapidly operational. It reports 15 000–20 000 beneficiaries annually, mostly non-migrants seeking career counselling and employment.

In these three countries, the experience of the EUTF-supported Tounesna reintegration platform in Tunisia provides a possible way forward, with a national platform on reintegration designed and led by the governments of partner countries, as detailed in Focus Box 2.

Focus Box 2: The Tounesna platform in Tunisia

In Tunisia, a reintegration platform, [Tounesna](#), was launched with support from the EUTF-funded ProGreS Migration programme. Designed in collaboration with Tunisian authorities, Tounesna is hosted by the Tunisian Diaspora Office (*Office des Tunisiens de l'Étranger*) and managed by Tunisian civil servants (paid by the Government of Tunisia). The Diaspora Office handles returnees' initial information and orientation sessions, referrals to public services, and administrative follow-up, in collaboration with the National Employment Agency and the National Directorate for Social Promotion. After this initial support, external, non-governmental entities (*opérateurs de suivi*) take over the individual case management and provide follow-up support on behalf of Tounesna.

Tounesna provides an additional economic (microbusiness start-up support) and social assistance package, made available through ProGreS Migration for returnees from four European countries (Belgium, France, Germany, Switzerland), based on eligibility criteria that are identical for all returnees.

Advantages of this scheme include: a reintegration process owned by the country-of-origin; increased institutional sustainability; easier referrals to public services; and no parallel assistance system specifically for returnees. Migrants returning from countries that do not fund reintegration assistance programmes can also access basic support through Tounesna (referrals to public services available to all Tunisians); thus, EUTF capacity building support to Tounesna also benefits them.

Tounesna could inspire other countries in the SLC region, especially those with strong governance structures (Ghana, Cameroun, Côte d'Ivoire), as well as future EU and IOM reintegration governance programming.

3.2.3. Situation 3: SEAs well placed to implement components of the AVRR process

In Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Senegal, SEAs are well-placed to contribute to the delivery of reintegration assistance. If adequate support and additional capacity building were to be provided (particularly to agencies located in the main areas of return), existing SEAs could play a more direct management and implementation role for key components of the AVRR process: orientation; linkages with youth employment opportunities; and monitoring of beneficiaries' situations. Most conditions are met to gradually evolve from the direct reintegration assistance delivery model currently used by EUTF-funded IPs, to more nationally owned and sustainable reintegration approaches.

In recent years, the three countries have taken concrete steps to improve and decentralise their SEAs. One Stop Service Centres (OSSCs) in Ethiopia, Public Employment Agencies (PEAs) in Nigeria and one-stop-shops (PEEJF)¹ in Senegal all offer job-seekers multidimensional assistance suited to the informal nature of the economies in which they operate. The assistance they provide includes classic intermediation services facilitating wage employment, information and access to TVET opportunities, as well as support to entrepreneurship and access to microfinance, including in the agriculture sector.

Ethiopia: OSSCs

Established in 2021, under the authority of the Ministry of Labour and Skills (MoLS), One Stop Service Centres (OSSCs) are a key part of the Government of Ethiopia's job creation efforts. OSSCs are mandated to facilitate employability and support business creation and access to TVET. They already work closely with government and non-government partners, including the Ministry of Women Affairs (MoWA), the Ministry of Youth and Sports (MoYS), the Ministry of Trade (MoT), the Addis Ababa Saving and Credit Cooperative Union, as well as TVET centres, private companies, cooperatives, and NGOs.

The MoLS is actively engaged in strengthening the capacity of OSSCs to support the reintegration of returnees. OSSCs are mandated to support returnees' orientation and economic reintegration by providing information on available employment options² and organising returnees in groups, based on their respective fields of choice. Following this, returnees may be referred to TVET centres or to (micro)finance institutions if they wish to start a business. According to the 'Economic

¹ 'Pôles Emploi et Entrepreneuriat des Jeunes et des Femmes'.

² An 'Economic Support Information Booklet' for vulnerable returnees, prepared by the former Federal Urban Job Creation and Food Security Agency (FUJCFSA) in November 2020, provides guidance on obtaining employment opportunities and economic reintegration.

Support Information Booklet', the most vulnerable may be referred to the Rehabilitation Fund established for victims of trafficking and smuggling.¹

There are currently 2 170 OSSCs countrywide, including 121 in Addis Ababa (or, essentially, one operating in each woreda²). Given their geographical reach and mandate to assist returnees, OSSCs could become, if adequately supported, key partners for the EU and its IPs in the delivery of reintegration assistance to future returnees, especially in the main return areas.³

Nigeria: Public Employment Agencies (PEAs)

In Nigeria's main return areas, the Lagos State Employment Trust Fund (LSETF), EdoJobs, the Delta State Job and Wealth Creation Bureau, and Enugu-Jobs were created in 2015 and 2016 as part of the political agenda of state governors to tackle youth unemployment. These structures run professional skills training programmes for youth aged 18–35 years, organise internships and job placements, and offer coaching and funding to entrepreneurs. They also facilitate access to finance, infrastructure, and networks through diversified funding sources and a network of over 60 partners each. The average annual number of beneficiaries they report ranges from about 1 000 (in Enugu and Delta) to over 3 000 (in Lagos) for technical training and business start-up support only.⁴

Despite significant potential advantages of these four agencies, IOM has only worked with EdoJobs on community-based projects. With their large networks of service providers and significant absorption capacities, these PEAs could play a key role in future reintegration programming in Nigeria.

Senegal: Espaces Sénégal Services (ESS) / Pôles Emploi et Entrepreneuriat des Jeunes et des Femmes (PEEJF)

The Government of Senegal has recently engaged in an ambitious reform of its administrative services, including in the field of youth employability, aimed at rationalising, decentralising, and digitalising the services. As part of its emergency programme for the insertion and employability of youth, the Government of Senegal created 45 ESS throughout the country. The ESS, which have been operational since 2021, host one-stop-shops (the PEEJF) in charge of orienting and supporting young people to access TVET, entrepreneurship, and employment opportunities. The creation of these one-stop-shops aims to rationalise the delivery of administrative services that, until then, were provided in a fragmented manner and bring them closer to beneficiaries. To date, three state structures are embedded in the one-stop-shops: the national delegation in charge of entrepreneurship support;⁵ the national TVET fund;⁶ and the Youth Employment Agency.⁷ Eventually, six more state structures are expected to play a role in the one-stop-shops. Of these, it is anticipated that the 33 existing migrant resources centres (BAOS), which provide information and orientation services to returnees and/or potential migrants, will be integrated into the ESS.

Despite being very recent, the ESS/PEEJF have achieved promising initial results, as stressed by several key informants. They could play a role in the reintegration of returnees in subsequent

¹ Reportedly in the process of being operationalised (at the time of data collection).

² Although 121 OSSCs are reportedly operating in Addis Ababa alone, many are not yet active and support should be provided for them to fulfil their mandate.

³ The EU is already engaged in the support of several OSSCs.

⁴ LSETF and EdoJobs are the most dynamic and ambitious of these four SEAs. They are recruiting staff, multiplying partnerships with local training service providers, employers, banking institutions and international donors, developing more services, and setting up local branches for increased outreach, such as LSETF's liaison offices and EdoJobs' job centres, now in all State's Local Government Areas. They have streamlined their process for selecting beneficiaries and vetting training partners, adapt their processes and training programmes to clients and target beneficiaries, mentor and monitor their beneficiaries after training completion, and create incubators and business parks for entrepreneurs in various sectors (ICT, manufacturing, agriculture, etc.). Their strategic partners noted that such agencies 'have strong ambitions and deliver'.

⁵ 'Délégation générale à l'entrepreneuriat' (DER).

⁶ 'Fonds de financement de la formation professionnelle' (3FPT).

⁷ 'Agence nationale pour la promotion de l'emploi des jeunes' (ANAPEJ).

phases of programming.¹ Such one-stop-shops are promising models for countries in the region where the fragmentation of administrative services and their limited reach are (as they were previously in Senegal) key issues to be addressed.

3.3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

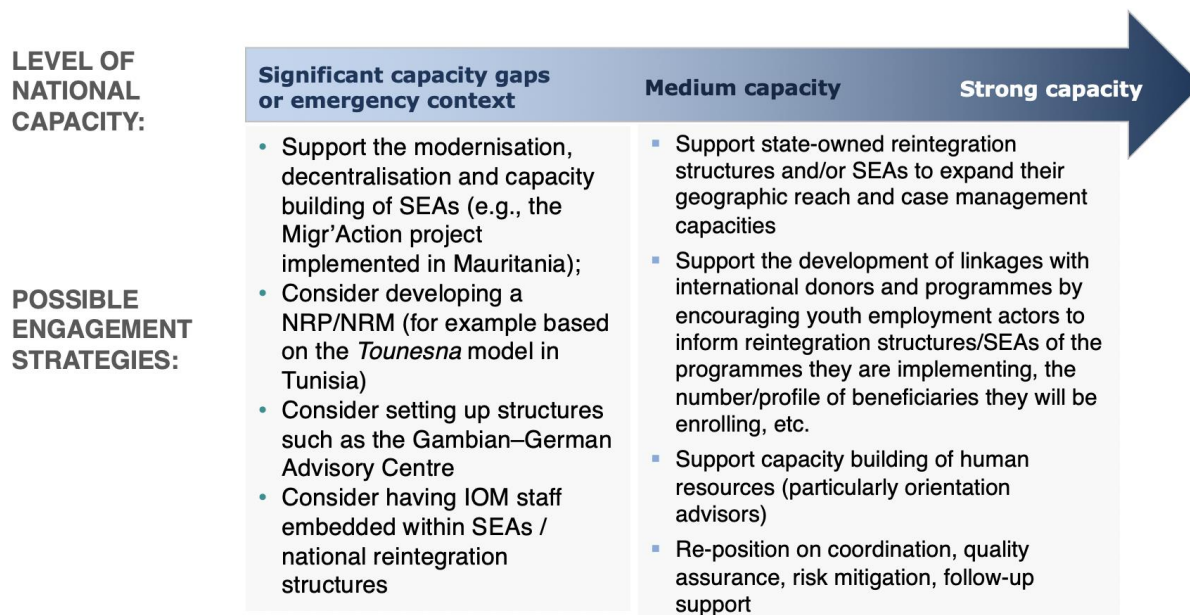
3.3.1. Expanding the scope of standard operating procedures to all returnees

The EU should support the revision and expansion beyond IOM of AVRR SOPs in all 12 countries based on the experience and lessons learnt from the JI. In the revision process, the EU could advocate for the arrangements outlined below to be made.

- **The SOPs should ensure nationally led reintegration governance structures are involved and build stronger linkages with the youth employment sector.**
- **The revised SOPs should be expanded beyond the scope of voluntary returns from migration routes towards Europe currently assisted by the EU and IOM.** The SOPs should encompass more types of returnees from various regions, assisted by more development partners (including the International Centre for Migration Policy Development [ICMPD], OFII, GIZ, etc.). The revision process should also involve each of these actors, which would revitalise inter-agency coordination and bring more coherence in their respective approaches. **This could even be the objective of a dedicated Team Europe Initiative (TEI), or a thematic focus for the Central and Western Mediterranean Routes TEIs.**
- **The revised SOPs should reaffirm the need for government institutions to be placed at the centre of the economic reintegration process and re-emphasise the key principle of avoiding singling returnees out from the rest of the youth population.**

3.3.2. Supporting the development of permanent reintegration structures in charge of developing referral mechanisms

Figure 7: What could a medium-term engagement and handover strategy look like?



¹ In addition, the Government of Senegal recently indicated that the ESS/PEEJF had already provided support to 100 000 beneficiaries.

In countries where this is realistic and possible, IOM should primarily work through SEAs and refer returnees to them for economic reintegration support and, in countries where such an approach would not ensure high quality, sustainable reintegration, the EU could fund long-term capacity building plans for SEAs, based on existing good practices (see section 4).

In addition, the EU should continue funding youth skills development and employment programmes as part of its strategy to address the root causes of irregular migration. This is critical to raise interest and further support from governments on the migration agenda. It is also needed to strategically complement its support to reintegration assistance. The support to SEAs recommended above could be framed as part of the EU's economic and youth empowerment programming, instead of migration.

Finally, the EU and its reintegration IPs should (continue to) advocate for increased, earmarked, and predictable government budgeting, in exchange for additional/new support to the youth employment sector. Existing technical working groups and TEI steering committees could be appropriate platforms for such advocacy efforts.

As part of its efforts to improve R&R governance in the 12 countries under study, the EU could scale up the capacity building of SEAs to help them better manage and deliver reintegration assistance.¹ These capacity building efforts should be made in coordination with other international donors (notably the World Bank, the African Development Bank [AfDB], GIZ and AFD).

In parallel, as part of the revision of IOM's SOPs, the EU should work with national governments and its IPs, such as IOM, towards a gradual transition and institutional strengthening strategy that will allow the SEAs to progressively assume more responsibilities in reintegration management and gain autonomy while limiting associated risks. Differentiated strategies should be adopted, depending on the level of maturity of existing structures and the scale of capacity building needed.

- **In Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Senegal,** EU support should help further enhance SEA management, outreach, and absorption capacities, as well as their internal information, monitoring, and quality assurance systems. Their main needs for support include: 1) expansion of their geographic outreach and case management capacities; 2) development of linkages with international donors and job creation programmes; and 3) provision of capacity building in favour of their human resources.
- **In Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire and Ghana,** where state-owned reintegration structures are likely to work in parallel to SEAs, measures should be taken to ensure coordination and complementarity of the assistance provided, while stepping up the capacities of both state-owned reintegration mechanisms and SEAs.
- **In Sahelian countries and the most fragile coastal states,** the EU and IOM should agree on longer-term handover plans. Differentiated strategies, based on the caseload of returnees in each country, should be adopted, as outlined below.
 - In countries hosting the largest number of returnees (Mali, Guinea, and, to a lesser extent, The Gambia and Sierra Leone), the EU and its IPs should continue directly implementing economic reintegration assistance, in parallel with efforts aiming to develop ad hoc referral mechanisms with other youth employment actors.² To strengthen national ownership over

¹ Through, for example, SOCIEUX+ (EU Expertise on Social Protection, Labour, and Employment), a facility for technical cooperation established and co-funded by the EU. It aims, among other objectives, to improve access to better employment opportunities. It implemented (or implements) actions in Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal.

² An additional difficulty is that Mali and Guinea host relatively fewer youth employment programmes than neighbouring countries, such as Senegal and Ethiopia. The current political situation in Mali and the withdrawal of many international actors (including AFD) may exacerbate this situation (see section 5).

R&R, the EU/IOM could also consider embedding SEA staff within IOM's case management team, or detaching IOM staff within SEAs;

- In countries hosting fewer returnees (Burkina Faso and Niger), and where most tend to resettle in rural areas, differentiated strategies could be adopted, such as targeted support to local orientation mechanisms¹ and/or direct referrals to youth employment programmes active in the field of agriculture.²
- In parallel, in these six countries, the EU could consider, based on the Senegalese model, to support the modernisation, decentralisation and diversification of the services offered by SEAs.

¹ For example, in Niger, the POJ/EOJ in Tahoua and Tillabéry, or in Burkina Faso, the renovated ANPE antenna in the Centre Region.

² However, as in Burkina Faso, Mali and Niger, the main return areas host comparatively fewer youth employment programmes than other regions of these countries.

4. LEVERAGING YOUTH EMPLOYMENT PROGRAMMES TO IMPROVE THE QUALITY OF REINTEGRATION ASSISTANCE

Given the mostly informal nature of job markets in all of the countries of the study, most reintegration pathways for returnees involve microenterprises in the informal sector. The formal private sector remains relatively small in most countries (at the continental level, it accounts, on average, for only 16 per cent of the labour force).^{xxv} Although opportunities may be found in the formal sector (see section 5.4), most jobs take the shape of unincorporated businesses owned by individuals or households.^{xxvi} These jobs are split between microenterprises in the artisanal and services sectors (about 22 per cent, on average, of the labour force, mainly in urban or semi-urban areas) and in the agriculture sector (around 62 per cent of the labour force on continental average).^{xxvii} Agriculture thus occupies the largest share of the population in all countries under study and accounts for up to 80 per cent of the workforce in Mali and 85 per cent in Niger.^{xxviii}

Microbusinesses in the informal sector generate low earnings and high underemployment, due to a set of factors including insufficient human capital (e.g., inadequate training) **and an inconducive business environment** (e.g., lack of support infrastructures, limited financial inclusion). Returnees, like other youth, are adversely impacted by these structural constraints. Despite additional support received, returnees reintegrated with EUTF funding also lacked market-relevant skills and faced an unconducive business environment. As a result, their individual and collective economic reintegration projects often struggled to start and become profitable.

This mapping exercise identified over 270 relevant youth employment programmes aiming to address the lack of productivity in the informal sector (thus suited to the needs of returnees aiming to start their own businesses). These programmes seek to improve the productivity of the informal sector through a set of interventions, as outlined below.

- **Strengthen human capital by reforming TVET and skills development systems.** TVET interventions of national governments and international actors aim to strengthen youth education and skills to improve their ability to increase their earnings and achieve income security. Several reforms and innovative methods are being tested and implemented to bring TVET and skills development closer to labour market needs (see section 4.1).
- **Improve the business environment in the agriculture, services, and artisanal sectors.** International partners generally design programmes that aim to address the main obstacles precluding youth from entering the informal entrepreneurship sector. These programmes include support to design business plans, access capital (e.g., in the forms of grants), loans (through financial literacy trainings or innovative financial inclusion schemes), new technologies (e.g., in the farming sector) and, more generally, through the development of entrepreneurship ecosystems: incubators, agencies supporting the creation of microenterprises, etc. (see sections 4.2 and 4.3).

Based on the data collected across the 12 countries of the study, the following sections present the main opportunities and actors identified in the fields of TVET (5.1), entrepreneurship (5.2 and 5.3), wage employment (5.4.) and socioeconomic support (5.5.) Each section provides a brief overview of the sector, presents the main international actors active in these fields, along with some of the best practices currently implemented as part of their programming, and outlines recommendations for future EU programming in these fields.

4.1. TVET AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

4.1.1. OVERVIEW OF THE SECTOR AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM EUTF

Despite political will and efforts,¹ TVET and skills development governance systems often remain complex and inefficient, and the sector is insufficiently funded or connected to labour market needs, with significant differences across the 12 countries.² In most countries, training is provided in a fragmented way by many ministries with limited accountability, creating substantial inefficiencies and distortions. Institutional complexity is generally due to multi-level, segmented, and uncoordinated governance models (formal vs. non-formal education; public vs. private institutions; education ministry vs. sectoral ministries managing sector-specific curricula, accreditation, and certification; etc.).³ In addition, the quality of trainings remains a challenge, largely depending on the resources invested by national governments and international actors. This can be explained as follows:

- **under-investment in government TVET and skills development centres:⁴** overcrowded classrooms, unattractive working conditions for teachers leading to poor teacher quality, outdated teaching methods and equipment⁵ (which partly explains the poor reputation of TVET and skills development institutions and their low appeal to young people, and which often leads to the growth of alternative options run by private sector and CSOs⁶);
- **short supply of training institutions in rural and remote areas** (employment programmes struggle to find good training partners for youth in these types of locations); and
- **weak knowledge of and linkages with labour market needs⁷,** lack of partnerships with private sector employers for post-training internships, apprenticeships and employment opportunities, as well as other forms of support for graduates willing to establish themselves as start-up entrepreneurs (representing a major obstacle to improving and maintaining market relevance, and for TVET graduates to find jobs after training completion).

EUTF-funded IPs reported challenges finding training centres due to these reasons, which consequently led to limited options for returnees and mixed results in terms of training quality and reintegration outcomes. Difficulties finding TVET and skills development centres with qualified trainers, modern teaching methods, adequate equipment or suitable entry requirements (see section

¹ As illustrated by the adoption of TVET dedicated policies in almost all 12 countries.

² Countries, such as Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, Senegal and, to a lesser extent, Côte d'Ivoire, have benefited from significant international support to reform their TVET sectors, along with national funding. Despite lingering weaknesses (particularly in terms of geographic coverage and governance), the TVET systems in these countries present modern features and offer many opportunities for returnees. On the other side of the spectrum, countries such as Guinea, Mali or The Gambia are less advanced, and will require significant international support to reach a level comparable to the more mature systems in neighbouring countries.

³ For example, in Burkina Faso, the sector is divided into formal and non-formal education. While formal trainings lead to nationally-recognised diplomas, informal trainings usually do not. Both are managed in parallel ways: formal trainings are placed under the supervision of the Ministry of Education and, to a lesser extent, the Ministry of Superior Education. Informal trainings are managed by the National TVET Agency (ANFP) placed under the tutelage of the Ministry of Youth and other sectoral ministries (e.g., agriculture, tourism, livestock, etc.).

⁴ In most countries, TVET remains chronically underfunded, which contributes to the lack of appeal of the sector. The proportion of TVET trainees in most countries remains small compared to that of students in conventional education, and TVET is still perceived as a back-up plan for school dropouts. Anecdotal evidence, however, suggests that, in countries where more resources are being invested, TVET becomes more attractive. For example, in Senegal, although it represents only 5 per cent of the total number of Senegalese students (the system is dominated by conventional education), this pathway is increasingly popular with young people as it is increasingly seen as an alternative to a failed classical education pathway and more as an opportunity to access a concrete trade.

⁵ TVET institutions also lack material resources: according to a 2022 NCTVA survey, fewer than two thirds of TVET institutions owned a computer and only 40 per cent had access to the internet.

⁶ Limited oversight by governments over private TVET and skills development providers, unilaterally set entrance requirements, and unclear policies on the definition of curricula and/or certification, contribute to the fragmentation and opacity of the sector.

⁷ In Sierra Leone, according to the 2020 National Technical and Higher Education Census (NTHEC), only 40 per cent of TVET and skills development institutions offer training programmes that are relevant to market demand. The remainder focus on basic trainings in skills, such as soap-making, weaving, tailoring, and catering, which are not aligned with the Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) and offer few prospects for successful economic integration.

5.1.3) in return areas, led many IPs (including IOM) to contract public and/or private service providers to deliver ad hoc trainings. This was accompanied by budget constraints, which meant that the duration of the trainings varied, and they were often too short, ranging from a few days to a year depending on the IP and the type of skills/trade.¹ Surveys conducted by Altai Consulting among returnees in West Africa between 2019 and 2021 showed that only 20 per cent of TVET and skills development beneficiaries ended up working in the field in which they were trained.^{xxix} They also showed that, despite a high demand of returnees for TVET and skills development, limited knowledge and information as to available opportunities, in addition to insufficient sequencing of technical skills trainings with other reintegration support (e.g., entrepreneurship training and in-kind support), contributed to limiting returnees' access to TVET and skills development opportunities.^{2, xxx}

However, there are numerous international partners active in the field of TVET and skills development which could contribute to diversifying options made available to returnees and increasing the quality of the trainings they receive (Table 6). Most programmes implemented by these actors aim at: improving or strengthening the governance of TVET and skills development sectors; renovating or building new TVET institutions; providing equipment; revising curricula to improve their relevance with private sector needs and strengthening relationships with the private sector.

Table 4: Main actors involved in the modernisation of TVET³ (non-exhaustive)

Country	Implementers of active projects in the TVET and skills development sector	
	EU Member States agencies	Other
Burkina Faso	LuxDev, AFD, ADA, GIZ	Swiss Cooperation
Cameroon	AFD, ENABEL	ILO
Côte d'Ivoire	AFD, ENABEL	WB, MCA, <i>Conseil Français des Investisseurs en Afrique</i> , ONUDI, IECD
Ethiopia	GIZ	WB, ILO, UNESCO
Ghana	GIZ, BMZ, ENABEL	ILO, Mastercard foundation
Guinea	AFD, ENABEL	World Bank, FSD/BID
Mali	AFD, LuxDev, AECID, ENABEL	Swiss Cooperation
Niger	AFD	World Bank, Swiss Cooperation
Nigeria	GIZ, AFD, AECID, AFD, ENABEL	World Bank, UNICEF, ILO
Senegal	LuxDev, AFD, ENABEL	UNESCO
Sierra Leone	GIZ	World Bank
The Gambia	ENABEL	UNESCO

4.1.2. POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN FAVOUR OF RETURNEES

Many opportunities for collaboration and partnerships between reintegration and youth employment actors are highlighted in the 12 country reports produced as part of this study. A total of 55 projects dedicated to improving and strengthening national TVET and skills development sectors and 167 TVET and skills development providers supported by international donors were

¹ For 90 per cent of beneficiaries surveyed by Altai Consulting in the SLC region between 2019 and 2021 (TPML mechanism for the EUTF), the training received lasted less than four weeks, and five days or less for one-third. In the latter case, it was closer to a general introduction/orientation to a trade than an actual training.

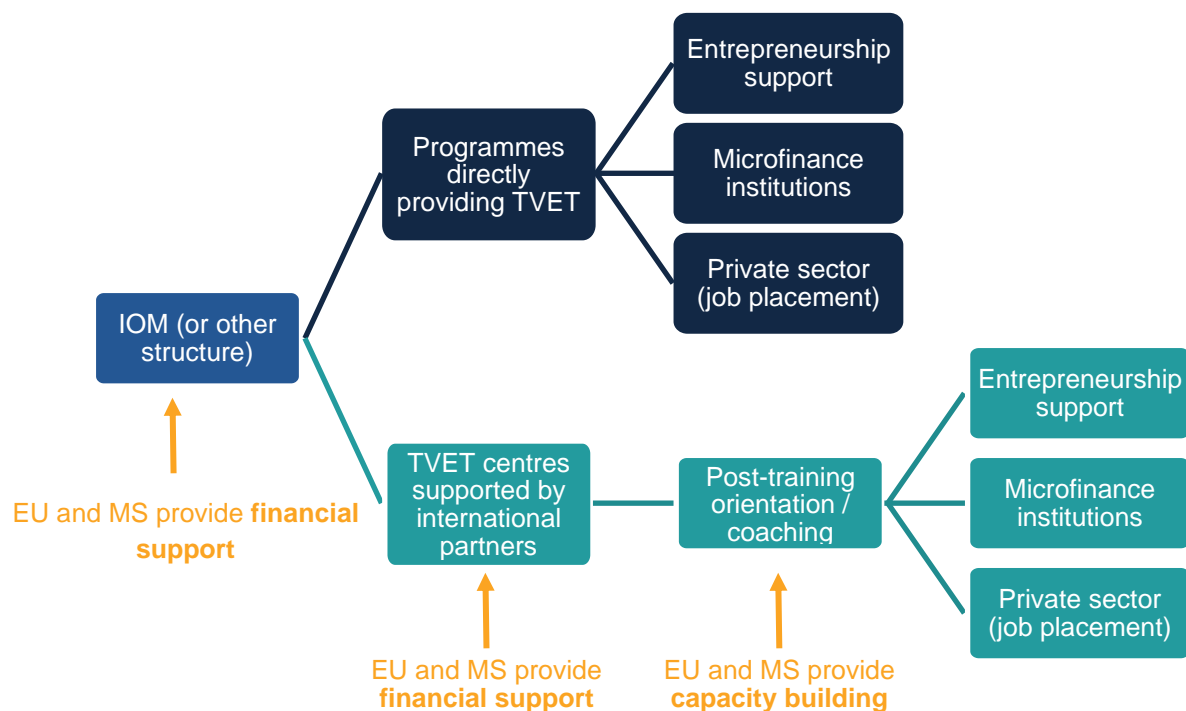
² Evidence gathered as part of the TPML study suggested that returnees' interest in TVET and skills development increases once they have received some material support or started an income-generating activity and are more motivated and available to attend. When returnees see economic needs as their main priority, TVET/skills development is not appealing as it delays economic gains. Adequately timing and sequencing this type of support is key.

³ Programmes implemented by the actors listed in this table primarily aim to strengthen the TVET and skills development sector. However, many of the programmes listed in sections 5.2 and 5.3 (support to entrepreneurship in the artisanal, services and agriculture sector) also include a TVET component.

identified (see annex 6.2 and country reports), and dozens more working towards improving access to entrepreneurship include a TVET component (see section 5.2). Potential collaborations include those outlined below (Figure 5).

- **Partnerships with TVET and skills development centres that have been renovated, built, or otherwise supported by international donors.** Such centres, which aim to strengthen links with the labour market (through entrepreneurship support, microfinance institutions [MFIs], and potential employers) offer better reintegration prospects. Many, however, will need further capacity building and support (see country reports and annexes).
- **Partnerships with actors directly implementing TVET and skills development programmes.** Many of these include a component providing support to entrepreneurship, thus offering integrated reintegration pathways (see section 5.2).

Figure 8: Potential collaborations with international actors active in the TVET sector



International partners active in the field of TVET have developed innovative approaches and good practices that should be replicated and scaled-up in the main countries and areas of return (Table 7). Developing partnerships with these TVET institutions and programmes would allow returnees to be linked with ‘new generation’ TVET centres, enabling them to benefit from modern approaches currently being tested and implemented. These programmes have already yielded positive results: in addition to renovating and building new TVET centres, international initiatives have included, for example: developing new teaching methods (e.g., dual vocational training based on apprenticeship training contracts), building public-private partnerships; identifying specific high-growth sectors and developing the technical skills needed for these sectors to develop. By closely linking the trainings provided to the needs of national and local economies, these approaches offer higher quality reintegration prospects than the short-term, one-off trainings delivered to most returnees under EUTF reintegration programming. Lessons learnt from these new approaches need to be widely shared and the most successful should be developed on a wider scale.

Table 5: Examples of good practices and opportunities for returnees

TVET sector needs	Good practices
<p>Modernising TVET centres</p> <p><i>Renovation and equipment of existing TVET centres</i></p> <p><i>Building new TVET centres</i></p>	<p>Most of the 166 recommended TVET and skills development centres have received or are receiving support from international donors: renovation of infrastructure, equipment, improved quality of trainings (training of trainers, revision of curricula, etc.), and strengthened relations with the private sector.</p> <p>In several countries, including Côte d'Ivoire,¹ Senegal² and, to a lesser extent, Cameroon and Guinea, international partners are projecting to build new, modern TVET centres.</p>
<p>Improving the relevance of curricula to private sector needs</p> <p><i>Revising curricula and developing dual apprenticeship and competency-based approaches</i></p> <p><i>Supporting public / private concessional management</i></p> <p><i>Developing technical skills in specific high-growth sectors</i></p>	<p>Programmes implemented by GIZ³ and the World Bank are testing and developing the dual apprenticeship approach,⁴ in partnership with TVET and skills development institutions and the private sector. The competency-based-approach is also being widely implemented in Senegal (through the ISEP).</p> <p>Concessional management models are being developed (e.g., through the VET Toolbox project in Senegal and Ethiopia) and are expected to soon be fully managed by private firms.</p> <p>This approach, which is mainly implemented by the World Bank and the United Nations Industrial Development Organization (UNIDO), aims to develop TVET capacities in specific high-growth sectors with high demand for skills.</p> <p>For example, in Sierra Leone, UNIDO is supporting the development of a regional centre of excellence for automotive technician training at the Freetown Polytechnic, while the World Bank targets digital skills through the Sierra Leone Digital Transformation Project.⁵</p>

¹ In Côte d'Ivoire, the AFD (C2D) will build and/or renovate 20 public TVET centres (modernisation of technical platforms, provision of equipment, rehabilitation of premises). In addition, the World Bank (PEJEDEC) plans to build, rehabilitate and/or equip another five centres (not yet selected at the time of data collection), while the Millennium Challenge Account (MCA) plans to build and equip three more.

² In Senegal, donors continue to support the deployment of TVET centres throughout the country. In addition to equipping the eight existing ISEPs, the World Bank committed to build two additional ones by the end of 2023, while AFD and KfW committed to build two and four additional ones, respectively, by the end of 2024. In addition, new CFP-clusters (similar to the existing CSFP-BTP based in Diamniadio) are to be built across the country with World Bank and AFD support by the end of 2024. They will provide trainings in promising sectors (e.g., eco-construction, forestry, mining, agribusiness).

³ In Sierra Leone, the Employment Promotion Programme (EPP IV), implemented by GIZ, focuses on dual apprenticeship.

⁴ The ARCHIPELAGO programme (EUTF-funded), implemented in most countries covered as part of this study.

⁵ This approach is time- and resource-consuming (conducting labour market studies and discussions with the private sector, building capacities [develop curricula, train trainers, upgrade infrastructures, provide equipment, etc.] and rolling out the trainings [on-the-job training, monitoring and follow up]) but can yield better results than the mass supply-driven approach applied until recently.

Increase enrolment capacity

Developing large-scale training programmes

Several large-scale training programmes, mainly implemented by the World Bank, AFD and GIZ, could offer opportunities for returnees.

In **Sierra Leone**, the World Bank and GIZ have played a key role: through the 'Skills Development Project', the World Bank supported 200 TVET and skills development institutions throughout the country, trained over 10 000 youth and supported the creation of an Integrated Skills Information System.¹ GIZ, through Employment Youth Promotion IV (EPP IV), is currently active in the northern and eastern border regions, supporting private sector and skills development, as well as a reform of the sector at the national level.

In **Côte d'Ivoire**, through the 'school for a second chance' programme, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire aims to provide a wide-scale training response to the massive arrivals of young people on the job market every year, with plans to train and integrate 400 000 young people over five years.² The Government is supported by AFD (C2D; target of 6 000 beneficiaries) and the World Bank (PEJEDEC; target of 18 000 beneficiaries).

In **Senegal**, to support TVET graduates entering the job market, the Government of Senegal is planning to set up reception, information, and orientation units in several pilot institutions, developed with World Bank support.

Supporting graduates' effective access to the job market

Supporting post-training follow-up units within TVET centres³

In **Mali**, with support from Luxembourg Development Cooperation Agency (LuxDev), School-Business Liaison Offices (BLEE) have been set up in several TVET and skills development centres to strengthen relationships with the private sector. Their mandate is to assist graduates in their job search and to establish partnership agreements with companies to recommend learners for internships. The Government of Mali intends to generalise these structures in all TVET and skills development centres. Agreements were signed with professional unions and several training institutions. For example, a TVET centre already signed an agreement with the relevant professional union in the construction sector,⁴ which offers numerous jobs in several regions of the country.

Other good practices include the set-up of business incubators directly within TVET centres (**Ethiopia**).

¹ Which had been initiated by GIZ through the Employment Promotion Program (EPP).

² The E2C offers short professional training courses (lasting less than 12 months, provided by public and private partner institutions, involving internships in the workplace, and offering tools to help with post-training integration). The programme also offers certification for master craftsmen as part of a VAE programme to strengthen the recognition of trainers who were previously only involved in the informal sector.

³ In all countries, there is an important need to further strengthen post-training follow-up to connect graduates with existing opportunities in the entrepreneurship ecosystem or private sector (see sections 5.2, 5.3 and 5.4).

⁴ 'Organisation Patronale des Entrepreneurs de la Construction du Mali' (OPECOM).

4.1.3. CHALLENGES PRECLUDING RETURNEES' ACCESS TO TVET

Several structural and programmatic barriers need to be addressed for returnees to access existing opportunities in the TVET and skills development sector. These include: 1) major challenges to accessing information on existing opportunities; 2) an uneven distribution of interventions and a lack of prioritisation of the main return areas; and 3) a mismatch between existing interventions and returnees' skills and needs/desires.

Information and orientation

Due to the lack of centralisation of existing TVET and skills development opportunities and inadequate orientation mechanisms, most young people – including returnees – are not equipped to make informed decisions about which centre to enrol in or which course to follow.

As part of their outreach strategies, most TVET and skills development centres interviewed as part of this study indicated relying solely on social media (Facebook), leaflets, or word of mouth for their external communications. As a result, decisions made by young people to enrol in a particular TVET centre or to choose one kind of training versus another are rarely based on informed factors, such as the quality of training provided or job prospects in the chosen sector. In addition, past research has demonstrated that young people often have inaccurate perceptions about the returns of vocational training and which sectors provide the highest earnings.^{xxxi} There is, thus, a need for more information to be made available to the youth (particularly returnees) about existing training opportunities within industries in which they wish to work, to help them decide which training to undertake and, overall, better match trainees' profiles with existing opportunities.

To this end, training institutions and intermediation mechanisms should be better coordinated, and their links strengthened through real-time centralisation of existing TVET and skills development opportunities. The quasi-totality of the 166 TVET and skills development centres interviewed as part of this study reported not having any connections with SEAs. To increase awareness and concrete information on TVET and skills development opportunities, creating a dedicated space within public employment agencies' information systems, through which training institutions could fill in their trainings and schedules in real-time (as has been done in Mauritania – Focus Box 2), would simplify processes. This information would be visible to agencies' advisors across a given country and thus increase awareness, transparency, and the range of options available to beneficiaries.

Focus Box 3: Migr'Actions project in Mauritania

The development of the **DELIL** system within the Mauritanian SEA (ANAPEJ), as a result of support received under the EU-funded Migr'Actions project, allowed for the creation of a space dedicated to TVET centres across the country. All ANAPEJ advisors were reportedly trained on how to keep track of existing TVET and skills development opportunities. In addition, measures have been taken to strengthen relationships between ANAPEJ and TVET providers through regular meetings between job counsellors and TVET and skills development centres about existing trainings, their costs, profiles of beneficiaries, etc. However, delays in activating the DELIL system were reported.

Geographic distribution of interventions

Important disparities were noted in the 12 countries, in terms of accessibility and quality of TVET and skills development, and remain to be addressed, particularly with regard to targeting the primary areas of departure and return. At the national level, there are significant disparities across regions in terms of access to TVET and skills development, rural areas often being largely forgotten, even when they are important departure and/or return areas. For example, in Senegal, the Dakar region alone accounts for more than half of the country's TVET institutions, followed by Thiès and Ziguinchor, while major departure and return areas, such as Kolda, Tambacounda, Kédougou, and Louga, only have limited TVET and skills development options. As a result, returnees are often forced to travel long distances to attend trainings, involving significant additional costs which contribute to early dropouts. In

Mali, the regions of Kayes and Gao, which are significant areas of departure and return, currently do not host any internationally funded TVET and skills development programmes. In Sierra Leone¹ and Guinea, rural and vulnerable populations are also largely excluded from the TVET and skills development system, with the lack of reintegration options outside Conakry and Freetown explaining, in part, why the quasi-totality of returnees resettle in the capital cities.

Access criteria, length of training and certification

Although entry requirements, curricula and length of trainings vary widely across the 12 countries, the structure of TVET and skills development courses often make them inaccessible to returnees who are seeking rapidly available, short-term trainings. Many TVET and skills development institutions require secondary schooling and, therefore, a significant proportion of returnees lack the qualifications to enrol. In some (mainly anglophone) countries, there is a distinction between ‘formal’ and ‘non-formal’ trainings. Non-formal trainings are usually shorter and more flexible than formal trainings but do not lead to national certifications. However, in many cases, they are better suited to reintegration assistance.² In other (mainly francophone) countries, there is no equivalent to ‘non-formal’ programmes. National programmes often last two to three years, making them unsuitable for returnees looking for rapidly available income. Other obstacles to returnees’ access to TVET and skills development include waiting times before the next available session (enrolment periods are spaced out, thus making the waiting period possibly long). The full-time requirement of some trainings makes it difficult to maintain a parallel activity, which can prevent some returnees from attending, especially when no financial support (stipend, per diem) is provided during the training period.

To overcome these difficulties,³ international actors have often developed, in partnership with TVET and skills development centres, ad hoc trainings and certificates. However, their lack of harmonisation and thus limited value on the labour markets represent a challenge. In all countries, short-term trainings and standalone programmes have been widely implemented following an approach of ‘à la carte’ curricula. However, these programmes usually last as long as their funding and because they award a wide range of diplomas/certifications not standardised nor recognised at the national level, they often have little value in labour markets. Another issue raised by IPs and TVET and skills development centres is that almost all trainees obtained the training certificate regardless of their learning and skills, even when these were assessed. The certificates therefore do not serve as a motivating factor and may lose their value from the perspective of potential employers. The development of standardised, controlled and market-responsive diplomas and certificates should be supported; the example of Senegal is interesting in this regard (Focus Box 4).

Focus Box 4: Certificates of specialisation (Senegal)

To standardise and control the quality of short-term training courses,⁴ the Government of Senegal (Ministry of Professional Training [MEFPAI]), in partnership with the World Bank, developed Certificates of Specialisation. These certificates are awarded upon the completion of short (three to six months) training courses. Before a TVET centre creates a course leading to the award of a certificate, the project must be government-approved. A technical committee managed by the MEFPAI examines, based on a grid developed by the World Bank, the proposed curricula and project submitted by the candidate TVET centre. It must demonstrate its technical and material capacity to deliver the training and its relevance to the private sector’s needs. A national fund dedicated to TVET (3FPT) funds most certification courses through training vouchers covering 90–100 per cent of tuition

¹ In Sierra Leone, most TVET institutions located in rural areas are private, and tuition fees often prohibitively high for vulnerable segments of the population.

² Non-formal TVET programmes target people in employment as well as school leavers, marginalised groups and adults wishing to pursue an alternative to formal education.

³ Most vulnerable youth face the same issues; these are not specific to returnees.

⁴ As in most other francophone countries in West Africa, nationally accredited TVET trainings in Senegal usually last two to three years and lead to nationally recognised diplomas.

fees. This model aims to adequately respond to the labour market at the local level. In total, since 2016, more than 15 000 people have benefited from this scheme. In addition to the World Bank, the development of certificates was also supported by other international actors (e.g., AFD, LuxDev).

4.1.4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

It is essential to support improved coordination among actors involved in the field of TVET and skills development, as well as the development of common strategies. Based on national TVET and skills development policies, the EU should support the development of action plans, along with realistic budgets and monitoring and evaluation (M&E) mechanisms (see section 3), to effectively implement and monitor TVET and skills development objectives in a coordinated manner with both national and international actors. As part of this, the EU should seek to support the development of strengthened and rationalised governance systems and increased public and private funding of the sector, based on good practices in the region (e.g., the 3FPT in Senegal) and/or the development of public/private partnerships.

Increased awareness and centralisation of information about existing TVET and skills development opportunities is key to ensure better access, including to returnees. The links between training institutions and intermediation mechanisms should be strengthened and existing TVET and skills development opportunities available in real-time. In addition, the EU could consider funding information campaigns to increase the appeal of TVET and skills development among returnees, particularly at the information/orientation/referral stages. A similar experience was conducted in The Gambia with the United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) 'Youth Empowerment through TVET' programme and yielded positive results.

The EU could consider funding and implementing additional TVET and skills development programmes in countries hosting the largest caseloads of returnees, targeting the main areas of return. At the regional and national levels, the EU and its Member States (e.g., as part of the TEIs) should regularly share good practices and lessons learnt from the new approaches to TVET and skills development currently being tested and implemented (see Table 7). The most promising ones should be developed on a wider scale, targeting in priority main areas of departure/return. In addition, specific features designed to support returnees throughout trainings could be included in these programmes, such as stipends contingent on attendance, basic psycho-social services when needed, and free childcare services (see section 5.5).

It would be beneficial to support the development of quality-controlled courses and standardised certificates accessible to returnees. Training cycles developed at the request of international actors/programmes should be standardised to ensure both their relevance and recognition in labour markets. The CS rolled out in Senegal (Focus Box 4) is a good practice that could be replicated in other countries.

Improving the monitoring of post-training outcomes would be key to ensure the relevance of TVET and skills development with labour market needs and to assess successes and failures. There is currently not a central integrated system to monitor the integration of trainees into the labour market in any of the 12 countries studied for this report. Post-training follow-up and surveys are carried out by TVET and skills development centres themselves and are typically insufficient and/or unreliable. In addition, there is a lack of monitoring at the outcome level: the monitoring often focuses on counting outputs (i.e., number of people trained), rather than assessing the quality of training and whether graduates actually benefited from it. Additional emphasis should be placed on measuring outcomes (share of trainees securing an internship, starting their businesses, or entering wage employment) both after graduation and periodically thereafter. This information is not only important for returnees to have before committing to a training but is also needed to improve TVET and skills development curricula and ensure the system is responsive to labour market demand.

4.2. SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE ARTISANAL AND SERVICES SECTORS

4.2.1. OVERVIEW OF THE SECTOR AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE EUTF

Most youth working in urban and peri-urban areas across the 12 countries under study are engaged in informal microenterprises in the artisanal and services sectors and face multiple constraints to start businesses and generate sufficient revenues and profit. Many of these microenterprises amount to self-employment.^{xxxii} Most sell services (hairdressing, repairs) or consumer goods (used clothing, household supplies), transform and sell agricultural products or natural resources (e.g., charcoal, bricks), or are engaged in artisanal activities (e.g, carpentry, tailoring, small construction).^{xxxiii} Despite national development plans and entrepreneurship sectoral policies emphasising the need to ease constraints faced by entrepreneurs, young people (including returnees) are held back by obstacles (e.g., insufficient capital or savings to start a business, inadequate information on markets, a lack of training in technical and/or 'soft' (behavioural) skills, basic competencies in literacy and numeracy).^{xxxiv} As a result, the death rate of microenterprises within their first year of existence is very high and, for those who manage to survive, only a minority grow and hire other workers.^{xxxv}

The support provided by EUTF-funded IPs to address these obstacles often proves insufficient for returnees' economic reintegration projects to develop and become profitable. Individual, collective, and community-based projects have struggled to start and grow in the 11 countries of the SLC region.^{xxxvi} The initial funding and start-up equipment provided to returnees was often too modest to set the entrepreneurship projects up for success.¹ In addition, microbusinesses were not always aligned with beneficiaries' first choices, professional aspirations² or skills, and many felt compelled to join collective projects, which faced management, group dynamics, and sustainability issues, with most splitting and discontinuing their businesses within the first year and a half.^{xxxvii} Business skills training were often short and rushed, and soft skills – often instrumental to the success of entrepreneurship projects – were not systematically offered. When they were offered, they were not always well timed and sequenced to adapt to the successive stages of business development. Access to affordable workspace, equipment, and finance were additional constraining factors. Finally, post-training support remained too limited.

Despite several existing opportunities across the countries under study, returnees were not encouraged to seek additional, external, longer-term technical and financial support – through local entrepreneurship ecosystems – after the end of their reintegration assistance. In all 12 countries, although significant disparities exist, local entrepreneurship ecosystems³ have developed in the past decade outside reintegration programming but these initiatives and services have not been, or have insufficiently been, used for the benefit of returnees. Nearly 100 projects and 120 service providers (e.g., incubators and MFIs) active in the field of entrepreneurship in the artisanal and services sectors were identified as part of this study (see Table 8, country reports and annexes), and many more programmes were being developed at the time of data collection.

¹ Subsidies were reportedly 'too modest to start certain types of businesses, especially those requiring upfront investment in capital, equipment, and supplies'. Subsidies typically amounted to as much as EUR 1 000 per beneficiary and varied across IPs and projects based on beneficiaries' vulnerability and needs. Most IPs provided them as one-off, in-kind grants. Some projects, such as INTEGRA in Guinea and EJOM in Mali, provided them in cash instalments, the second, complementary grant being disbursed after a follow-up period (Altai Consulting TPML survey).

² Nearly one in four survey respondents stated that their microbusiness was not aligned with their initial desires and plans (Altai Consulting TPML survey).

³ Comprised of public and private incubators, as well as entrepreneurship support organisations (ESOs) and MFIs.

Table 6: Main actors involved in the entrepreneurship sector (non-exhaustive)

Country	Implementers of active projects in the entrepreneurship sector	
	EU Member States	Other
Burkina Faso	EF, SNV, AFD, GIZ	WB, USAID, UNDP, ITC
Cameroon	GIZ, AFD, PROPARCO	AfDB, UNDP
Côte d'Ivoire	AFD, PROPARCO, GIZ	UNDP, ITC
Ethiopia	GIZ	UNDP, WB, UNIDO, ITC
Ghana	GIZ, AFD, PROPARCO	AfDB, WB, JICA, Mastercard, UNDP, ITC
Guinea	AFD, GIZ	WB, AfDB, UNDP
Mali	GIZ, AFD, SNV	World Bank, UNDP, AfDB, ITC
Niger	AICS, LuxDev, SNV, AFD, GIZ, COOPI	WB, Swiss Cooperation, UNCDF, USAID, UNDP
Nigeria	GIZ, AFD, PROPARCO	UNDP, WB, AfDB, ILO, UNDP
Senegal	AFD, GIZ	AfDB, ILO, UNDP, ITC
Sierra Leone	AFD, GIZ	WB, UNDP, ILO, UNCDF, UNDP, AfDB
The Gambia		UNCDF, UNCTAD, UNDP

4.2.2. POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN FAVOUR OF RETURNEES

In recent years, the number of incubators and business/start-up centres has significantly expanded in Ethiopia and across West Africa, thanks to multiple international, government and civil society initiatives. Through youth employment programmes, international development partners have contributed to strengthen entrepreneurship ecosystems. Public and private structures supporting entrepreneurs now offer an increasingly wide range of services, such as entrepreneurship training and mentoring, access to infrastructures (e.g., workspace), business services, and finance for microentrepreneurs, including in the informal sector. Although unevenly geographically distributed across and within countries, many opportunities for collaboration and partnerships between such structures and actors managing reintegration assistance are highlighted in this study's country reports. Potential collaboration pathways include: 1) partnerships with incubators or MFIs, including those supported by international donors, which form part of local entrepreneurship ecosystems; and 2) partnerships with entrepreneurship development programmes directly implemented and funded by international actors, including EU Member States.

There are vast disparities across countries, with Ghana, Nigeria, and Ethiopia hosting the most developed entrepreneurship ecosystems, particularly in large cities. In these three countries, the terms 'business/start-up centres' and 'innovation hubs' encompass different types of facilities and services from simple co-working spaces to incubators offering services ranging from meeting rooms to trainings on how to start and manage a business and access seed funding, legal advice, and networking events, to accelerators for already established small companies. For example, Ghana hosts an estimated 200+ non-financial organisations which provide a wide range of services focusing on early-stage businesses, from one-off, targeted support to longer-term, integrated business support.¹ In Nigeria, Lagos presents itself as the innovation capital of West Africa and, alone, hosts over 80

¹ 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. Many of them are supported by the EU, Member States (BMZ/GIZ), as well as the World Bank and the Mastercard Foundation. EU-funded reintegration programmes have not yet leveraged, or not leveraged enough, the opportunities offered by these actors.

entrepreneurship support facilities.^{1,xxxviii} Similarly, in Ethiopia, at least 83 non-financial support providers and 60 financial support providers are in operation.^{xxxix}

In Senegal, Cameroon, and Côte d'Ivoire, local entrepreneurship ecosystems are also developing, albeit at a slower pace, while those in Sahel countries and fragile coastal States² remain nascent. In Senegal and Côte d'Ivoire, governments adopted several measures to improve the regulatory and business climate for small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) to start and develop, notably by rationalising procedures to formalise businesses. In Cameroon, incubators developed with EU support³ have become key institutions in the entrepreneurial ecosystem while the Government of Cameroon is actively developing policies to support SMEs. In Sahel countries and Guinea, The Gambia and Sierra Leone, the emergence of incubators and microfinance institutions is more recent, and their capacities remain limited. The main weaknesses of these incubators are their small staff and limited financial resources (they can support only a few beneficiaries at once), their lack of specialisation⁴, their limited financial autonomy (they are mainly dependent on international funding) and their concentration in capital cities, at the expense of other return areas. In addition, access to financing remains difficult, with a very limited number of financial institutions and investors providing credits to start-ups.

In parallel to local private and public structures, entrepreneurship development programmes directly implemented by international development actors (usually in partnership with local institutions) offer a diversity of services potentially well suited to the needs of returnees. Most of these programmes provide their beneficiaries with: 1) technical training in a specific sector (e.g., tailoring, metalworking, bakery operations); 2) business skills and financial literacy (e.g., basic accounting or money management), behavioural and life skills, or a combination of these.

4.2.3. CHALLENGES PRECLUDING RETURNEES' EFFECTIVE ACCESS TO THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP SECTOR

In all the studied countries, key challenges need to be addressed in the entrepreneurship sector to help increase the viability and productivity of microenterprises, including those of returning migrants. At the root of difficulties for microenterprises to start up and grow are the lack of financial inclusion and limited information on existing entrepreneurship support services, when and where they exist. In addition, improved institutional coordination both at the international and national levels are needed to standardise, monitor, and evaluate existing initiatives in a more consistent manner, and replicate the most successful approaches in the least supported countries and/or areas (and prioritise the main areas of departure and return).

Financial inclusion

Financial services are what returnees report lacking the most and what EU-funded IPs have found most challenging to mobilise. In the most fragile countries, specialised investors remain rare, and classic commercial banks are not well placed to cater to the needs of start-ups. Loans – the most common type of financial support available to micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) – are reportedly not easily accessible, particularly for young microentrepreneurs in the informal sector. Eligibility conditions are reportedly often out of reach,⁵ processing times are long (typically several months), and approval rates low⁶. Moreover, interest rates are perceived as too high, by both microentrepreneurs (including returnees) and the organisations supporting them.^{xl} The requirement for

¹¹ Options exist and are developing in Edo and Delta too but remain more limited.

² Guinea, Sierra Leone, and The Gambia.

³ Such as *Graines de Talent* (GDT) or the *Centre d'Incubation Pilote*.

⁴ Most offer the same types of services and in the same industries.

⁵ Requirements relate to business registration, cash flow, bank statements, basic book-keeping/financial records, tax compliance, years in business, and collaterals or reputable guarantors.

⁶ For example, in 2020, the Development Bank of Nigeria used less than 40 per cent of the 550 billion Naira available for wholesale lending to MSMEs.

lenders to nominate a guarantor is an additional challenge for returnees, due to the widespread lack of trust sometimes expressed by their communities. As a result, an injection of savings is often necessary, but rarely an option for returnees who are most often unemployed and have very limited resources. In addition, in several countries (e.g., Ethiopia), stakeholders also reported that returnees are sometimes unwilling to engage with financial institutions either for religious reasons or due to a lack of trust in them.

Financial inclusion is, in all 12 countries, a key issue that governments are seeking to address with the support of international development partners. A range of innovative measures have been taken and recently implemented and could, if adequately leveraged by reintegration actors and scaled up by international development actors in the main departure and return areas, offer promising opportunities for returnees wishing to start their own businesses. These include: 1) national funds; 2) targeted government measures; 3) digital financial services; 4) social microfinance; 5) financial services associations (FSAs) and community banks (CBs); 6) non-bank loan service providers; and 7) diaspora funds.

Table 7: Example of good practices in the financial sector

Examples of good practices	
National financing funds	<p>In Burkina Faso¹, Niger², Sierra Leone and Senegal³, governments recently set up – with support from international actors, such as the World Bank, AfDB and EU Member States – National Financing Funds (NFFs) to provide credit or other forms of financial support for specific socioeconomic activities. These funds aim to promote income-generating activities and employment for categories of beneficiaries excluded from access to conventional financing.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ For example, in Burkina Faso, some NFFs have expertise in assisting the socioprofessional integration of young people whose profiles are similar to those of returning migrants. Each fund has specific targets, but they all share the objective of facilitating the provision of credit, notably through simplified procedures and preferential rates. ▪ Similarly, in Niger, the Inclusive Finance Fund (FDIF) was created in 2020 and officially launched in April 2022. Its main mission is to promote access to financing for vulnerable populations, particularly in rural areas, as well as for SMEs whose turnover does not exceed FCFA 30 million. The FDIF is also mandated to strengthen the financial capacities of MFIs by setting up lines of credit at preferential rates, guaranteeing funds, and refinancing facilities. The FDIF is also expected to contribute to the formalisation of informal SMEs.

¹ Various actors support the NFFs, including the AfDB and the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA), but a comprehensive approach has not yet been defined or implemented. Several key issues exist: 1) the monitoring of beneficiaries and the transparency of results are still insufficient, and many cases of fraud have been detected; 2) accessibility of these funds to returnees is limited, for geographical and financial reasons, and because of the skills needed to complete the application; and 3) the sustainability of these funds is not ensured because they are not entirely self-financed and depend, in part, on external resources. Their non-recovery rates and operating costs are still relatively high.

² Several international donors (in particular UNCDF, AFD, LuxDev and the World Bank) have supported the Ministry of Finance in developing three new financing instruments.

³ In addition, the recent launch of a new global fund to strengthen the fight against irregular migration in Senegal, by the GMD project (EUTF funding), should provide additional opportunities to finance entrepreneurial projects. The total amount allocated, FCFA 1 billion (about EUR 1.5 million), will be divided between a national fund for associations involved in the integration of young people and the reintegration of returning migrants, and several regional funds to finance the start-up and strengthening of individual or collective productive activities. Launched in February 2022, these regional funds should be managed in a decentralised manner at the level of the BAOS (housed in the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) - *Agences Régionales de Développement* (ARDs), which will disseminate the calls for applications, house the project selection committees, and possibly monitor the projects financed. However, the low budget and the end of the 'Migration Governance and Development project' (*Gouvernance migratoire and development* - GMD) in 2023 should be taken into consideration.

Government measures aiming to simplify procedures and improve access

- In **Sierra Leone**, the Ministry of Youth (MoY) announced the creation of the National Youth Empowerment Fund which will include access to financial services, and business development services for the youth. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) has been associated with the conception phase and, according to the MoY, the fund will be supplied with contributions from the National Treasury, development partners, and international organisations.

In **Ghana**, to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 crisis and improve the financial inclusion of entrepreneurs, including those in the informal sector, the Government of Ghana requested that financial institutions simplify their processes and procedures and offer more affordable credit with the aim to nearly double their lending to MSMEs. It also introduced new loan and grant schemes.¹ In 2022, it officially launched the Development Bank Ghana (DBG) to support financial institutions in providing long-term lending and business advisory services to SMEs in agribusiness, manufacturing, information and communications technology (ICT), and high-value services.

Digital financial services (DFS)

DFS and mobile money also represent options to support financial inclusion for the general population, including returnees. DFS are rapidly growing in **Sierra Leone**² and will most likely continue to do so.^{3,xli} The ease on administrative requirements have made them an increasingly popular solution. They are mainly used for person-to-person transfers, cash-in, cash-out and airtime top-up. Demand for other products, such as savings and credit, remains limited but could be developed and improved to provide opportunities to financially excluded groups, such as returnees. The key players in this sector are the two main mobile money operators, Afrimoney and Orange Money.⁴ Both have experienced very significant growth since 2018. Other DFS providers are commercial banks and one MFI (LAPO).

Social microfinance

In **Sierra Leone**, Munafa microfinance, developed with *Entrepreneurs du Monde*, presents an interesting model of social microfinance that could be replicated for reintegration assistance. Based on its 'group model', it is the only MFI offering individual loans without any collateral or guarantor. This model provides a comprehensive support involving tailored trainings (in management/sales and/or other fields, such as education, health, human rights). In addition to these sessions, follow-up visits are conducted twice a month to beneficiaries' neighbourhoods. Social monitoring is also conducted, and tailored individual support is made available as part of Munafa's comprehensive approach.

¹ For example, GIRSAI's Interest Rate Subsidy Initiative, which was launched in 2021, grants a 50 per cent 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) jointly set up an Aggregation and Entrepreneurship Development Fund to provide funding for commodity aggregators to buy produce from smallholder farmers.

² Sierra Leone is a good environment for the development of mobile money. Based on GSMA's mobile money prevalence index, Sierra Leone has 'high' mobile money prevalence and scores well on the GSMA regulatory index (83.4 out of 100), which covers criteria such as consumer protection, KYC requirements, agent networks and transaction limits.

³ A 2021 UNCDF survey indicated that 12 out of 13 providers experienced an increase in registered accounts between 2019 and 2020, with a 63 per cent increase in 90-day active accounts (from 1.4 million in December 2019 to 2.2 million in December 2020).

⁴ The third is the Gambian owned QMoney, a more recent market entrant.

<p>Financial services associations (FSAs) and community banks (CBs)</p>	<p>In Sierra Leone, aside from MFIs, FSAs and CBs are the most appropriate structures to work with returnees. MFIs have the largest audience, but FSAs and CBs provide affordable financial services to the poorest households, mainly in rural areas. The 59 FSAs and 17 CBs are overseen by an APEX Bank and have reached close to 285 000 households since 2013. As of March 2022, FSAs and CBs comprised more than 170 000 shareholders, almost 120 000 active depositors and 82 000 active borrowers.</p>
<p>Non-bank loan service providers</p>	<p>In Nigeria, business and community-based financial cooperatives, village savings and loan associations, and thrifts (locally known as ‘<i>Esusu</i>’ or ‘<i>Ajo</i>’) are typically created among colleagues, friends, or neighbours and with no interest rate. Although such mechanisms are still little explored by international and national initiatives, they might be blind spots in current reintegration and entrepreneurship approaches.</p> <p>Senegal and Mali initiated interesting programmes aiming to attract diaspora engagement and investments, although their results remain limited, to date. Lessons need to be learnt and shared to improve the functioning of these mechanisms and replicate them in other countries.</p>
<p>Diaspora funds</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In Senegal, a dedicated fund for diaspora investments was set up (the FAISE¹) to facilitate the R&R of Senegalese migrants through investments made by the diaspora. While it is meant to be a central instrument to support return, FAISE is currently unable to provide loans due to poor management and declining financial capacity. ▪ In Mali, the EU supported several initiatives working towards the development of diaspora investment mechanisms and financing capacities for young entrepreneurs. These actions should be consolidated in order for returnees to be able to benefit from them.

Lack of information about existing entrepreneurship and financial support opportunities

The development of entrepreneurship support structures and programmes can open valuable opportunities for returnees, provided that they are adequately informed and oriented to the structures best matching their needs and skills. However, in most countries, the absence of common frameworks and strategies and the multiplication of partnerships between international partners and national structures with overlapping mandates have resulted in the absence of clearly identified venues to seek support. In this context, more transparent information about existing entrepreneurship support and/or financial opportunities is needed in order to help young people in general, and returnees in particular, decide which training to undertake and/or type of financial services to seek.

To achieve this, the relationships between incubators, international entrepreneurship development programmes, as well as SEAs and/or government-led entrepreneurship support structures need to be better coordinated and strengthened, including through a centralisation of existing opportunities. Several ways could be explored. In countries in which SEA service includes entrepreneurship support services (see section 4.2.1), support could be provided to help expand their network of partners to organisations and programmes active in the entrepreneurship sector.² In other

¹ 'Fonds d'Appui à l'Investissement des Sénégalais de l'Extérieur' (FAISE).

² Support to the development of self-employment falls partly within the scope of SEAs. While the development of business plans should be entrusted to specialised ESS, SEA job counsellors should be trained and provided the necessary information to inform and guide the job-seeker to the right organisation and/or programme (depending on the industry, location and/or aspiring entrepreneur's need for training).

countries, such as Ghana, one-stop-shops offering MSME support services have been set up and constitute an interesting example (see Focus Box 5) that should be further supported. In parallel, youth employment actors implementing entrepreneurship support programmes should be encouraged to share the opportunities made available under their programmes with these structures. Burkina Faso¹, Mali², and Niger³ have started to structure existing incubators within organised networks that should also be able to centralise international initiatives offering entrepreneurship support. Coordination and synergies should be developed between SEAs and these networks to facilitate the referral of beneficiaries.

Focus Box 5: One-stop-shops in Ghana

In 2021, NBSSI was transformed into the Ghana Enterprises Agency (GEA) with a new status and 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 services.⁴ They currently have about 190 locations, one in almost every district, and more are being built. They are involved in returnee reintegration by reviewing and validating their business plans. Local Technology Solution Centres are also being multiplied by the Ministry of Trade and Industry to provide business development and technology services. The Ghana Economic Transformation Project, which is funded by the World Bank, launched in 2020 and set out to create new entrepreneurship hubs and support organisations which could play a role in reintegration assistance.^{xiii}

Similarly, in the field of microfinance, even when suitable options for returnees exist, they are often not readily accessible. Most microentrepreneurs, including returnees, and often reintegration actors themselves⁵ are not familiar with the pre-conditions and eligibility criteria for accessing loans. This is mainly because government websites are often outdated and many national/public, commercial and microfinance banks' sites do not provide detailed information. In parallel, the rapid development of additional instruments and programmes, such as mobile money schemes and inclusive finance programmes implemented by CSOs, FSAs, CBs and non-bank loan service providers, is creating an increasingly complex landscape. In addition to loans, grants are sometimes made available by SEAs and MSME agencies or international programmes,⁶ but these are rarely advertised. Significant information gaps, therefore, should be filled to adequately reach the most vulnerable populations, including returnees. To this end, several successful initiatives aiming to disseminate information about existing opportunities and bridging the gap between supply of, and demand for, microfinance services have been tested in Ghana and Nigeria (Focus Box 6) and could be scaled up and replicated.

Focus Box 6: Bridging the gap between demand for, and supply of, microfinance services in Nigeria

Public and private actors, CSOs and international partners have engaged in various initiatives in Nigeria to bridge the gap between supply and demand. Financial literacy courses (in-person

¹ In Burkina Faso, the 'Fédération Burkinabè des structures d'accompagnement à l'entrepreneuriat innovant (SAEI)' is an umbrella structure that includes 20 actors working in various sectors and aims to make these structures known to aspiring entrepreneurs and share their best practices.

² The emergence of incubators in Mali is recent: it dates from 2015 with the creation of Donilab. Within the framework of the 'Enabling Environment for Growth Entrepreneurship' (EPEC) project, implemented by the World Bank, incubators have grouped together around an umbrella organisation, 'Malinov', led by Donilab, whose capacities are still limited.

³ Réseau des Structures d'Accompagnement de l'Entrepreneuriat du Niger (RESAEN).

⁴ 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.

⁵ For example, in Nigeria, where many opportunities exist in the microfinance sector, most stakeholders interviewed for this study did not know available schemes in detail, and only three had approached financial institutions to explore partnership opportunities.

⁶ In Nigeria: SMEDAN, FMYSO, the federal government's MSME Survival Fund, the COVID 'Cares' recovery grants channelled through state agencies, and state subsidies targeted at MSMEs in tech, farming, or in the rice value chain.

and online, some entirely free [e.g., GIZ/SMEsabi and Enugu SME Centre courses]), specialised websites (e.g., SukFin), and mobile apps (e.g., OZE) have been specifically designed to help microentrepreneurs. They provide transparent, up-to-date, and reader-friendly information on available financial instruments and conditions for accessing them, explain book-keeping basics, propose templates and digital platforms for recording revenues and payments, digital invoicing and payment services to build credit worthiness, and/or directly facilitate loan applications through personalised advice and matching or even by providing help in filling out application forms.

Besides support to start a business and access finance, a blind spot in most countries is the lack of support structures linking already active entrepreneurs with potential clients. Support to existing microenterprises to access markets and clients at the local and national levels is key to ensure they can develop and eventually reimburse their loans. The overall poor business environment and lack of infrastructure and communication means often makes this access difficult. SEAs (when they have an entrepreneurship mandate), MSME support institutions, and private incubators should be equipped and supported to better monitor labour market needs and connect potential clients with relevant microenterprises. Innovative structures connecting individual service providers and potential employers/clients, for example, have been developed in Ethiopia and could constitute interesting examples on which to build (Focus Box 7).

Focus Box 7: Digital platforms connecting entrepreneurs with customers in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, digital platforms connecting individual service providers and potential employers could play an interesting role at the interface of entrepreneurship and employment. The company, Taskmoby, recruits unskilled, semi-skilled and skilled individuals who have an interest in upskilling and being linked to the labour market as either permanent or part-time employees. Taskmoby helps a wide range of beneficiaries, ranging from uneducated individuals to 10th/12th graders, TVET graduates, and diploma or degree holders. Similarly, Kifya Financial Technology created *ShegaMuya*, an interactive digital marketplace that links informal sector workers (skilled and semi-skilled) with potential customers in a secured and trusted manner, creating digital career opportunities for its platform users. Both structures developed a wide range of partnerships and expressed their interest and willingness to work with returnees.

Lack of common strategies and M&E frameworks

In most of the 12 countries, institutional fragmentation and limited coordination among actors involved in entrepreneurship regulation and promotion leads to a lack of strategic coherence of interventions. In countries such as Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger, and Sierra Leone, a growing number of ministries are competing to support entrepreneurship in their respective sectors of intervention (e.g., agriculture, environment, women and family affairs), which leads to a lack of coordination and leadership and limits the coherence of interventions. Labour market studies and value chain analyses are often ad hoc, one-off, and neither consolidated nor widely shared or used – even those conducted as part of policy and strategy development initiatives (see section 3.1.2). Similarly, no formal coordination exists between initiatives and programmes led by international actors and there is no strategy aiming at collective results.¹ As a result, the cumulative results of these interventions remain unclear.²

¹ This is particularly difficult in Sahelian countries where support to entrepreneurship is used as a means of intervention as part of very different approaches: community resilience (including to climate change); social cohesion and peacekeeping, particularly in a degraded security environment; and economic development of value chains. Coordination is further complicated by the diversity of economic sectors targeted, which explains why there is no single coordination group for entrepreneurship and self-employment in these countries.

² For example, in Sierra Leone, a mapping of those interventions was conducted by the World Bank in 2021: 24 interventions and programmes targeting over 210 000 youth were implemented between 2015 and 2021, mainly in the Western area. The

Therefore, despite the large number of existing support programmes, evidence of their effectiveness remains limited. Although entrepreneurship trainings are offered by several institutions, the approach is not coordinated, and the curricula not standardised in terms of content and quality. Most training programmes operate on a small scale, do not collect monitoring data on dropouts or graduation rates, and are unable to track outcomes. Even larger programmes do not systematically document successes (or failures). As a result, there is no compiled data available on support provided to entrepreneurship in the 12 countries, no harmonisation or control over the types of support offered, and no integrated M&E system.

4.2.4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The EU should support the development of action plans based on national entrepreneurship and financial inclusion policies, along with realistic budgets and M&E mechanisms to effectively implement and monitor entrepreneurship development objectives in a coordinated manner.

Such action plans could include the forms of support outlined below.

- **Support to the development of incubators and other entrepreneurship support services,** mainly where entrepreneurship systems are still nascent (Sahel countries, fragile coastal States): A focus should be placed on the expansion of their geographical reach (outside capital cities and in main return areas). In parallel, the EU should encourage and strengthen the governance of entrepreneurship ecosystems through a clarification of governance structures, the identification of lead ministries, and support to the formalisation of government-vetted networks of organisations providing services to entrepreneurs.
- **Support to the expansion of financial inclusion, particularly in return areas:** In addition to providing support to regulatory reforms in the financial sector, the EU, along with other international donors, could consider contributing to the development of financial inclusion instruments. For example, the EU could support the development of national financial inclusion funds, non-profit microfinance schemes implemented by NGOs, diaspora funds (based on lessons learnt from past interventions), and non-bank loan services (e.g., village savings groups), particularly in main areas of return.¹
- **Support to link entrepreneurship support better with technical and soft skills trainings.** Services to support entrepreneurship, microcredit agencies and other financial inclusion instruments should be involved early in the definition of reintegration paths to better sequence the support provided and combine skills acquisition with support to develop business plans along with loan applications. This would enable time and efficiency gains and to rapidly assess the viability of reintegration paths. The inclusion of a financial literacy curriculum, as well as modules covering 'soft' skills as part of all trainings provided by TVET institutions, could be considered and encouraged.

Intermediation mechanisms should be placed in a position to centralise existing entrepreneurship support and financial services opportunities:

- SEAs, one-stop-shops and organised networks of incubators should be placed at the core of such centralisation efforts to more efficiently advise and orient aspiring entrepreneurs. International actors (including EU Member States) should be encouraged to reach out to these structures and widely share the opportunities made available as part of their programmes.

study concluded that the projects were largely donor-driven, and that government and private sector funding were significantly low, leading to the unsustainability of projects beyond donor support.

¹ For example, 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.

- Existing opportunities in microfinance should be more widely shared, particularly among the most vulnerable groups, including returnees. The EU could consider funding programmes, such as those developed in Nigeria, to make financial inclusion opportunities more accessible to beneficiaries, reintegration actors, SEAs, and entrepreneurship support services.

At the regional level, the EU and its Member States should regularly share good practices and lessons learnt based on reliable data derived from appropriately defined M&E mechanisms. To achieve this, future EU-funded programmes in entrepreneurship should seek to measure the share of beneficiaries starting a business, the viability of these businesses after one to two years, and/or the success in securing loans and/or grants, etc. Larger impact evaluations (including cumulative impacts) should be conducted, as well as research on best practices to design youth employment programmes (including which components to package together – TVET, business plan development, grants, etc. – and the most effective national and international agencies to deliver the programmes).

Finally, the EU should consider directly funding and implementing additional entrepreneurship development programmes in countries hosting the largest caseload of returnees (ex: Guinea, Mali), targeting the main areas of return. This would be in addition to creating paths for returnees into already existing entrepreneurship programmes which are not yet able to absorb existing caseloads.

4.3. SELF-EMPLOYMENT AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

4.3.1. SECTOR OVERVIEW AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM EUTF

The agricultural sector concentrates the largest share of programmes implemented by youth employment actors and the highest number of potential opportunities for returnees identified in this study. The overall objective of programmes active in the agricultural sector is to support the transition from subsistence¹ agriculture towards more commercial agriculture, through the development of productive agrobusiness strategies at the local, national, and regional levels.^{xiii} The development of the agricultural sector is a key priority at the continental and regional levels: population growth and urbanisation are driving increased demand for food products that are not currently being produced in sufficient quantity or quality by African farmers.² Multilateral and bilateral institutions are investing significant resources in programmes aimed at developing value chains, the agrobusiness industry and the development of entrepreneurship in the sector³ to meet this demand.

The EU-IOM JI supported community-based reintegration projects in the field of agriculture, but their long-term viability remains unknown. Between April 2017 and July 2021, under the JI, IOM launched 267 community-based reintegration projects in the SLC region and took the same approach in Ethiopia.^{xiv} Most projects involved farming, breeding, poultry farms, vegetable and fruit production, etc. In most cases, decisions to implement community-based projects were based on criteria, including the concentration of returnees in the same community and/or community members' willingness to participate, rather than on prior adequate market-based assessments. This resulted in scarce market linkages, which negatively affected the long-term viability and profitability of the projects. IOM's limited

¹ See, AfDB, Feed Africa: Strategy for Agricultural Transformation in Africa (2016–2025). 'The lack of productivity of African agriculture exacts a high human and economic cost. High rates of poverty prevail, especially in major agro-ecological zones such as the Sub-Humid "Guinea Savannah" and Semi-Arid "Sahel" regions where more than 50% of people live on less than US\$1.25 a day.'

² It is expected that, without intervention, net import levels will likely increase to over USD 100 billion by 2025 at the continental level (see AfDB, Feed Africa: Strategy for Agricultural Transformation in Africa 2016–2025).

³ For example, according to the Strategy for Agricultural Transformation in Africa, multilateral and bilateral donors, plus foundations and NGOs spent approximately \$3.8 billion on agriculture in Africa in 2014. According to the same document, the AfDB intended to raise its average annual investments into agriculture by \$1.8 billion, to reach \$2.4 billion per year, raising the total level of available funds from this category of financing to approximately \$5.6 billion per year.

geographic reach and available human and material resources constituted additional challenges which restricted the options available to returnees in the agricultural sector and the projects' sustainability.¹

Despite the large number of programmes active in the field of agriculture, returnees were not encouraged to seek access to additional technical and financial support available in the sector. In all of the countries of the study – although significant geographical disparities exist – programmes and actors active in the development of agricultural value chains and the development of the agro-industry were not reached, or were insufficiently reached, for the benefit of returnees.^{xlv} Numerous IPs (Table 10) and over 100 programmes active in the field of entrepreneurship in the agricultural sector were identified as part of this study (see country reports and annexes), and many more programmes were being developed at the time of data collection.

Table 8: Main international actors active in the agriculture sector in the countries under study (non-exhaustive)

Country	Main implementers / funders of active projects in the agricultural sector	
	EU Member States agencies	Other
Burkina Faso	AFD, GIZ, ADA, ENABEL, SNV	Swiss Coop., WB, AfDB, IFAD, USAID, FAO
Cameroon	AFD, GIZ	AfDB, FAO
Côte d'Ivoire	<i>Chambre régionale d'agriculture Auvergne-Rhône-Alpes</i> (France), GIZ	AfDB, UNDP, USAID
Ethiopia		ILO, USAID, FAO, AfDB
Ghana	DANIDA, GIZ	ITC, USAID, AfDB
Guinea	AFD	WB, FAO, UNIDO, AfDB
Mali	SNV, LuxDev, AECID, AFD	WB, IFAD, UNDP, FAO, USAID
Niger	AFD, AICS, SNV, ENABEL	WB, Swiss Coop., WFP, USAID, FAO
Nigeria	GIZ	USAID, ITC, AfDB
Senegal	AFD	AfDB, USAID, WB, AfDB
Sierra Leone	GIZ	World Bank, IFAD, UNFPA, UNDP, FAO
The Gambia		AfDB, FAO

4.3.2. POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES IN FAVOUR OF RETURNEES

Linking returnees with opportunities offered by bilateral and multilateral donors in the agricultural entrepreneurship sector and/or agro-industry could help increase the relevance, quality, and sustainability of reintegration projects. International actors' support to the development of the agriculture sector falls into two main categories, as outlined below.

- Most programmes focus on specific value chains and support to the productivity of small-scale farmers along these value chains. They are particularly relevant for returnees who own land and wish to relocate to rural areas but, depending on locations, also can create opportunities for returnees who do not own land. The development of value chains also creates demand for skilled and semi-skilled labour to fill an increasingly wide range of jobs in processing, marketing,

¹ A significant proportion of training, coaching and follow-up in the agricultural sector has been sub-contracted to local NGOs, which have limited resources and capacities. For example, in Niger, the NGOs contracted by IOM organised training sessions lasting only four to six days, including business training and the development of business plans. Follow-up with beneficiaries was limited and the sustainability of projects beyond the provision of start-up kits remains largely uncertain.

machinery operation and repair, transport, logistics, and quality control,^{xlvi} which could be suitable for returnees.

- Another more recently implemented set of programmes (mainly under the leadership of AfDB), aims to develop agro-industrial capacities on a wider scale to create high numbers of direct and indirect jobs. Several of them are located in areas of return (Senegal, Nigeria, Ethiopia) and, thus, could offer significant opportunities for returnees.

Programmes supporting entrepreneurship in the agriculture sector

Most programmes are built on a set of interventions aiming to strengthen value chains and to support increased productivity and earnings of farmers/entrepreneurs. These programmatic interventions include the following components:

- support to the development of a value chain at the macro level (e.g., addressing the business/regulatory environment of a specific sector);
- operational support to a specific segment of a value chain (e.g., production, transformation, commercialisation; or instead, holistic support to an economic basin);
- capacity building of farmers' skills (technical agricultural skills, as well as entrepreneurship and financial literacy);
- support to the development of farmers' business plans to improve their productivity as part of the development of the value chain and/or the development of the economic basin; and
- support to access to finance.

International partners active in the field of agriculture have developed innovative approaches and good practices that should be replicated and scaled up in the main countries and areas of return (Table 11). These include: 1) build synergies and develop multi-actors or multi-programme approaches to support the development of value chains holistically; 2) modernise existing technical trainings and develop additional ones in the field of agriculture, which are currently not widely offered by TVET centres, despite the large share of the population active in this sector; 3) help entrepreneurs develop business plans and projects, coaching them and helping them access markets; and 4) develop new, innovative financial inclusion tools for farmers. By closely linking entrepreneurship support, technical trainings and the development of value chains, these approaches may offer reintegration prospects of a higher quality than the short-term trainings and coaching delivered to most returnees thus far with EUTF funding. Lessons learnt from employment programmes in the agriculture sector need to be widely shared and successful approaches developed on a wider scale in the main return areas.

Table 9: Examples of good practices and opportunities for returnees in the agricultural sector

Needs	Examples of good practices
<p>Coherent programmatic support to the development of value chains with potential</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ In Cameroon, the AfDB and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) are implementing complementary approaches to the development of value chains, with programmes aiming to develop production basins at the local level (IFAD), in parallel to the development of value chains at the national level (AfDB). At the operational level, AFD funds projects providing a continuum of services to small producers: 1) the AFOP programme provides vocational training to small farmers followed by entrepreneurship grants; 2) the ACEFA programme provides agricultural technical advice to AFOP graduates; and 3) the TRANSFAGRI project provides support to scale up and support the commercial development of SMEs.

Technical / on-site trainings in the agricultural sector

- In **Sierra Leone**, projects supported by the World Bank¹ and the AfDB² each target different segments of the same value chains (production, processing, marketing), to develop a wide range of job opportunities collectively.
- In **Guinea**, AFD has been supporting TVET in the agriculture sector since 2014 (PAFISAM project). It plans to renovate four TVET centres specialised in agriculture and livestock, in areas many returnees are from, including Mamou and Macenta.
- In **Mali**, GIZ (PAPSE programme) organised on-the-road trainings on farming techniques for displaced persons and vulnerable groups. This model could be particularly relevant to reach returnees in the most remote and/or difficult to access areas (e.g., northern Mali).
- At the **regional level**, AFD developed the International Network for Agricultural and Rural Training (RIFAR) to identify and produce knowledge on agricultural training and to strengthen local capacities.

Support to entrepreneurship projects; follow-up and coaching; access to markets

- In **Cameroon**, the PEA-Jeunes programme set up a platform of incubators specialised in agricultural value chains. Ten of the 16 targeted incubators already joined the platform, which is government-approved. The programme also has an inclusion strategy whereby specific support is provided to vulnerable profiles, such as isolated communities, women, and girls. The PEA-Jeunes inclusion strategy won the IFAD international award for support to vulnerable populations.
- In **all countries**, many international partners (World Bank, AfDB, LuxDev, Belgian Development Agency (ENABEL), United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), COOPI, GIZ, AFD, etc.) support entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector. These programmes include support to the development of business plans, skills training, coaching, information about market opportunities, and/or help to access markets. Other programmes (SNV – 2Scale and AFD – *Pôles ruraux* in Niger) focus on the development of farmers' cooperatives.

Access to finance

- In **Niger**, the government, with support from international donors, recently created the Investment Fund for Food Security and Nutrition (FISAN). This financial instrument aims to facilitate access to credit for entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector and to set up a guarantee fund to sustain and scale up financing for cooperatives and farmers. In parallel, several international actors have tested and developed innovative solutions to improve financial inclusion in the farming sector: the Swiss Cooperation (PROMEL) encourages the development of pre-financing mechanisms between stakeholders active in the same value chain; SNV (JEEN) and the World Bank (PIMELAN) use *warrantage*³ while USAID (Catalyze) favours grants transformed into bank savings to facilitate the granting of agricultural credits.

¹ Smallholder Commercialization and Agribusiness Development Project and Agro-Processing Competitiveness Project.

² Rice agro-industrial Cluster project and the Agribusiness and Rice Value Chain Support Project (SLARIS).

³ Warrantage is a credit system and cash management tool adapted to small-scale producers. Warrantage allows farmers to use part of their production as collateral in order to obtain credit (the collateral is usually stored and sold once its value has increased, for example during the dry season).

- In **Mali**, AVSF¹ supports farmers structuring themselves into farmers' organisations² to facilitate the purchase of equipment. Farmers' organisations manage funds through which members can apply for no-interest loans with terms adapted to the specificities of agricultural activities (e.g., reimbursement after the harvest). This tool could be relevant for returnees from the same community, its main advantages being the moral and solidarity commitment made by borrowers and the possibility of benefiting, in addition to the loan, from community support.
- AFD, LuxDev, ENABEL and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF) also support the structural development of MFIs and the diversification of the banking offer, particularly in terms of agricultural credit, while supporting the development of guarantee funds. UNCDF is also developing important financial education programmes and supporting the development of digital finance.
- Finally, many of the programmes supporting entrepreneurs in the agricultural sector also provide direct grants to their beneficiaries.

Programmes supporting the development of Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ)

In parallel to efforts aiming to strengthen the productivity of small farming operations, multilateral and bilateral donors are also supporting the development of large-scale agro-industrial projects which, in the short- to medium-term, could create additional opportunities for returnees. The Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) programme is a flagship initiative, which the AfDB is developing in 18 countries (including Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guinea, Mali, Nigeria, and Senegal)^{xlvii}, which may create significant opportunities for future returnees. SAPZ national projects are currently active in Ethiopia, Nigeria, and Senegal.

- In **Nigeria**, the projected SAPZ will be the largest.³ Phase 1 will be implemented over five years, starting in 2022.^{xlviii} The first phase's key expected outputs include infrastructure development for eight agro-industrial processing hubs and 15 agricultural transformation centres.^{xlix} It is expected that SAPZ will create at least 400 000 direct jobs in Nigeria and a further 1.6 million indirect jobs during the construction and operation phases.^l MSMEs (including factories) along the value chain will create most of the jobs, along with tenant industries in the agro-industrial hubs.^{li}
- In **Ethiopia**, the project is supporting the development of four Integrated Agro-Industrial Parks in Tigray (North), Amhara (Northwest), Oromia (Central) and Southern Nations, Nationalities and People (SNNP), which are key areas of departure and return.⁴ It is estimated that 200 000 new jobs (50 000 direct and 150 000 indirect) will be created in the four parks and that, in the first phase of implementation, about 800 000 farming households will benefit from improved access to organised markets, rising to 2 million in later years.
- In **Senegal**, the government plans to create 'Agropoles' in all of the country's regions (South, Centre and North). After completing the financing of the Agropole South project in 2019, it has begun the structuring phase of the Agropole Centre covering the regions of Kaolack, Kaffrine,

¹ Agronomists and Veterinarians without borders

² 'Organisations paysannes'.

³ The AfDB and other partners are co-financing the first phase for a value of USD 538.05 million (AfDB providing USD 210 million, the Islamic Development Bank and IFAD jointly contributing USD 310 million, and the Government of Nigeria providing USD 18.05 million).

⁴ The project was designed to be implemented over a period of five years (2019–2023) at a cost of USD 78 million (including co-financing amounts totalling USD 63 million from the EU, Korea Exim Bank and Big Win Philanthropy).

Fatick and Diourbel in collaboration with AfDB, UNIDO and ENABEL. It is expected that the Agropole North will create around 30 000 direct jobs and the Agropole Centre 16 000.¹

4.3.3 CHALLENGES PRECLUDING RETURNEES' ACCESS TO OPPORTUNITIES WITHIN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

In all 12 countries, structural and programmatic challenges remain to be addressed for returnees to effectively access existing opportunities in the agriculture sector. The main difficulties that reintegration actors faced under EUTF programming were challenges related to access to land,² the lack of active programmes in the main areas of return as well as insufficient information about existing entrepreneurship and financial support opportunities specifically designed for the agriculture sector – when they existed. There is, therefore, a need for migration and youth employment actors to work together during the conception phase of future programming to more appropriately target the main departure and return areas, help returnees have easier access to land, and develop tools/awareness-raising strategies to inform migrants about existing opportunities within the agricultural sector.

One key barrier for returnees aiming to work in the farming sector is the lack of access to land. Several promising initiatives have been developed to work around this challenge. At present, different paths are available for youth seeking to enter the farming sector, but most are inaccessible to returnees. They can either work on the family land (which is not an option for many), work on larger farms (which are not numerous) or establish their operations on new land (without being able to buy it). Several initiatives could provide solutions to returnees wishing to work in the farming sector. For example, in Senegal, the National Agency for Insertion and Agricultural Development³ builds and fully equips farms, then recruits the staff needed to operate them. At the time of data collection, more than 5 000 beneficiaries had been hired on these farms. With its strong experience and track record, this system could be made accessible to more returnees in Senegal and/or replicated elsewhere in the region. The Government of Nigeria, through the Youth Agricultural Entrepreneurs Programme (YAGEP), developed a functional cluster system in which structures and other facilities/amenities are provided for common use and land developed (Focus Box 8).

Focus Box 8: YAGEP in Nigeria

Since 2015, the YAGEP trains youth entrepreneurs in agriculture and agribusiness and equips participants to establish their own enterprises. Unemployed youth aged 18–35 years old are trained and established or reinforced in their chosen agricultural enterprises, including poultry, piggery, fishery, apiculture, arable crop production (cassava, yam, maize, rice, tomato, okra, watermelon, pumpkin, and plantain), and agro-processing. About 250 applicants are selected to participate in the programme every year.

Over the years, YAGEP has adopted the cluster and non-cluster models in establishing the Green YAGEPreneurs. The cluster model involves co-locating YAGEPreneurs of different enterprise combinations where structures and other facilities/amenities are provided for common use, while the non-cluster model is where YAGEPreneurs are established in their individual location. Co-locating beneficiaries in designated clusters is seen as beneficial for more effective targeting, higher cost efficiency, easier performance tracking and more accurate impact evaluation. To this end, the Delta

¹ Belgium has already invested FCFA 15 billion into the Agropole Centre. The AfDB and the European Investment Bank (EIB) have committed USD 60 million (FCFA 36 billion) and EUR 50 million (FCFA 32 billion), respectively.

² Only 10 per cent of Africa's rural land is registered, while inefficient land administration means that transferring land title deeds costs twice the price and takes twice as long as it does in developed countries.

³ 'Agence nationale d'insertion et de développement agricole' (ANIDA). ANIDA is supported by AfDB, COOPI and AECID, among others.

Job and Wealth Creation Bureau and the Ministry of Agriculture designated land locations that will be developed into YAGEP clusters for crop production and fishery.^{lii}

Other obstacles include the uneven geographic distribution of programmes and the lack of entrepreneurship support structures, including MFIs, in rural areas where returnees relocate. Particularly in Sahel countries (Burkina Faso, Mali, and Niger), departure and return areas are insufficiently targeted by international programmes,¹ thus offering limited referral opportunities. This situation is exacerbated by the lack of entrepreneurship support structures and MFIs outside capital cities. Agricultural entrepreneurs – even more than in the artisanal and services sectors – face major constraints in obtaining capital and credit due to risks specific to agriculture.² Financial institutions rarely find it profitable to provide agricultural credit to small farmers and offers by traditional MFIs are often not suited to their specific needs.³ Lack of support and limited financial opportunities (together with a high rate of financial illiteracy) contribute to the very high mortality rate of agricultural microenterprises during their first year of existence. While innovative approaches have been developed in terms of financial inclusion in the agricultural sector (see Table 11), these could be scaled up in the main areas of return. Several interviewed actors stressed the importance of supporting the geographical expansion and capacity building of entrepreneurship support services specialised in the agriculture sector.

Finally, most returnees know little about existing opportunities in the farming sector and tend to resettle in urban areas. To more effectively link returnees with available opportunities, the EU could consider encouraging international partners (at least EU MS agencies) active in the field of agriculture to systematically share information about their programmes (e.g., objectives, timeframe, beneficiary profiles, type of support provided, etc.) with SEAs/NRMs as well as TVET centres specialised in the agriculture sector. In the main areas of return, a strategy combining an increased number of programmes with capacity building and support to entrepreneurship support structures, such as the ‘Rural entrepreneurship Resources Centres’ in Burkina Faso or the ‘Farmers’ houses’ in Niger could help strengthen and diversify options available to returnees (see Focus Box 9).

Focus Box 9: Entrepreneurship support services in rural regions of Burkina Faso and Niger

In Burkina Faso, IFAD set up ‘Rural Entrepreneurship Resource Centres’, which support microenterprises in the farming sector through assistance to business plan development and access to finance. They also provide technical training and facilitate access to information on markets and agricultural technologies. Similarly, in Niger, 40 ‘farmers’ houses’ have been launched and yielded positive results. These structures are integrated platforms of support services for farmers, that provide them with tools, seeds, storage solutions and advice on production innovation.

4.3.4. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Most of the recommendations related to entrepreneurship support outlined in section 4.2.4 also apply to the agricultural sector. These include promoting the centralisation of existing opportunities, replicating good practices, and working towards the set-up and use of stronger M&E systems.

In addition, the EU and its MS should seek to develop a more coherent approach between the development of agricultural value chains, entrepreneurship support and TVET. Value chain analyses are rarely consolidated or widely shared and used, sometimes resulting in a lack of coherence

¹ For example, in Burkina Faso, certain regions, such as the Centre and Centre East, only host a small number of programmes, although most migrants originate and return to these areas. Similarly, in Niger, while more than half of returnees are from Tahoua and intend to work in the agricultural sector, few programmes have been developed, compared to regions of transit, such as Agadez.

² Weather and other climatic risks, epidemics, and generally very limited knowledge of financial institutions.

³ For example, the possibility to start paying the loan back after the harvest.

between interventions. This data needs to be consolidated and mainstreamed in agricultural, entrepreneurship and TVET and skills development strategies in order to ensure that the technical skill and entrepreneurship support provided by international programmes, NGOs and government structures match macroeconomic objectives at the local and national levels and aim to achieve collective and cumulative results.

Based on existing knowledge of migration patterns, the EU should consider funding additional programmes, taking into account the barriers faced by most migrants seeking to enter the agricultural sector i.e., increased difficulties in accessing land and finance. For example, for returnees who do not own land, programmes could seek to facilitate their employment (through training) into larger farms; and/or help them develop skills and businesses relevant to local value chains but not requiring land (e.g., storage, transformation, etc.). In addition, the EU, through its IPs, could engage with government actors to identify available land and make it accessible to beneficiaries of these programmes (see the example of Nigeria, Focus Box 8).

4.4. WAGE EMPLOYMENT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

4.4.1. SECTOR OVERVIEW AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE EUTF

In the 12 countries covered by this report, wage employment opportunities in the private sector remain very limited.¹ This is mainly due to the structure of the economy, and to a mismatch between returnees' skills and employers' needs and a lack of transparent information on job markets. Besides jobs in the public sector,² wage employment primarily relies on sectors such as mining, manufacturing, and construction.^{3,iii} As a result, youth and returnees hoping to find employment in these sectors not only face a very crowded job market but also difficulties related to the inadequacy of their skills with the needs of private companies.⁴ Employers report struggling to hire workers both technically qualified and equipped with the expected set of soft skills (e.g., punctuality, reliability, communication, etc.).^{iv,lv} This situation is further exacerbated by a lack of information about opportunities: jobs are often insufficiently advertised, at least partly due to structural weaknesses of SEAs in many countries (see section 4). Vulnerable segments of the population are particularly disadvantaged: young people without networks and whose family members or communities are not engaged in wage jobs are less likely to find such jobs.^{lvi}

Under the EU-IOM JI, only a few returnees benefited from job placements.⁵ Although they remain limited, more opportunities for returnees could be found in this sector. Returnees with only a basic level of education, for example, could access wage jobs in the construction sector. Those with a higher set of skills may be able, if adequately oriented and trained, to enter the more competitive modern wage sector. With EUTF funding, in several countries such as Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia or Guinea, IOM started to develop partnerships with private companies. These relationships should be further developed, either indirectly (through capacity building of SEAs as well as strengthened relationships between TVET centres and private employers) or directly (in countries where SEAs and TVET institutions are still fragile) through the establishment of partnerships with private employment agencies and/or referrals towards private companies offering on-site training and job opportunities.

¹ On continental average, it accounts for about 16 per cent of the labour force. In the less developed economies of several of the countries (e.g., Guinea, Mali, Niger), the proportion may be smaller. See, World Bank, Youth Employment in Sub-Saharan Africa.

² Which account, on average, at the continental level, for about half of total wage employment.

³ Taking into account entrepreneurship in the informal sector.

⁴ This is not specific to returnees; there is a reported general inadequacy between youth skills and the needs of private employers. As explained earlier (section 5.1), few TVET institutions offer training programmes that are relevant to market demand. This was confirmed by several private sector actors interviewed by Altai Consulting.

⁵ For example, in Nigeria, only nine direct job placements were achieved between 2017 and 2020 due to the lack of adequate opportunities/offers from employers and employment agencies, according to IOM (see Nigeria country report, section 2.2.).

4.4.2. POTENTIAL OPPORTUNITIES FOR RETURNEES IN WAGE EMPLOYMENT IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR

Private employment agencies

Because of the fragmentation and low visibility of many SEAs in the countries, private actors have gradually engaged and taken on an important intermediation role on the labour market. These structures include private employment agencies and specialised human resource organisations. Under the JI, IOM rarely solicited these structures,¹ despite the significant advantages they could offer returnees.

- **Private employment agencies** sell employment and job-matching services and differ from job portals in that they do more than publishing job listings and registering applicants online. Their services include identifying job openings, pre-selecting candidates, putting them in touch with companies, and even delivering short training sessions on skills required for the available positions. All structures recommended in the 12 country reports are active in both the formal and informal sectors. Their comparative advantage is their extensive network of partners, combined with a precise knowledge of the needs of companies and of the overall job market.
- **Specialised human resources consultancies and employability training/coaching organisations** typically sell their services to employers. They offer recruitment, staff skills development (short-term technical, management, or soft-skills training), coaching, and human resources and payroll management services. 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, offering support to job-seekers, mostly university graduates and skilled workers in urban areas, but also sometimes less-skilled workers, in the construction sector for example.

In most countries under study,² several private employment agencies were interviewed and recommended to be involved in the economic reintegration of future returnees. Partnerships with recruitment agencies could be developed to increase the linkage of returnees with enterprises in the formal and informal sectors. These structures could also play a more important role in the counselling and orientation phases of reintegration assistance given their extensive knowledge of employers' expectations. However, the downside of this approach is the uneven quality of the services such organisations offer and their lack of coordination with the public sector. Although by law they must be registered and regulated by the government, in practice, many are informal, and their supervision and coordination with public institutions and programmes is very limited. It will thus be critical to carefully select potential partners and support efforts made by governments to regulate the sector.

Public / private partnerships for youth employment programmes

Private companies, including large international groups, are demonstrating a growing interest in tackling the youth employment challenge on the African continent, including in several countries, and have started implementing programmes as part of public/private partnerships. Examples of such programmes include:

- The Young Africa Works was developed by the **Mastercard Foundation** and implemented in Ethiopia, Ghana, Nigeria, and Senegal, among others. It aims to enable 30 million young people in Africa to secure employment by 2030. Its key objectives are to: 1) improve the quality of education and TVET to equip the youth with skills needed by employers; 2) leverage technology to connect employers and job-seekers; and 3) enable entrepreneurs and small businesses to grow through access to financial services.^{lvii} As part of this strategy, the Mastercard Foundation

¹ Except, for instance, in Guinea where IOM referred several returnees to the company 'Trust Africa'.

² See country reports for Burkina Faso, Ghana, Guinea, Mali, Niger, Nigeria and Sierra Leone.

is currently implementing a large industrial parks programme in Ethiopia (BRIDGES), aiming to create thousands of employment opportunities (see Focus Box 10).

Focus Box 10: the BRIDGES programme in Ethiopia

BRIDGES is a five-year programme aiming to enhance the competitiveness of the industrial sector to attract qualified workers and offer support to MSMEs. It seeks to: create nearly 600 000 jobs; support 15 000 MSMEs; train 300 000 unemployed youth; and contribute to building market linkages between industrial parks and MSMEs to enhance their competitiveness and productivity. In addition, it plans to create a digital industrial park labour database to gather reliable data and develop predictable labour market information for both policy makers and industrial parks.^{lviii}

- **Volvo** is also involved in Ethiopia. In collaboration with the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and UNIDO, Volvo launched an initiative aiming to set up a training academy for technicians of heavy-duty machinery and commercial vehicles. While UNIDO is responsible for the overall project management and implementation, Volvo provides new equipment, training material, teacher training, ongoing curriculum development and apprenticeship opportunities for students. The Ethiopian Selam Vocational Training College is the project owner and will manage the administration of the academy.^{lix}
- In Côte d'Ivoire, several key actors in the retail sector (**Corporation for Africa & Overseas - CFAO, Auchan**) have created, in partnership with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire, a 'school of retail'¹ to address the mismatch between employers' needs in this sector and job-seekers' skills. Training courses are delivered in the form of apprenticeships (thus ensuring an income for the apprentice) and could be suitable for returnees as they are generally short (a few months), do not require any educational prerequisites, and take place on the job. Several other companies, such as the **Nestlé Cocoa Academy**, also offer training programmes. Although currently only for Nestlé's employees, the academy's expertise could be leveraged for the development of curricula in the cocoa sector, which is key in the country's economy.
- In Senegal, **Eiffage** developed an extensive in-house vocational training programme for its staff, notably through the launch of Eiffage University in Dakar.
- In Nigeria, the **Sustainable Hospitality Alliance (SHA)** offers opportunities for youth in the tourism sector. Its programmes yielded positive results which could be duplicated in other countries where the tourism industry is growing, such as Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Senegal, or The Gambia (see Focus Box 11).

Focus Box 11: Sustainable Hospitality Alliance (SHA)

SHA is a charity organisation registered in the United Kingdom (UK). Its members consist of world-leading hotel companies (Accor, Arabella, BHW, Four Seasons, Hilton, Hyatt, Marriott, Radisson, Scandic, etc.) and other strategic partners with a combined reach of over 35 000 properties and 5.5 million rooms – 30 per cent of the global industry's rooms.

SHA has a youth employment working group gathering 18 leading hotel companies. Since 2004, under the Youth Employment Programme, SHA and its members notably developed training programmes for young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to gain practical experience and job opportunities in hospitality in four countries: Kenya; India; Nigeria; and Sri Lanka. SHA also supports several of its members in the development of their own employability programmes.

¹ 'École de la grande distribution'.

Over 200 hotels had participated in youth employment programmes and over 6 000 vulnerable young people had been supported with training and employment opportunities as of the end of 2021. Nigeria is one of the most recent SHA intervention countries. A small-scale pilot programme was implemented in Lagos before the COVID-19 pandemic, with a few partner hotels. A new programme in Lagos, funded by the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO), and focusing on people with disabilities just ended (see section 6). A replication of that programme is currently in discussion with another funder (a member organisation).

4.4.3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The EU could consider encouraging its IPs delivering reintegration assistance to work with selected and recommended private employment organisations (see country reports and annexes), when and where they can provide an added value to the services offered by SEAs.

In parallel, the EU could support national governments in their efforts to better control the development of private employment agencies (e.g., through the establishment of a government-approved licence to operate) and harmonise the types of services offered by these structures. To this end, a global framework of public and private intermediation mechanisms could be established for these structures to contribute more coherently to governments' objectives (including collecting data on labour markets, number and profiles of employers and job-seekers, hiring industries, etc.) and contribute to the overall transparency of the sector.

Finally, the EU could consider further developing and funding additional public-private partnership employment programmes with international companies and financial institutions (e.g., Mastercard, Volvo, etc.) already active in several of the 12 countries. New programmes could be developed with EU companies and financial institutions in the main areas of departure and return. EU Member States and national agencies could play a key role in identifying and advocating for the most promising partnerships.

4.5. ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION OF VULNERABLE MIGRANTS

4.5.1. OVERVIEW AND LESSONS LEARNT FROM THE EUTF

Returnees often present vulnerability profiles requiring the combination of economic reintegration assistance with specific social and psycho-social care, that mostly IOM and its networks are currently able to provide. Aside from the specific needs of unaccompanied minors, single-headed households, or victims of trafficking, many returnees suffer from severe medical conditions, such as physical and psychological trauma, which require the provision of holistic reintegration assistance. In addition, their need for material assistance (e.g., shelter, food, child support, legal aid, etc.) is often immediate upon return. In order to provide adequate responses to such a wide range of needs, under the JI, IOM closely worked with governments to increase the availability and provision of shelter services as well as medical and mental health and psycho-social support (MHPSS) and developed relatively wide networks of local and international service providers (CSOs, NGOs, UN agencies, etc.).

Such partnerships developed by IOM should be perpetuated, in parallel to the development of longer-term strategies designed to survive the discontinuity of programming phases. IOM's protection units, in partnership with international NGOs (e.g., *Terre des Hommes*, Save the Children or the Red Cross) or local CSOs played a pivotal role in compensating for the scarcity of resources available at the national level to address the needs of vulnerable migrants. MHPSS, in particular, remains a major gap in protection services in most countries: the undersupply of qualified human resources and infrastructure remains a critical bottleneck. IOM developed capacity building strategies and participated in the development of NRMs for vulnerable migrants in most countries, but longer-term

solutions should involve further capacity building while existing NRMs should be consolidated and rationalised. In parallel, improved levels of collaboration and coordination between social/psycho-social care providers and economic reintegration actors are needed. Future EU-funded youth employment programmes, for example, could include features making them more adapted to the needs of returnees (e.g., offering basic MHPSS services). In addition, development actors and programmes susceptible to enrol returnees should be made aware of existing structures able to provide additional support to their most vulnerable beneficiaries.

4.5.2. BUILDING NATIONAL CAPACITIES AND REFERRAL MECHANISMS IN FAVOUR OF THE MOST VULNERABLE RETURNEES

Building the capacities of national authorities in coordination with relevant international agencies

Significant capacity building of national authorities was conducted by IOM under the JI, including as part of the development and operationalisation of AVRR SOPs. The development of SOPs and the identification of focal points within relevant ministries allowed or national authorities' involvement in the protection of vulnerable migrants to be increased, both at the reception phase and beyond. IOM led several capacity building activities on psycho-social services, identification of vulnerable beneficiaries, and referrals for a wide range of civil servants throughout relevant ministries (usually ministries of social affairs and/or health). In most countries, national authorities and IOM jointly conduct the identification of, and assistance to, vulnerable returnees. National focal points have been involved in the follow-up of these cases including, for minors, family tracing and mediation. Referrals towards public hospitals and medical treatment facilities were facilitated by relevant national ministries. However, while these efforts to involve and train national authorities yielded positive results, long-term ownership and sustainability remain uncertain. Capacity building could be provided on a wider scale, particularly in the main countries of return (Guinea, Mali) and as part of a coherent strategy with other international actors involved in the health and protection sectors.

In coordination with other international partners, additional resources should be allocated to further strengthen and decentralise MHPSS systems, building on good practices identified in Nigeria and The Gambia. Under the 'Strengthening the Sustainable and Holistic Reintegration of Returnees in The Gambia', a project of the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund (UNPBF), implemented between 2018 and 2022, a national MHPSS framework was developed by the Ministry of Health with financial and technical support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and IOM, as well as associated training curricula and capacity building. This enabled IOM to expand its social inclusion and cohesion activities in communities, particularly through the launch of the mobile health caravans. The mobile teams, comprised of community health volunteers and doctors, provided free medical consultations, MHPSS, and complimentary medicine to over 200 community members in Farafenni (NBR) and Brikama (WCR).^{lx} Similarly, in Nigeria, IOM collaborated with the Federal Ministry of Health to roll out the WHO Mental Health Gap Action Plan (see Focus Box 12).

Focus Box 12: IOM and WHO capacity- and system-strengthening initiatives in Nigeria and The Gambia

In Nigeria, IOM and the Federal Ministry of Health organised two pilot trainings (four days each) for 42 primary healthcare workers based in the main areas of return, outside the largest cities. The trainings, which covered MHPSS in general and the specific needs of returnees in particular, were expected to facilitate the referral of returnees during and beyond the duration of the JI and to strengthen the Nigerian mental health support system, thus potentially benefiting many other Nigerians. In addition, IOM's experience with mobile clinics for internally displaced people in the Northeast region is envisaged to be extended to returnees in the southern part of the country.

In The Gambia, IOM developed a national mental health framework for returnees and a national training curriculum (not EUTF-funded), which it implemented in partnership with the WHO, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the International Trade Centre (ITC). Ad hoc community-based MHPSS activities were implemented following a shipwreck off the coast of Mauritania, causing the death of dozens of Gambian nationals and the return of survivors. To ensure the continuity of this support and strengthen community support mechanisms, IOM trained over 100 health workers, youth counsellors and community members to become local MHPSS ambassadors and change agents. At the end of the training, they were able to identify basic signs of mental illness and provide psychological first aid and basic counselling.

Developing National Referral Mechanisms in favour of all vulnerable migrants, including returnees

In addition to strengthening the capacities of national authorities, there is a need to build sustainable mechanisms among medical, MHPSS and shelter service providers to facilitate referrals (including across borders) and increase the range of available support options. Particularly in countries of transit, international and local NGOs provide services suitable to the needs of vulnerable returnees, such as shelter, legal support, healthcare, MHPSS, (child) protection services¹ and, in some cases, economic reintegration assistance. While returnees should not, by default, be singled out from other youth for their economic reintegration, a minority of particularly vulnerable returnees need additional, longer-term, and holistic support that ‘classic’ reintegration actors often cannot provide. NGOs and social workers providing a wide range of services and tailored support are, in these cases, better suited.²

While several NRMs for vulnerable migrants have been established, others provide support to specific profiles only (victims of trafficking, transit migrants), thereby excluding large contingents of returnees and contributing to the fragmentation of governance structures and services. These gaps mostly stem from a lack of coordination among donors, divergent priorities, and the proliferation of initiatives. To date, these structures remain either too limited in terms of capacity and/or scope.

These structures need to be rationalised, harmonised, and capacity building provided in a more coherent and sustainable manner, in partnership with national authorities, along with predictable and sufficient funding.

- **In The Gambia and Ethiopia, NRMs dedicated to vulnerable migrants have been developed but need to be strengthened and/or operationalised.** In 2021, The Gambia launched the National Referral Mechanism for the Protection and Assistance of Vulnerable Migrants, including Victims of Trafficking. Funded by the EUTF, its role is to provide a comprehensive framework that outlines roles and responsibilities of state and non-state actors in the promotion and protection of the rights of migrants. Two SOPs for the management of stranded vulnerable migrants and victims of trafficking were validated in June 2020. In Ethiopia, the National Referral Mechanism for Victims of Trafficking and Vulnerable Migrants was developed in 2021 with the support of IOM. Its mandate is to facilitate the coordination between relevant actors and serve as a platform gathering key stakeholders in charge of providing protection and assistance services to returnees in vulnerable situations.³ It is still in the process of being operationalised.^{lxi}

¹ For a more detailed outlook, see the recent mapping by UNHCR: ‘Western and Central Mediterranean situation – mapping protection services for vulnerable people on the move’ (July 2022), available [here](#).

² See country reports and annexes of this study where economic reintegration actors in a position to provide such holistic support are listed.

³ Its mandate includes the identification of vulnerable migrants, case-type determination, case management and the provision of protection and assistance services.

- **In Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, and Niger, NRMs have been set up, but only for the benefit of victims of trafficking while, in Burkina Faso, the NRM's mandate is limited to the protection of migrants in transit. In most cases, these mechanisms have remained under-used.** Structures specifically dedicated to victims of trafficking set up in Cameroon and Niger have either been under-used or undermined by their limited geographical coverage (and remain nascent in Côte d'Ivoire). In Burkina Faso, the Ministry of Social Action and its decentralised structures were to play a key role in orienting vulnerable migrants and coordinating assistance (accommodation, food, medical assistance, MHPSS, legal insurance, assistance to minors). However, due to its limited scope, the NRM was not able to provide assistance to returnees, and since the January 2022 military coup, is no longer operational.

Increasing awareness of vulnerable migrants' needs among youth employment actors

Several good practices implemented by youth employment actors could be disseminated and/or incorporated into future programmes that enrol returnees. Under EUTF funding, several actors implementing youth employment programmes improved their MHPSS capacities and activities. For example, LuxDev added a MHPSS component to the ECLOSIO project during its implementation in Senegal after realising that the lack of such assistance was an obstacle to most returnees' successful economic reintegration. Similarly, in The Gambia, the Gambian-German Advisory Centre was, at the time of data collection, in the process of formalising a collaboration with the Gambian Red Cross to offer MHPSS to returnees (from Europe). Finally, in Ethiopia, GIZ implemented several innovative approaches dedicated to vulnerable migrants, including women, by providing holistic support including MHPSS to TVET trainees¹ (Focus Box 13).

Focus Box 13: QEP and STEP programmes implemented by GIZ in Ethiopia

In Ethiopia, GIZ, through its Qualifications and Employment Perspectives for Refugees and Host Communities in Ethiopia Programme (QEP), supported the implementation of individual and group counselling services, such as peer-mentoring. Counsellors were trained to provide basic psycho-social support and the programme developed referral mechanisms to provide more specialised support to TVET trainees in need of such services.

In addition, through the Sustainable Training and Education Programme (STEP), TVET trainers and leaders were trained in psycho-social counselling and three TVET centres adopted free day care services for their female employees and students during teaching and learning hours.

4.5.3. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

To foster more sustainable economic reintegration solutions in favour of vulnerable migrants, the EU could consider supporting and funding, in cooperation with other relevant organisations (UNPBF, UNICEF, WHO, etc.), large-scale capacity building of national authorities to improve local case management capacities of vulnerable groups, including returnees. These interventions could be based on the successes and lessons learnt from initiatives recently conducted in The Gambia and Nigeria in partnership with WHO.

The EU could consider supporting and consolidating existing NRMs in favour of vulnerable returnees.² To avoid the multiplication of referral frameworks, NRM's mandates should encompass all vulnerable

¹ In several countries (particularly in The Gambia), interviewed TVET representatives expressed the need to have psycho-social service experts available among their staff, to be able to better accompany returnees facing difficulties integrating into training courses. In their experience, many returnees started trainings shortly after their return, without having had the time and means to process their often difficult, if not traumatic, experience. Such situations created challenges for both returnees and TVET institutions, increased risks of dropouts and, overall, significantly jeopardised chances of a successful economic reintegration.

² To ensure coherence of interventions, prior audit and actions plans should be conducted and drafted in collaboration with relevant national and international actors.

migrants. In addition, medical, MHPSS and shelter service providers should be systematically mapped¹ to increase the range of support options available to vulnerable returnees.

As part of efforts made to better link the migration and youth employment sectors, development actors should be sensitised on the main areas of departure and return (see sections 5.1–5.3) and on the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including returnees. Future EU-funded youth employment programmes, for example, could include features making them more adapted to the needs of returnees (e.g., basic MHPSS, including in TVET centres). In addition, through the development of NRMs, partners that enrol returnees should be made aware of existing structures able to provide additional support to the most vulnerable of their beneficiaries.

¹ Such structures were not covered as part of this mapping study.

4.6. GENERAL CONCLUSION

Although a large number of opportunities have been identified as part of this study and many more are being developed, the absence of centralisation of youth employment opportunities not only makes them difficult to identify (including to returnees), it also prevents youth employment actors from informing their strategies with analyses of the existing supply and demand at the national and/or local levels. Youth employment opportunities are, at present, insufficiently leveraged by reintegration actors, either due to a lack of information or due to an inadequacy between the regions targeted by youth employment actors and the regions of return. Youth employment programmes also need to target their beneficiaries more effectively: international programmes are sometimes implemented without prior knowledge – in the absence of reliable data – on the numbers, profiles, or aspirations of potential beneficiaries in the region in which they will operate.¹

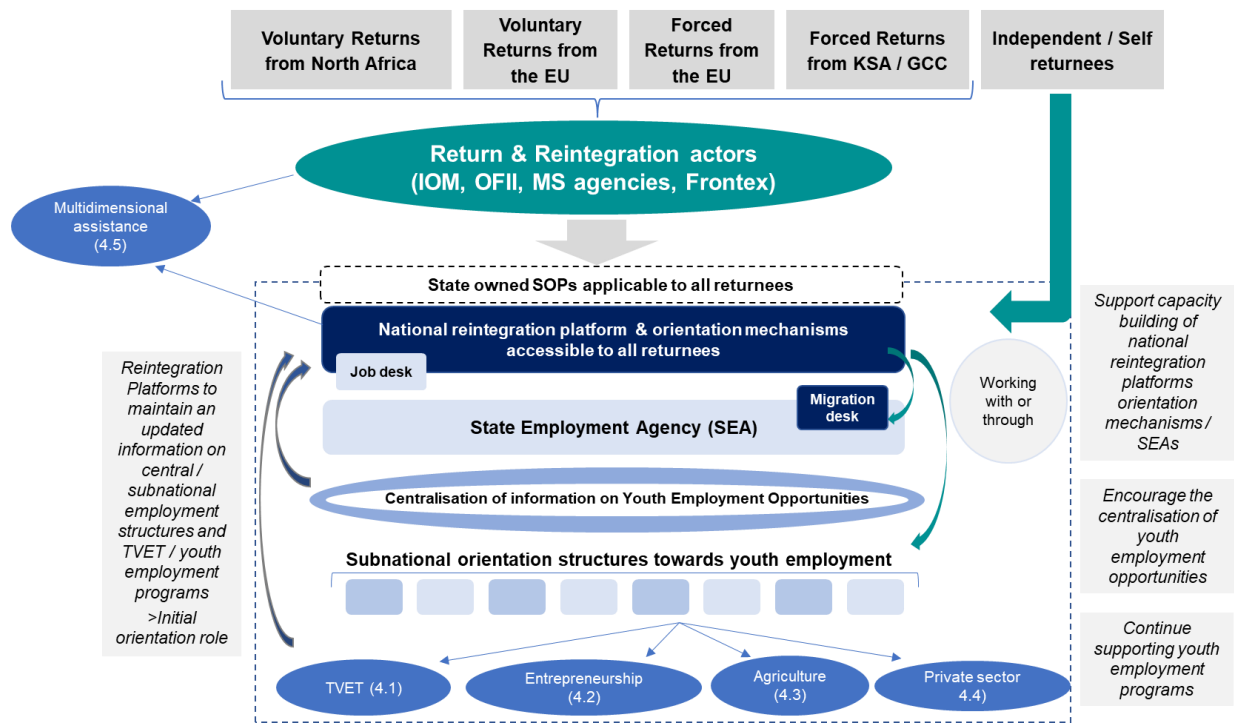
For young people (and returnees in particular) to benefit from existing programmes that best match their needs and aspirations² (from an often wide range of programmes), the development of transparent databases centralising available opportunities is essential. The development of information systems able to capture opportunities made available by international partners and centralise them in a database visible and accessible to everyone would offer multiple advantages. The more visible the opportunities, the more youth, including returnees, would be able to make choices according to their needs and expectations. It would also increase and encourage professional mobility: a returnee from Ségou (Mali) should be able to apply to an offer in Bamako and an opportunity offered in a livestock project in Mamou (Guinea) may interest a returnee located in Conakry. In addition, this would provide donors and IPs with more reliable data on needs, demand, and geographical gaps.

In this arrangement, reintegration actors could position themselves more strategically in an orientation role at the screening phase, upon arrival, and refer returnees either to government-owned structures for economic reintegration (SEAs, state-owned reintegration mechanisms – Figure 4), or to dedicated support structures providing multi-dimensional types of assistance to vulnerable beneficiaries, including psycho-social services, family reunion services, medical assistance, and specifically designed follow-up and support for economic reintegration. Provided their capacities are strengthened, these structures, in turn, could refer returnees to relevant opportunities in the fields of TVET, entrepreneurship and wage employment (Figure 8).

¹ This was, for example, the case of the EUTF-funded INTEGRA programme in Guinea.

² Beneficiaries are also more likely to report improvements in their economic situation, including as a result of the reintegration assistance received, when the type of TVET and entrepreneurship project they benefited from matched their aspirations. This confirms the JI's programming principle of individually tailored reintegration assistance and the need to ensure diversified reintegration pathways.

Figure 9: Building sustainable linkages between reintegration systems and youth employment programmes



5. ANNEXES

5.1. KEY NATIONAL FRAMEWORKS AND SECTORAL POLICIES

Country	Development framework	TVET policy	Job creation / youth employment policy	Entrepreneurship /microfinance policy
Burkina Faso	<i>Plan national de développement économique et social (2021–25)</i>	<i>Politique nationale d'enseignement et formation technique et professionnelle (PN/EFTP) (2008)</i> <i>Stratégie de généralisation de la formation professionnelle (SGFP) – 2014</i> <i>Plan sectoriel de l'éducation et de la formation (PSEF) – 2017–2030</i>	<i>Politique du travail, de l'emploi et de la protection sociale (TEPS)</i>	<i>Stratégie de la finance inclusive (2019–2023)</i>
Cameroon	<i>Stratégie nationale de développement 2030</i>	Under development	<i>Politique nationale de l'emploi (PNE) – 2007 + plan d'actions prioritaires (2019–23) + budget</i>	Dedicated operational programmes
Côte d'Ivoire	<i>Plan national de développement (2021–25)</i>	<i>Plan stratégique de l'éducation et de la formation technique et vocationnelle</i>	<i>Stratégie nationale de l'insertion professionnelle et de l'emploi des jeunes (SNIEJ) 2021–2025</i>	-
Ethiopia	Homegrown economic reform agenda	Technical and Vocational Education Training Sector Growth and Transformation Plan	Plan of Action for Job Creation (2020–2025)	Micro and Small Enterprise Development Strategy Entrepreneurship Strategy
Ghana	Coordinated Programme of Economic and Social Development Policies 2017–2024	TVET Policy for Ghana, 2004; ICT in Education Strategic Plan, 2018-2030	National Employment Policy, 2015; Green Jobs Strategy, 2021–2025; Youth Policy of Ghana, 2022–2032	-

Guinea	<i>Plan national de développement économique et social (PNDES) – 2016–2020</i>	-	Under Development	-
Mali	<i>Cadre Stratégique pour la Relance Économique et le Développement (CREDD) pour la période 2019–2023</i>	<i>Politique nationale de la formation professionnelle (PNFP) Programme décennal de développement de l'éducation et de la formation 2019–2028</i>	<i>Politique Nationale de l'Emploi (PNE)</i>	<i>Stratégie nationale d'Inclusion Financière (SNIF)</i>
Niger	PDES 2022–2026	<i>Plan de transition du secteur de l'éducation et de la formation Stratégie nationale de la formation professionnelle technique (SNFPT) (not adopted yet)</i>	<i>Politique Nationale de l'Emploi (PNE), (2009)</i>	<i>Stratégie Nationale de Promotion de l'Entrepreneuriat des Jeunes au Niger (SNPEJ) 2020–2029 Stratégie Nationale sur la Finance Inclusive (SNFI) 2019–2023</i>
Nigeria	National Development Plan 2021–2025	-	National Strategy for Job Creation and Youth Employment (2016) National Employment Policy (2017) Youth Employment Action Plan (2021)	-
Senegal	PSE 2014–2023	<i>Programme d'amélioration de la qualité, de l'équité et de la transparence éducation-formation 2018–2030 (PAQUET-EF)</i>	<i>Politique nationale pour l'emploi (2015–2020); not renewed yet</i>	-
Sierra Leone	Medium-Term National Development Plan (MTNDP) 2019–2023	National TVET policy (2019) Education Sector Plan for 2022–2026	The National Employment Policy (2020) National Youth Policy (NYP)	National Financial Inclusion Strategy (2022–2026)
The Gambia	National Development Plan (NDP) 2018–2021	-	National Employment Policy (NEP) 2022–2026 National Employment Action Plan (NEAP)	-

5. 5.2. LABOUR MARKET INTERMEDIATION AND ECONOMIC REINTEGRATION STRUCTURES (NON-EXHAUSTIVE LIST)¹

Countries	State employment agencies	Youth-dedicated agencies	All migrants orientation agencies
Burkina Faso	ANPE	-	-
Cameroon	FNE	CIOP	PARI-JEDI
Côte d'Ivoire	-	AEJ	CGC ²
Ethiopia	OSSCs	YESC	NPC, NRM, MMRAC ³
Ghana	GECs	YEA	NRM and MICR
Guinea	AGUIPE	CECOJE	BAOS
Mali	ANPE	APEJ	-
Niger	ANPE	EOJ/POJ	-
Nigeria	JCs, SEAs	Youth Bureaus /Centres	MRCs, NGC
Senegal	MIL	PEEJF (ANPEJ)	BAOS
Sierra Leone	EEU	-	-
The Gambia	ESU	NYC	MICs / GGAC

5.3. KEY ACTORS AND PROGRAMMES IN THE TVET SECTOR⁴

Country	Structure	Project
Burkina Faso	LuxDev	<i>Appui à la politique sectorielle d'enseignement et de formation techniques et professionnels (APOSE)</i> Countrywide
	Swiss Cooperation	<i>Programme d'appui à la formation professionnelle et à l'apprentissage</i> Centre-Sud, Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre, Hauts-Bassins, Cascades, Centre-Ouest ont été soutenus
Cameroon	AFD	<i>Projet de centres de formation aux métiers non agricoles en milieu rural (CFM)</i> Countrywide
Côte d'Ivoire	World Bank	<i>Projet sur l'emploi jeune et le développement des compétences en Côte d'Ivoire (PEJEDEC) – Tranche 3</i> Countrywide
	AFD	<i>C2D – Secteur éducation, formation, emploi</i>

¹ In addition to these structures, many more are involved in support to youth employability, such as structures in charge of supporting entrepreneurship in the services and/or artisanal sectors, or in the agriculture sector.

² The evolution of the CCG into an 'all migrants' platform, however, has not yet materialised.

³ The Multipurpose Migrant Return Assistance Centre (MMRAC) is being set up as part of a project implemented by RRS.

⁴ Programmes listed in this section primarily have the objective to strengthen the TVET sector. However, many of the programmes listed in sections 6.2 and 6.3 also include a TVET component.

		<i>Countrywide</i>
	MCA	<i>Compact 'Compétences pour l'employabilité et la productivité' Daloa, Gbêkê, San Pedro, Abijan</i>
	Conseil français des investisseurs en Afrique	<i>Programme de formation professionnelle et d'accompagnement à l'insertion dans le marché du travail des jeunes dans les secteurs de l'énergie électrique et de l'hôtellerie-restauration en Côte d'Ivoire (Programme KALANCI / ARCHIPELAGO)</i>
	ONU/DI	<i>Programme d'Appui à la formation professionnelle et à l'insertion des jeunes en Côte d'Ivoire (PROFORME)</i>
	IECD	<i>Programme Graine d'Espérance (GDE) Duekoué, Abengourou, Bonoua, Koumassi (Abidjan), Bimbresso</i>
Ethiopia	ILO	<i>FAIRWAY project Addis Ababa</i>
	GIZ	<i>Employment Perspectives for Refugees and Host Communities in Ethiopia Programme Addis Ababa, Somali, Gambella, Benishangul-Gumuz</i>
Ghana	EU	<i>Developing a thriving and inclusive Green Economy in Ghana (part of ARCHIPELAGO programme) Countrywide</i>
	EU, BMZ, SECO	<i>Ghana Skills Development Initiative, phase 4 Countrywide</i>
	GIZ	<i>Programme for Sustainable Economic Development (PSED) – Ghana Skills Development Initiative (GSDI) phase IV Countrywide</i>
	ILO	<i>Skill-Up Ghana project Countrywide</i>
	Mastercard Foundation	<i>Transforming Youth TVET Livelihoods for Sustainable Jobs</i>
Guinea	WB	<i>Booster les Compétences pour l'Employabilité des Jeunes (BOCEJ) Countrywide</i>
	FSD/BID	<i>- Projet de développement de l'EFTP (FSD) - Projet de développement de l'EFTP (BID) - Phase 2 du Projet de développement de l'EFTP (BID) Countrywide</i>
	AFD	<i>Projet d'amélioration de la formation et de l'insertion dans les secteurs agricoles et miniers (PAFISAM) Countrywide Projet d'appui au développement de l'ASCAD (PAD-ASCAD) Conakry (with additional locations to be covered)</i>
Mali	AFD	<i>Amélioration de la compétitivité des entreprises par la Formation professionnelle (ACEFOR, phases I & II) Sikasso and Ségou Accompagnement de la Jeunesse et des Collectivités Territoriales dans leurs Initiatives de Formation et d'Insertion Professionnelle (ACTIF) Mopti, Tombouctou et Gao</i>
	LuxDev	<i>Formation et insertion professionnelle (MLI/022) Ségou (circles of Ségou, Barouéli, San, Tominian et Bla) et Sikasso (circle of Yorosso)</i>
	AECID	<i>Appui à la formation professionnelle (en cours de définition)</i>
	Swiss Cooperation	<i>Programme d'Appui à l'Éducation Non Formelle (PENF), mis en œuvre par Helvetas</i>

		<i>Sikasso, Mopti et Tombouctou</i>
		Particip – (TVET). Implemented by SwissContact and C2D (<i>Catalyseur de Développement</i>) <i>Sikasso, Mopti et Tombouctou</i>
Niger	WB	<i>Projet de développement de compétences pour la croissance (PRODEC II) Countrywide</i>
	Swiss Cooperation	<i>Programme d'Appui à la Formation Professionnelle en Milieu Rural (FOPROR III) Régions de Maradi et Dosso</i>
Nigeria	GIZ	PME project <i>Lagos and Edo states, and FCT/Abuja</i>
	EU, AFD and GIZ	NAPTIN project Nationwide, with focus on Edo, Delta, Lagos, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, Ogun, and Abia states
	WB	IDEAS project Phase 1: <i>Edo, Abia, Ekiti, Kano, Gombe, Benue</i> Phase 2: <i>Lagos and Ogun, Katsina, Kaduna</i>
		EdoBEST project <i>Edo state</i>
	UNICEF	Generation Unlimited (GenU) <i>16 states incl. Edo, Lagos, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna</i>
	AECID & ActionAid	<i>Dare to Hope project Edo</i>
Senegal	LuxDev	<i>Accès équitable à la formation professionnelle (ACEFOP) Kédougou, Kolda, Tambacounda, Sédhiou and Ziguinchor</i>
	UNESCO	<i>Plateforme d'expertise en formation professionnelle au Sénégal (PEFOP) Countrywide</i>
Sierra Leone	World Bank	Sierra Leone Skills Development Project <i>Countrywide</i>
	GIZ	Employment Youth Promotion IV (EPP IV) <i>Countrywide</i>
The Gambia	UNESCO	Youth Empowerment through TVET <i>Banjul, Kanifing Municipality, Lower River Region, North Bank Region, Central River Region, Upper River Region</i>
Regional and cross-country Initiatives	ILO	Skills initiatives for Africa <i>Pilot countries: Tunisia, Ghana, Togo, Nigeria, Cameroon, Ethiopia, Kenya, South Africa</i>
		Skill Up <i>Ghana, Ethiopia, Lebanon, Malawi, Senegal, Tanzania</i>
	AFD	<i>Programme Être solidaires pour la réussite des jeunes et des territoires ruraux – Maisons Familiales Rurales (MFR) Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Madagascar, Morocco, Senegal, Chad, Togo</i>
		<i>Initiative Ressources Humaines (RH) Excellence en Afrique Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Senegal</i>
		<i>Centres d'excellence africain sur l'impact sur le développement (ACE IMPACT) Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Nigeria</i>
	<i>Appuyer le développement intégré de l'Institut international de planification de l'éducation et de ses pôles régionaux</i>	

		<i>Madagascar, Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Congo Brazzaville, Côte d'Ivoire, Gabon, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Uganda, RDC, Sénégal, Tanzania, Chad, Togo</i>
	Enabel, British Council, Expertise France, GIZ, LuxDev	VET – Toolbox 2 <i>Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria, Cameroun, Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania, Malawi, Mozambique</i>
	EU/EUTF	ARCHIPELAGO: an African - European TVET initiative <i>Burkina Faso, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Chad, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Mali</i>
	GIZ	ATVET 4 Women <i>Benin, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, and Togo</i>
		International network brings craft workers together – Strengthening innovative approaches between the German skilled trades sector and international TVET cooperation partners <i>Ethiopia, Rwanda, Uganda, South Africa</i>
	World Bank	The EASTRIP – East Africa Skills for Transformation and Regional Integration Project <i>Kenya, Ethiopia, Tanzania</i>
		PASET Initiative on Regional TVET Centres of Excellence – World Bank Financed Project in East Africa <i>East Africa (Inc. Ethiopia)</i>
		Regional TVET initiative (With the involvement of Chinese and Korean governments)
	UNESCO	Pan African Initiative for Digital Transformation of TVET and Skills Development Systems in Africa <i>Continental</i>
	UNESCO / Republic of Korea	BEAR II – Better education for Africa's Rise <i>Ethiopia, Kenya, Madagascar, Tanzania, Uganda</i>

5.4. KEY ACTORS AND PROGRAMMES IN THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP SECTOR

Country	Structure	Project
Burkina Faso	Expertise France	<i>Territoires créateurs d'emplois Boucles du Mouhoun, Nord et Sahel</i>
		<i>Renforcement de la cohésion sociale et de la stabilisation Centre Nord</i>
		<i>Programme d'appui au développement d'opportunités économiques pour les jeunes et les femmes Nord et Sahel</i>
	World Bank	<i>Projet d'appui à l'entrepreneuriat, au développement des compétences et à l'adoption technologique¹</i>
Cameroon	GIZ	<i>Projet d'appui à la résilience socio-économique des jeunes (PARSE II) Northern regions</i>

¹ Being developed at the time of data collection.

	BAD	<i>Promotion de l'entrepreneuriat, l'amélioration des compétences et la compétitivité (PEAC)</i> <i>Centre, Sud, Littoral et Sud-Ouest</i>
	UNDP	Strengthening MSMEs for economic resilience and recovery in the face of COVID-19 (RFF) <i>Centre, Littoral, Extrême Nord</i>
Côte d'Ivoire	UNDP	<i>Soutien à l'innovation entrepreneuriale des jeunes en Côte d'Ivoire</i> <i>Grand-Abidjan, Sud, Sud-ouest, Ouest, Centre, Nord-est, Daloa</i>
Ethiopia	World Bank	Ethiopia Job Compact Sector Reform and Performance Contract <i>Countrywide</i>
	UNDP	Innovation for Development project <i>Countrywide</i>
	UNIDO	Technical Assistance to the Upgrading of the Ethiopian Leather and Leather Products Industry (Phase 2)
Ghana	AfDB	Post-Covid-19 Skills Development and Productivity Enhancement Project <i>Countrywide</i>
	Canada	INVEST in HER <i>Accra, Kumasi, and Sekondi-Takoradi</i>
	EU	Boosting green employment and enterprise opportunities in Ghana (GrEEn project) <i>Ashanti, Western Regions</i>
	World Bank	Ghana jobs and skills project <i>Countrywide</i>
		YouStart Campaign <i>Countrywide</i>
		Jobs for Youth through Competitiveness and Entrepreneurship Support <i>Countrywide</i>
		Strengthening the financing pillars of the Entrepreneurship Ecosystem in Ghana <i>Countrywide</i>
	GIZ	Programme for Sustainable Economic Development / Migration & Employment Promotion (MEP) component <i>Greater Accra, Bono, Bono East, Ahafo and Ashanti regions</i>
		Programme for Sustainable Economic Development / Financial System Development: <i>Countrywide</i>
		Digital Transformation Centre <i>Countrywide</i>
		Invest for Jobs (Special Initiative on Training and Job Creation) <i>Countrywide</i>
JICA	Kaizen project <i>Countrywide</i>	
Mastercard Foundation	Young Africa Works <i>Countrywide</i>	
Guinea	WB	<i>Projet de renforcement de la compétitivité des PME en Guinée (PRECOP)</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
		SME linkages <i>Countrywide</i>
		Guinea DFS Market Creation <i>Countrywide</i>
		<i>Développement économique local guinéen (LED)</i>

		<i>Countrywide</i>
	AfDB	<i>Projet d'assistance technique à l'emploi des Jeunes (PATEJ) Countrywide</i>
Mali	WB	<i>Projet de Promotion de l'Accès au Financement, de l'Entrepreneuriat et de l'Emploi au Mali (PAFEEM) Mopti, Gao, Tombouctou, Kidal, Ségou</i>
		<i>Environnement Propice à l'Entrepreneuriat de Croissance (EPEC) Countrywide</i>
	GIZ	<i>Renforcement de la participation socio-économique des déplacés internes, des réfugiés et des communautés hôtes vulnérables au Mali (PAPSE) Kayes, Ségou, Bamako</i>
		<i>Programme Jeunesse et Stabilisation dans les régions centre du Mali (PROJES) Mopti, Ségou</i>
		<i>Programme des déchets, eaux usées et excréta « Mali Propre » (Mali Sanya) Kayes, Koulikoro, Bamako, Sikasso, Ségou</i>
	AFD	<i>Construire le Mali Countrywide</i>
SNV	<i>L'Emploi des Jeunes crée des Opportunités, ici au Mali (EJOM) Koulikoro, Kayes, Gao et district de Bamako</i>	
Niger	WB	<i>Projet Emploi des Jeunes et Inclusions Productives (PEJIP) Régions de Dosso, Diffa, Maradi, Zinder, Tahoua et Agadez</i>
	AICS	<i>Programme de Promotion de l'Entrepreneuriat Local (PROMEL) Régions de Maradi et Dosso</i>
		<i>Programme D.E.S.E.R.T. (Durabilité de l'Environnement et Stabilisation Économique sur la Route de Transit) Régions Agadez et Tahoua</i>
	LuxDev	<i>Appui au Développement de l'Emploi et l'Employabilité des jeunes et des femmes (Programme NIG/028) Dosso, Niamey et Zinder</i>
	SNV	<i>Youth Employment and Work in Niger (JEEN) Régions de Tahoua et de Zinder</i>
	AFD	<i>Projet d'appui à l'entrepreneuriat des jeunes et des femmes (PAJEF) Régions de Niamey et de Maradi</i>
	UNCDF	<i>Programme Digital Finance for Resilience (DFS for Resilience) Countrywide</i>
	GIZ	<i>Programme de promotion de l'Emploi et de l'Insertion Professionnelle au Niger (ProEMPLOI II) Régions d'Agadez, Tillabéri et Zinder</i>
COOPI	<i>ReAgir (within EUTF-funded D.E.S.E.R.T. programme) Agadez, Tahoua</i>	
Nigeria	GIZ	<i>Skye project Lagos, Edo, Ogun, Enugu, Abuja, Plateau, Adamawa</i>
		<i>Stable, Trained and Empowered Migrant (STEM) project implemented by Caritas Abuja and Edo state</i>
		<i>SEDIN Project Lagos, Edo, and Abuja; also include Ogun & Ondo. Other states benefit from SEDIN</i>
	EU, GIZ, UNDP	<i>Innovation and Jobs for Youth in Nigeria – INN-JOBS project Nationwide, with focus on Edo, Delta, Lagos, Enugu, Kano, Kaduna, Ogun, and Abia states</i>
	EU&WB	<i>State Expenditure and Employment for Results (SEEFOR) project Edo, Delta, Rivers, and Bayelsa states</i>

	EU, AfDB & AFD	Investment in Digital and Creative Enterprises (I-DICE) programme <i>Countrywide</i>
	World Bank	Nigeria for Women project <i>Edo, Ogun, and other states</i>
	ILO	Employment and Reintegration Programme <i>Countrywide</i>
Senegal	AfDB	<i>Projet d'Appui et de Valorisation des Initiatives Entrepreneuriales (PAVIE I)</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
	GIZ	<i>Réussir au Sénégal II</i> <i>Kaolack, Louga, Diourbel, Kédougou, Matam et Kolda</i>
	AfDB	<i>Projet d'Appui et de valorisation des Initiatives Entrepreneuriales (PAVIE) I</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
	ILO	<i>Programme pays de promotion du travail décent du Sénégal</i> <i>Countrywide</i> Promotion of innovative and formal entrepreneurship in Senegal and The Gambia (PROMEFI) <i>Countrywide</i>
Sierra Leone	WB	Sierra Leone Economic Diversification Project <i>Countrywide</i>
		Sierra Leone Financial Inclusion Project <i>Countrywide</i>
	UNDP	Local Economic Revitalization for Local Communities <i>Countrywide</i>
		Youth Empowerment and Employment <i>Nationwide</i>
		MSME Growth Accelerator Program <i>Countrywide</i>
	ILO	Opportunity Salone <i>Bo, Bombali, Kenema and Port Loko districts</i>
		Enabling Environment for Sustainable Enterprises and promotion of business linkages between MNEs and local enterprises in Sierra Leone <i>Countrywide</i>
		BI-BEST Initiative – Selecting and Analysing Value Chains in the Mano River Border Areas <i>Countrywide</i>
	UNCDF	Digital Financial Services in Sierra Leone <i>Countrywide</i>
		Freetown/Blue Peace Initiative (with ILO) <i>Countrywide</i>
		Inclusive Digital Economies <i>Countrywide</i>
		Strengthening Domestic Resources Mobilization for SDGs Financing <i>Countrywide</i>
The Gambia	UNCDF	Jobs, Skills, and Finance for Women and Youth in The Gambia <i>Countrywide</i>
	UNCTAD	Empretec Gambia <i>Countrywide</i>
Regional and cross-	SNV	African Biodigester Component (ABC) <i>Burkina Faso, Mali, Niger</i>
	USAID	Bridge Youth Connect <i>Niger, Burkina Faso</i>

country Initiatives		
AFD	<i>Développer l'entrepreneuriat avec le concept initiative Burkina Faso, Mali, Maroc, Tunisia</i>	
	<i>Incubation d'institutions de microfinance Senegal, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia</i>	
	<i>Afric'Innov Benin, Burkina Faso, Guinea, Niger, Senegal</i>	
	<i>Jeunesse, emploi et entrepreneuriat Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Côte d'Ivoire, Cameroon, DRC, Congo Brazzaville, Madagascar, Burma, Vietnam</i>	
	<i>Encourager le redressement économique et social inclusif autour du lac Tchad (RESILAC) Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria, Chad</i>	
	<i>Accompagner l'accélération d'entreprises inclusives et digitales en Afrique continentale (AFIDBA) Burkina Faso, Ghana, Maroc, Senegal, Guinea</i>	
	<i>Afrique créative : promouvoir l'entrepreneuriat créatif en Afrique Burkina Faso, Morocco, Uganda, Senegal</i>	
	<i>Compétences pour demain Benin, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea, Mali, Senegal</i>	
	<i>Jeunesses actrices du monde de demain (JADE) Guinea, Congo Brazzaville, Haïti, Mali, Mauritania, Senegal</i>	
	PROPARCO	<i>ADVANS : Le pari d'un réseau international d'institutions de microfinance The network is comprised of 9 MFIs: Cameroon, Ghana, Nigeria, RDC, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire, Cambodia, Pakistan, Tunisia</i>
GIZ	<i>Promotion de l'emploi des Jeunes en milieu rural (ProEmploi) Kenya, Burkina Faso, Malawi, Mozambique</i>	
	<i>Make-it in Africa – The Tech Entrepreneurship Initiative Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, Tunisia</i>	
	<i>Promoting employment in the informal sector in Africa by leveraging diaspora money transfers (WIDU platform) Ghana, Cameroon, Kenya, Ethiopia, Togo</i>	
	<i>Pan-African E-Commerce Initiative – Boosting African Digital Trade Ghana, Kenya, Rwanda, EAC</i>	
	<i>Promoting employment in Africa through public-private cooperation Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, South Africa, Tanzania, Uganda</i>	
	<i>PPP Fund for cooperation with companies in the Mano River Union countries Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Guinea, and Sierra Leone</i>	
AfDB	<i>Boost Africa / Innovation and Entrepreneurship Lab Continental</i>	
	<i>Jobs for Youth in Africa programme (Including: Youth Entrepreneurship and Innovation Multi-Donor Trust Fund; Youth Innovation Lab; Rockefeller Trust Fund and multiple public and private partnerships, such as ILO, Rockefeller, ITC, AFD, UNFPA, Mastercard, Microsoft, Google, Intel, Facebook, Siemens, etc.) Continental (with pilot countries including Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ghana, Mali, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone)</i>	
UNDP	<i>GEF Small Grant Programme and Post-Covid support to MSMEs Active in 127 countries (including the 12 countries under study)</i>	
	<i>Youth Connekt Africa/ Youth Connekt Sahel Continental</i>	

		Accelerator Lab <i>Active in 115 countries (including the 12 countries under study)</i>
		Commerce transfrontalier pour la paix <i>Niger, Mali, Burkina Faso (Liptako-Gourma region)</i>
	UNDP/ The Tony Elumelu Foundation	TEF-UNDP Youth Entrepreneurship Programme <i>Continental (with a first phase targeting Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Chad, Mali, Mauritania, Niger and Nigeria)</i>
	ITC	Netherlands Trust Fund – Phase V – Agribusiness and digital technology <i>Benin, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, Mali, Myanmar, Senegal, Uganda</i>
		One Trade Africa: Empowering African enterprises, women and youth entrepreneurs under the AfCFTA <i>Mali, Burkina Faso</i>
		Job creation and development of micro enterprises through fair trade and selected value chains <i>Mali, Burkina Faso</i>

5.5. KEY ACTORS AND PROGRAMMES IN THE ENTREPRENEURSHIP SECTOR (AGRICULTURE)

Country	Structure	Projects
Burkina Faso	AFD	<i>RH Excellence Afrique Nationwide</i>
		<i>SECURAGRI Boucles du Mouhoun, Est</i>
		<i>Projet d'appui à l'insertion économique des jeunes ruraux de l'Est II Fada N'Gourma, Est</i>
	Swiss Coop.	<i>Programme d'appui à la promotion de l'entrepreneuriat agricole Nord, Centre-Ouest, Hauts-Bassins, Centre</i>
		<i>Programme de valorisation du potentiel agro-pastoral Est</i>
		<i>Programme d'appui à la valorisation des produits forestiers non ligneux Nord, Centre-Nord, Sud-Ouest, Centre-Ouest, Sahel</i>
	GIZ	<i>Centres d'innovation Verts du secteur agro-alimentaire Sud-Ouest, Cascades Hauts-Bassins, Boucles du Mouhoun</i>
		<i>Programme Développement de l'Agriculture (PDA) Est, Sud-Ouest, Hauts-Bassins, Cascades, Centre-Est</i>
	WB	<i>Projet d'Urgence de Développement territorial et de résilience Boucles du Mouhoun, Est, Centre-est</i>
		<i>Projet de Résilience et de Compétitivité Agricole (PRéCA) Cascades, Boucle du Mouhoun, Hauts-Bassins et Nord</i>
		<i>Projet d'appui au secteur de l'élevage au Burkina Faso Countrywide</i>
	AfDB	<i>Projet d'appui à l'emploi des jeunes (PADEJ) Nord, Centre Nord, Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre Ouest</i>
		<i>Projet d'appui au développement de l'anacarde dans le bassin de la Comoé pour la REDD+ Cascades (Hauts Bassins, Sud-Ouest)</i>
		<i>Programme de renforcement de la résilience à l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle au Sahel (P2RS) Boucles du Mouhoun, Centre, Plateau central, Centre-Sud, Centre-Ouest, Sahel</i>
	ADA	<i>TUUMA: Appui à la compétence professionnelle, l'entrepreneuriat et l'emploi des jeunes et des femmes dans les régions rurales du Burkina Faso Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades, Hauts-Bassins et Sahel</i>
		<i>Programme multi-acteurs d'appui à l'entrepreneuriat agro-sylvo-pastoral des jeunes (phase 2) Boucle du Mouhoun, Centre sud, Est, Nord</i>
		<i>Projet d'irrigation localisée et de résilience agricole Boucle du Mouhoun, Hauts-Bassins, Nord, Centre Ouest</i>
		<i>Développement économique des femmes par l'innovation dans l'anacarde Cascades et Hauts Bassins</i>
	ENABEL	<i>Appui au développement d'un entrepreneuriat inclusif et durable dans la région du Centre-Est Centre Est et Est</i>
	SNV	<i>Africa Biodigesteur Component Sahel Countrywide</i>
<i>Carbon Initiative for Development (Ci-Dev)</i>		

		Countrywide
		<i>Programme Agroalimentaire pour la Résilience Intégrée et le Développement Économique du Sahel</i> <i>Boucle du Mouhoun, le Centre-Ouest, l'Est et le Nord</i>
		<i>Programme 2SCALE</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
		<i>Weoog Paani : Projet de Gouvernance Locale des Ressources Forestières</i> <i>Centre-Est, Nord, Est, Centre-Sud</i>
		<i>Mobilité Pastorale transfrontalière apaisée et stabilité sociale au Sahel</i> <i>Kéné Dougou, Liptako Gourma, WAPO</i>
		<i>Résilience communautaire dans le secteur agro-sylvo-pastorale (RESCOM)</i> <i>Nord et Boucles du Mouhoun</i>
		<i>MoDHEM</i> <i>Centre-Sud, des Cascades, du Centre-Ouest et du Sud-Ouest</i>
	IFAD	<i>Projet d'Appui à la Promotion des Filières Agricoles (PAPFA)</i> <i>Boucle du Mouhoun, des Cascades et des Hauts-Bassins</i>
		<i>Projet d'appui aux filières agricoles (PAFA-4R)</i> <i>Sud-Ouest, Boucle du Mouhoun, Cascades et Hauts-Bassins</i>
		<i>Projet 'Neer Tamba'</i> <i>Nord, Centre-Nord, Est</i>
USAID	Multiple projects, additional information available here	
Cameroon	AFD	<i>Programme national de développement participatif (PNDP)</i> <i>Extrême Nord</i>
		<i>Programme d'amélioration de la compétitivité des exploitations familiales agropastorales</i> <i>Nationwide</i>
		<i>Programme Intégré de Valorisation et Transformation des Produits Agricoles et Agroalimentaires (TRANSFAGRI)</i> <i>Six bassins et sept régions : Centre, Littoral, Sud-Ouest, Ouest, Nord-Ouest, Adamaoua, Nord</i>
	BAD	<i>Projet développement des chaînes de valeurs élevage et pêche (PDCVEP)</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
		<i>Projet de développement des chaînes de valeurs agricoles (PDCVA)</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
	FAO	<i>Intensification de la production maraîchère dans les zones périurbaines de Douala et Boya</i> <i>Douala, Boya</i>
		<i>Projet d'Appui au Développement des filières agricoles (PADFA) II</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
Côte d'Ivoire	BAD	<i>Projet d'Emploi des Jeunes en Agribusiness en Côte d'Ivoire (Enable Youth – Côte d'Ivoire)</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
	CRA-RH	<i>Projet AFDS-Bélier (ARCHIPELAGO)</i> <i>Appui au développement de l'activité et de l'emploi des jeunes dans les filières du manioc et du maraichage par le développement de la formation professionnelle et l'accompagnement de projets dans la région du Bélier</i> <i>Bélier region</i>
	UNDP	<i>Engagement des jeunes et des femmes pour la prévention des crises, la stabilité sociale, la consolidation de la paix et la réduction de la violence communautaire dans le Nord de la Côte d'Ivoire</i>

		<i>Folon (Kaniasso & Minignan), Poro (Mbengue), Bagoué (Tengrela), Tchologo (Kong & Ferkessédougou) et Bounkani (Tehini & Bouna)</i>
Ethiopia	ILO	ProAgro Ethiopia <i>Countrywide</i>
	USAID	Multiple projects, more information available here
Ghana	AfDB	Savannah Agriculture Value Chain Development Project <i>Savannah region</i>
	DANIDA	We Grow <i>Countrywide</i>
	GIZ	Sustainable Employment through Agribusiness (AgriBiz) <i>Northwest region</i>
	USAID	Multiple projects available here
	ITC	Ghana: Building Alliances in Cocoa from Bean to Bar (NTF V)
Guinea	WB	<i>Projet de développement de l'agriculture commerciale en Guinée (PDACG)</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
		<i>Projet de Développement Agricole Intégré (PDAIG)</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
	FAO	<i>Appui au développement de la filière de noix de Cajou au Nord-Ouest de la Guinée</i> <i>Basse Guinée</i>
		<i>Amélioration de la filière maraîchère en faveur des populations victimes de Covid-19</i> <i>Basse Guinée, Moyenne Guinée</i>
		<i>Appui à la Promotion de l'entreprenariat jeune par la création de fermes avicoles</i> <i>Basse Guinée, Moyenne Guinée</i>
		<i>Consolider la Cohésion Sociale transfrontalière entre la Côte d'Ivoire et la Guinée pour une meilleure compréhension et anticipation des risques et le renforcement de la confiance et de la collaboration entre les acteurs locaux (CoSocFront – mis en œuvre avec l'OIM)</i> <i>Guinée forestière</i>
		<i>Prévention des conflits intercommunautaires en Guinée forestière par une économie mutualisée et l'amélioration de la gouvernance foncière</i> <i>Guinée forestière</i>
	UNIDO	<i>Projet de relance de la filière ananas en Guinée (REFILA)</i> <i>Basse Guinée</i>
	AFD	<i>Projet de Développement de la Pisciculture Commerciale Familiale (PISCOFAM)</i> <i>Basse Guinée, Guinée Forestière</i>
		<i>Projet d'Appui aux Systèmes d'Activités Rizicoles en Territoire de Mangrove (SARITEM)</i> <i>Basse Guinée</i>
		<i>Projet d'établissement des fondamentaux de la filière avicole en Guinée (PEFFAG)</i> <i>Countrywide</i>
		<i>Consolidation d'une filière de foyers améliorés en république de Guinée (COFIFAM)</i>
		<i>Pour des communes inclusives et durables</i> <i>Haute, Basse Guinée et Guinée Forestière</i>
AfDB	<i>Appui transformation agriculture guinéenne (PATAG) entrepreneuriat agricole jeunes</i>	

		<i>Boké, Boffa</i>
Mali	WB	<i>Projet d'Appui au développement de l'élevage (PADEL) Kita, Kolokani, Bougouni, Nara, Niani, Nampara, Bandiagara, Niafunke, Bourem, Douentza, Gourma-Rharous, Ansongo, Tessalit, Taoudeni</i>
		<i>Projet d'appui à la compétitivité agro-industrielle (PACAM) Sikasso, Bamako, Koulikoro</i>
		<i>Promotion du financement de l'agriculture en faveur des agro-entreprises en milieu rural Nationwide</i>
		<i>PREBC – Projet de Redynamisation des Banques de Céréales Mopti (Socoura, Fatoma et Sio)</i>
	SNV	<i>Programme 'emploi vert' Régions de Ségou, Mopti et Sikasso (si prolongation)</i>
	LuxDev	<i>Appui au développement économique local et à la prévention des conflits dans les régions de Tombouctou et de Gao – MLI/804 (ADEL) Tombouctou, Gao</i>
		<i>Développement rural et sécurité alimentaire (MLI/021) Ségou et Koulikoro</i>
		<i>Programme d'appui aux filières agropastorales – Phase II – (MLI/026) Sikasso</i>
		<i>Renforcer la résilience des communautés rurales du Cercle de Kita et leur accès au système de marché – Phase III – (MLI/027) Kita</i>
	AECID	<i>Projet d'Appui à la Filière de l'Anacarde au Mali (PAFAM) Kayes Koulikoro et Sikasso</i>
	IFAD	<i>Formation professionnelle, insertion et appui à l'entrepreneuriat des jeunes ruraux (FIER) Koulikoro, Sikasso, Kayes et Ségou</i>
		<i>Financement Inclusif des Filières Agricoles (INCLUSIF) Ségou, Koulikoro, Sikasso, Kayes, Mopti</i>
<i>Projet Multi-énergies pour la résilience et la gestion intégrée des terroirs (MERIT) Countrywide</i>		
UNDP	<i>Femmes actrices économiques Ségou, Mopti</i>	
FAO	<i>Soutien à l'auto-emploi de la jeunesse rurale, vecteur de paix et de cohésion sociale au Mali (Consortium FAO/UNESCO/OIM) Kita, Yanfolila</i>	
USAID	Multiple projects, more information available here	
Niger	WB	<i>Projet Intégré de Modernisation de l'Agriculture et de l'Elevage pour la Transformation du monde rural (PIMELAN) Tillabéri, Tahoua, Agadez, Zinder, Diffa, Niamey</i>
	Swiss Cooperation	<i>Programme de Promotion de l'Entrepreneuriat Local (PROMEL) Maradi, Dosso</i>
	AICS	<i>ZARESE II – Amélioration de la sécurité alimentaire et de la valorisation des initiatives paysannes dans les ZARESE du Niger Dosso, Tahoua</i>
	AFD	<i>Projet Pôles ruraux Tahoua, Agadez</i>
	ENABEL	<i>Programme Quinquennal – Pilier 2 : Économie et Développement Agro-pastoral</i>

		<i>Tahoua, Dosso</i>
	WFP	<i>Programme Résilience Diffa, Tahoua, Maradi, Zinder, Agadez, Tillabéri, Dosso</i>
	USAID	Multiple projects, more information available here .
Nigeria	EU & GIZ	Agriculture Value Chain Facility (EU-VACE) All states from North-West/North Central to South-West/South-South
	USAID	Multiple projects, more information available here
Senegal	AfDB	<i>Programme de renforcement de la résilience à l'insécurité alimentaire et nutritionnelle en milieu rural au Sénégal (P2RS) Fatick, Kolda, Tambacounda, Kédougou, Matam, Ziguinchor</i>
	USAID	Multiple projects, more information available here
Sierra Leone	WB	Smallholder Commercialization and Agribusiness Development Project <i>Countrywide</i>
		Sierra Leone Agro-Processing Competitiveness Project <i>Countrywide</i>
	UNFPA/ UNDP	Empowering youth at risk as resources for sustaining peace and community resilience <i>Tonkolili and Kenema districts</i>
	IFAD	Rural Finance and Community Improvement programme – Phase II <i>Countrywide</i>
Agricultural Value Chain Development Project <i>Countrywide</i>		
The Gambia	AfDB	Rice Value Chain Transformation programme <i>Central River Region (CRR) and Upper River Region (URR)</i>
	FAO	Agriculture for economic growth and food security/nutrition to mitigate migration <i>North Bank Region (NBR), Central River Region (CRR), Lower River Region (LRR), Upper River Region (URR)</i>
		Support to the sustainable production and marketing of fish and vegetable products for urban/peri-urban women <i>West Coast Region (WCR)</i>
Regional initiatives	SNV	<i>Programme Agroalimentaire pour la Résilience Intégrée et le Développement Économique du Sahel – Pro-ARIDES Burkina, Faso, Niger, Mali</i>
		Agribusiness 2SCALE: The largest incubator for inclusive agribusiness in Africa <i>Ghana, Niger, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Mali, Nigeria, South Sudan, Egypt</i>
	USAID	Catalyze Sahel Platform <i>Niger and Burkina</i>
		West Africa Trade and Investment Hub <i>Nigeria, Ghana, Senegal, Burkina Faso, Niger, Côte d'Ivoire, Cape Verde, Liberia</i>
	FAO	Agriinvest <i>Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Kenya, Niger</i>
		Green jobs for rural youth employment <i>Sierra Leone, Zimbabwe, Timor-Leste</i>
Promoting Decent Rural Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship in Agriculture and Agribusiness <i>Benin, Cameroon, Malawi, Niger</i>		

	GIZ	Market-Oriented Value Chains for Jobs & Growth in the ECOWAS Region (MOVE) <i>Nigeria, Burkina Faso, Ghana, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire</i>
		<i>Programme mondial Centres d'innovations vertes pour le secteur agricole et agroalimentaire</i> <i>Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Ethiopia, Ghana, India, Kenya, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Nigeria, Togo, Tunisia, Viêt Nam, Zambia</i>
		Soil Protection and Rehabilitation of Degraded Soil for Food Security (ProSoil) <i>Benin, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, India, Kenya, Madagascar, Tunisia</i>
	AFD	<i>Transitions écologiques et résilience des territoires ruraux</i> <i>Senegal, Togo, Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire</i>
		<i>L'agroécologie pour la souveraineté alimentaire et la résilience climatique</i> <i>Burkina Faso, Togo</i>
		<i>Transition vers une agroécologie paysanne au service de la souveraineté alimentaire (TAPSA)</i> <i>Niger, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Mauritania, Burundi, Rwanda, RDC</i>
		<i>Favoriser la transition des systèmes agricoles et alimentaires sur les territoires (TERSAA)</i> <i>Benin, Burkina Faso, Colombia, Peru, Togo</i>
		<i>Organisations professionnelles agricoles, levier de développement des économies rurales – transfert 2 & 3</i> <i>Burkina Faso, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Madagascar</i>
		<i>Solution d'irrigation solaire améliorée</i> <i>Benin, Burkina Faso, Togo</i>
		<i>Prévention des conflits et résilience des systèmes alimentaires transfrontaliers en Afrique (PCR-SAT)</i> <i>Mali, Mauritania, Senegal</i>
		<i>Appui au développement de l'entrepreneuriat coopératif agricole au Bénin et au Sénégal</i> <i>Benin, Senegal</i>
		<i>Programmes filières cuiseurs autonomes</i> <i>Comores, Congo Brazzaville, Chad, Senegal</i>
	<i>Transfert de capacités à des entrepreneurs du secteur agroalimentaire, de la production au marché</i> <i>Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire</i>	
World Bank	<i>Projet régional d'appui au pastoralisme au sahel, phase 2</i> <i>Burkina Faso, Mauritania, Mali, Niger, Senegal, Chad</i>	
AfDB	<i>Special Agro-Industrial Processing Zones (SAPZ) programme</i> <i>18 countries (including Nigeria, Senegal, Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Mali)</i>	
ITC	<i>Empowering women and boosting livelihoods through agricultural trade: Leveraging the AfCFTA Phase II</i> <i>Tanzania, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal</i>	

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- ^{vi} Ibid.
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