HRDC
Human Resource Development Council

Sectoral Skills Development Scheme

Application Guidelines

To be at the forefront of Human Capital Development.

OUR VISION

OUR MISSION

To mainstream institutional synergies for Human Capital Development.

OUR OBJECTIVES

- To promote human resource development in line with national economic and social objectives;
- To stimulate a culture of training and lifelong learning at the individual, organisational and national levels to enhance employability of the labour force and increase productivity; and
- To provide the necessary human resource thrust for a successful transformation of the country's economy into a Knowledge Economy.

CONTENTS

Intro

1. Introduction
I. Role of HRDC
II. Rationale of the Scheme
III. Overview of the Scheme
IV. Need and Purpose of the Scheme

02

2. Application Procedure
I. Terminologies
II. Identification of skills needs
III. Eligibility
IV. Application template
a. Project cover sheet
b. Background and analysis of the problem to be addressed
c. Objectives of the programme
d. Target participants
e. A detailed implementation plan
f. Projected outcomes of the programme
g. Risk Management
h. Gantt chart
i. A work plan and budget
V. Funding and co-funding
VI. Generic pathway for the joint collaborative skill development projects
VII. Submission procedures

03

3. Project Implementation

04

4. Annex 1: SSDS Template Guideline

1. Introduction

I. Role of HRDC

The Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) was established as a corporate body in November 2003 under the Human Resource Development Council Act 2003. The HRDC is mandated to promote and facilitate the development of skills within the Mauritian workforce, ensuring that the country's human resource capabilities remain aligned with the evolving needs and demands of a rapidly growing economy.

II. Rationale of the Scheme

One of the key functions of the HRDC is to bridge the gap between the training system & academia and industry by ensuring that skills development initiatives are responsive to the needs of the labour market. In this context, the Sectoral Skills Development Scheme (SSDS) has been established to address the skills development needs of existing employees through post-employment training, thereby enhancing workforce competencies and supporting improved productivity and industry performance.

III. Overview of the Scheme

Training, learning and skills development are essential for enterprises to acquire and maintain up-to-date skills, which are critical to remaining competitive in local and international markets. However, upskilling employees remains a significant challenge for enterprises across sectors, particularly in responding to technological advancements and changing production requirements. Supporting employers in identifying and addressing skills needs, while ensuring employees acquire the necessary competencies, is key to strengthening workforce capabilities. As enterprises within the same sector often face similar skills challenges, the SSDS provides an opportunity to collaborate in addressing these needs. Enterprises may develop and implement skills development initiatives through their respective industry associations or, where this is not feasible or available, by forming clusters to address common skills requirements collectively.

Introduction

Overview of the Scheme (continued)

A sectoral approach focuses on common skills needs within a specific industry, enabling enterprises to analyse requirements and implement targeted training initiatives. As industries evolve, skills requirements also change over time.

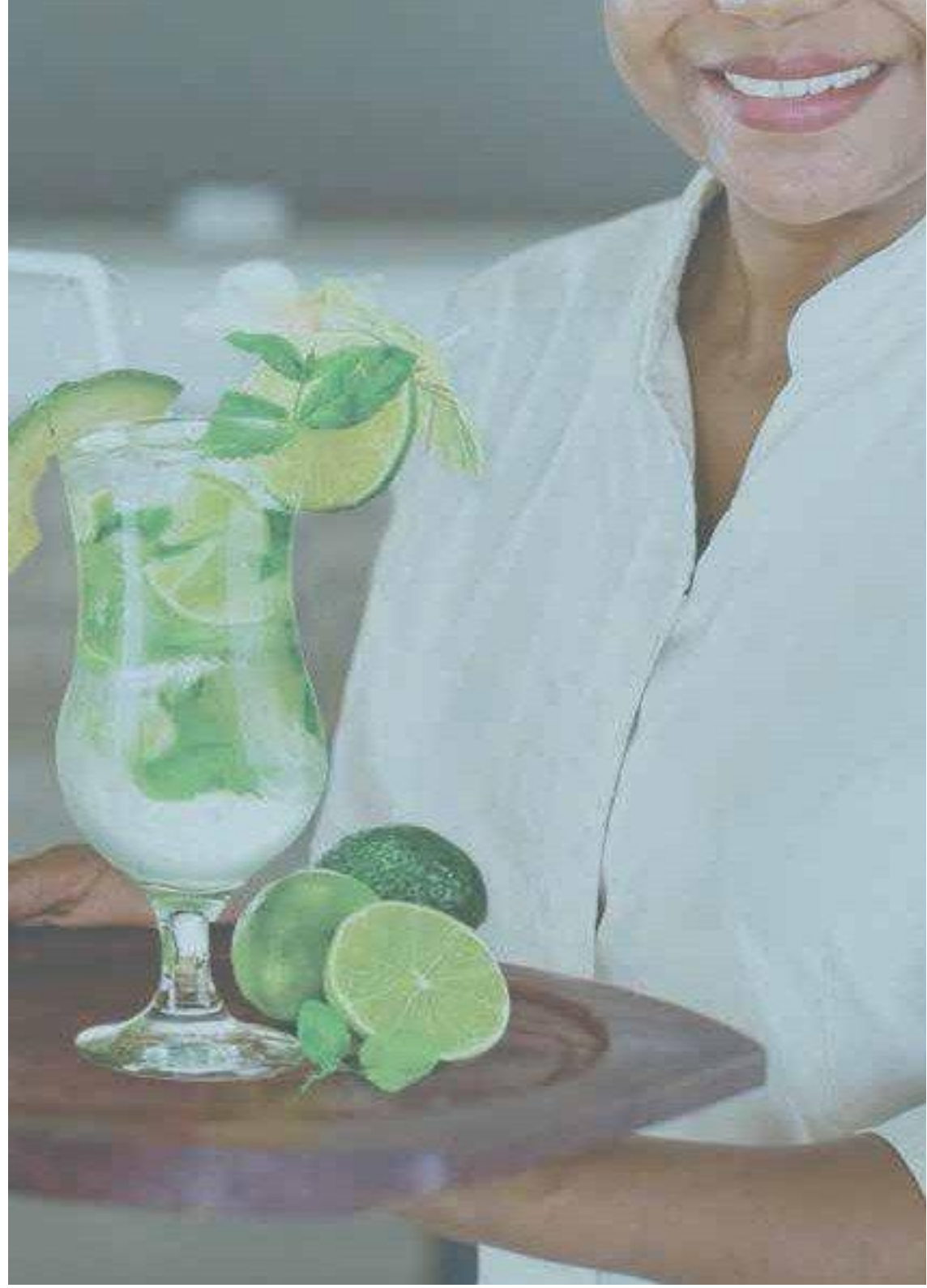
The SSDS adopts a bottom-up approach, targeting industry associations and clusters of enterprises where the association route is not practical or available. It enables participants to develop and implement skills development programmes based on shared needs, identified through Training Needs Analyses (TNAs), focus group discussions, skills interface platforms, consultations with industry association members and other relevant means.

Through clustering, enterprises can share training costs and access resource persons who may otherwise be beyond their individual reach. This approach also helps establish a strategic direction for sectoral skills development.

Knowledge transfer is another key element of the SSDS and may take place through forums, discussions and talks delivered by resource persons to university students, MITD trainers and other stakeholders. Wherever feasible, industry participants should also be equipped to train subsequent batches, as required.

Projects under the SSDS are funded through the National Training Fund and do not fall within the employers' funding ceiling.

Applicants may submit proposals through an industry association or directly as a cluster of enterprises. They are encouraged to develop training programmes in collaboration with the HRDC, using local or foreign resource persons. Proposals should be submitted using the prescribed templates available by contacting the HRDC.



IV. Objective of the Scheme

The primary objectives of SSDS are to:

- Address specific skills development needs by supporting employers in designing, implementing, monitoring and funding training programmes through industry associations or clusters of enterprises;
- Enhance skills levels across sectors;
- Reduce skills gaps, under-skilling, skills obsolescence and skills shortages at sectoral level;
- Encourage organisations to explore clustering opportunities for skills development within their respective sectors;
- Promote the identification and adoption of emerging trends and innovative skills development practices;
- Foster an understanding of future skills requirements within industries; and
- Facilitate the transfer of knowledge and expertise.

2. Application Procedure

I. Terminologies

Application:

An application must comprise a minimum of three enterprises with common sectoral skills needs, either through a registered industry association or as a cluster of enterprises. Each application must cater for a minimum batch size of 15 employees.

Applicant:

Applications may be submitted by a registered industry association on behalf of its members or by a lead applicant nominated by a cluster of enterprises.

Skills Development:

Common and technical training and skills development needs must be identified by the industry association or, in the case of cluster applications, by the participating enterprises within the relevant sector.

Industry associations:

Industry associations must be sector-specific, comprise at least 10 members from the relevant sector or sub-sector, and be registered with the Registrar of Associations.

Funding:

The HRDC will provide funding for approved applications in accordance with the applicable guidelines. Industry associations or employers must initially bear the full cost of training and will be reimbursed for approved expenditure upon submission of individual receipts or other acceptable proof of payment. For cluster applications, the HRDC's share of the approved funding will be paid directly to the training provider.

II. Identification of Skills Needs

Skills needs must be demand-driven and based on the requirements of participating enterprises. They may be identified through regular meetings, consultations with industry associations or participating enterprises, and tools such as Training Needs Analyses (TNAs) and surveys. Applicants must explain how the skills needs were identified and provide a rationale for the proposed training. Identified needs may be current or anticipated.

Application Procedure (continued)

III. Eligibility

Who can apply?

A group of employers from the same sector or sub-sector may initiate a proposal, submitted through their industry association or directly as a cluster of enterprises, provided that:

- The application covers a minimum of 15 employees;
- At least three enterprises with common skills development needs participate;
- The application is submitted by a registered industry association of which the participating enterprises are members, or by a lead applicant nominated by the cluster; and
- The completed application is accompanied by all supporting documents listed in the checklist.

When to apply?

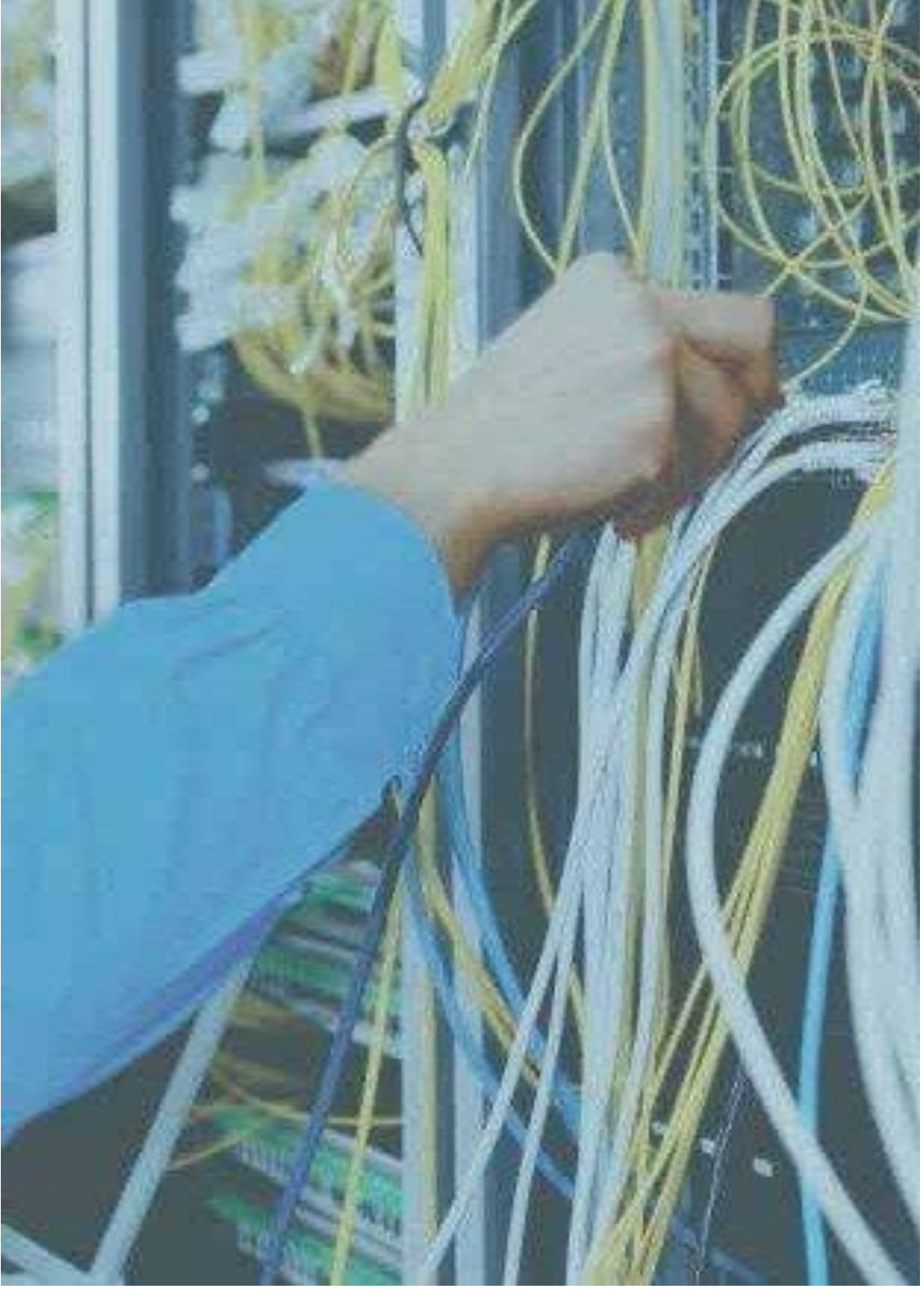
Applications may be submitted at any time of the year.

How to apply?

Applicants must hold initial consultations with HRDC officers before submitting their proposals. Applications must be prepared using the prescribed proposal template and submitted together with all relevant annexes and supporting documents, in accordance with the application checklist available from the HRDC.

Completed applications should be addressed to:

The Director
Human Resource Development Council
4th Floor, NG Tower
Cybercity, Ebène



Application Procedure (continued)

IV. Application template

The application guideline at annex 1 will serve as guide to assist in writing a project proposal. The proposal should comprise the following sections:

a. Project cover sheet

This section should include project title, project leader, project members, and project duration details. A brief profile (300 words) of the industry association (including year of registration, number of members, among others), or of the cluster of enterprises for cluster applications, and the prospective enterprises involved in the skill development programme should be provided as well as their contact information.

b. Background and analysis of the problem to be addressed

This section should contain the following details:

How the need for the project was determined?

Provide an analysis of the sector and what are the existing skills gaps and challenges in the sector.

What exactly is the critical issue or potential problem which the proposal seeks to resolve?

Which occupational groups/ job profiles/ enterprise or sector of activity is affected by this problem and how can the proposed project help address the issue?

c. Objectives of the programme

The overall aim of the project and the objectives of the programme should be clear in this section.

d. Target participants

This section should answer the following question:
Who are the potential beneficiaries of the proposed program/project?
A profile of those potential beneficiaries should be provided in terms of gender, age, qualifications or job title as far as possible.

e. A detailed implementation plan

This section should provide brief and clear details on the following:

How will the project be implemented?
The activities in the formulation and implementation of the project. The different activities, motivating their inclusion in the project.

f. Desired outcomes of the programme

This section should answer the following questions:

In what ways this project addresses the issue(s) highlighted in the analysis problem?

What are the specific measures to sustain the project?

How can this project be associated with other initiatives of similar endeavour that would lead to further skills development of targeted participants?

g. Risk Management

This section should answer the following questions:

Does the project carry any associated risk or factors that could jeopardize the successful implementation of project activities and achievement of project outputs?
What are the measures that would mitigate the adverse effects resulting from such risks?

h. Gantt chart

A Gantt chart should be inserted here as per the template given at annex 1.

i. A work plan and budget

The proposal should range around 3000 words. A checklist is provided at annex 1 to ensure complete applications.

V. Funding and co-funding

A co-funding philosophy is adopted (cash or in kind). The HRDC will provide funding for the eligible applicant up to 80% of the total amount disbursed on skill development. The remaining 20% should be incurred by the applicant whether in cash or in kind (venue, logistics, etc). For training programmes explicitly focused on Artificial Intelligence, the ratio is 90:10 (HRDC : applicant). A refund of the expenses will be effected upon submission of respective receipts or documentation for eligible and approved expenses from the industry association(s). For cluster applications, the HRDC share is paid directly to the training provider.

Application Procedure (continued)

VI. Generic pathway for the joint collaborative skills development projects

step 1	Regular meetings and joint consultations with umbrella industry associations representing various sectors of the economy.
step 2	Identify collective technical skills needs through their own instruments eg TNA, Surveys, representations from members amongst others.
step 3	Identify resource persons and potential beneficiaries in a transparent Manner (by Industry Association/Cluster)
step 4	Prepare project proposal (template provided by HRDC) with co-funding philosophy (in cash or in kind) in collaboration with the HRDC
step 5	Submit for consideration to HRDC sectoral committees.
step 6	Approval by Council.
step 7	Initiate skills development programmes, upon receipt of award letter and signature of Project Collaborative agreement.
step 8	Appoint or confirm resource persons
step 9	Undertake a fair selection of participants from enterprises.
step 10	Implementing skills development programme.
step 11	Public Dissemination / Debriefing session
step 12	Post-training Evaluation by Industry Association/Lead applicant and the HRDC

Additional details:

1) Regular meetings and joint consultations are held with umbrella industry associations representing sectors of the economy or Councils regrouping members from economic sectors such as Association of Mauritian Manufacturers (AMM), Mauritius Export Association (MEXA), National Women Entrepreneur Council (NWEC), SME Mauritius, Mauritius Chamber of Agriculture (MCA), Mauritius IT Industry Association (MITIA), and Association des Hôteliers et Restaurateurs de l'île Maurice (AHRIM).

2) Collective needs of organisations under sectors or subsectors of activity are identified through the use of their own instruments including surveys or focus groups discussions among members. The HRDC may be called upon in certain cases to identify the needs jointly with the associations. Any upcoming projects are discussed thoroughly with the HRDC before preparing a project proposal. The same is mounted in collaboration with the HRDC. All relevant information pertaining to rationale, objectives, selection of beneficiaries, appointment of resource persons and cost estimate of the project are compiled in the project proposal. The selection of beneficiaries and the appointment of resource persons are done in a fair and transparent manner with all necessary procurement procedures by the applicant.

3) A co-funding philosophy is adopted whether in cash or in kind.

4) Possible components of project implementation (step 10) would include:
   a) Theoretical training sessions;
   b) Onsite visits in enterprises;
   c) Practical components;
   d) Public dissemination to a wider audience;
   e) A train the trainer component; and
   f) A debriefing session on the project outcomes.

Components may differ based on specificity of each project.

5) The project proposal is submitted to the HRDC for approval of Council. The Council may revert for additional information or amendment or approve/reject the project.

6) An evaluation is carried out post-training and 6 months after training (where deemed necessary) by the HRDC in collaboration with the applying association.

VII. Submission procedures

The validated application should be submitted to the HRDC by the applicant (industry association or cluster of enterprises). Prior meetings and consultations to mount respective training programme and prepare the proposal could be held between the HRDC and the applicants.

Once completed, the project proposal from the applicant is submitted to the HRDC for consideration by the respective sectoral committee. The sectoral committee makes appropriate recommendations to Council.

Annex 1: SSDS Template

3. Project Implementation

I. Outcome of application

The HRDC and the applicants may hold preliminary working sessions to support the development of the proposal prior to its submission. Applicants will be formally notified of the outcome of their applications through official correspondence. Upon approval, a Project Collaboration Agreement will be signed by both parties.

II. Evaluation

The HRDC together with representatives of the applicants will carry out an evaluation exercise immediately after the completion of the training and six months after the training where deemed necessary.

III. Deliverables

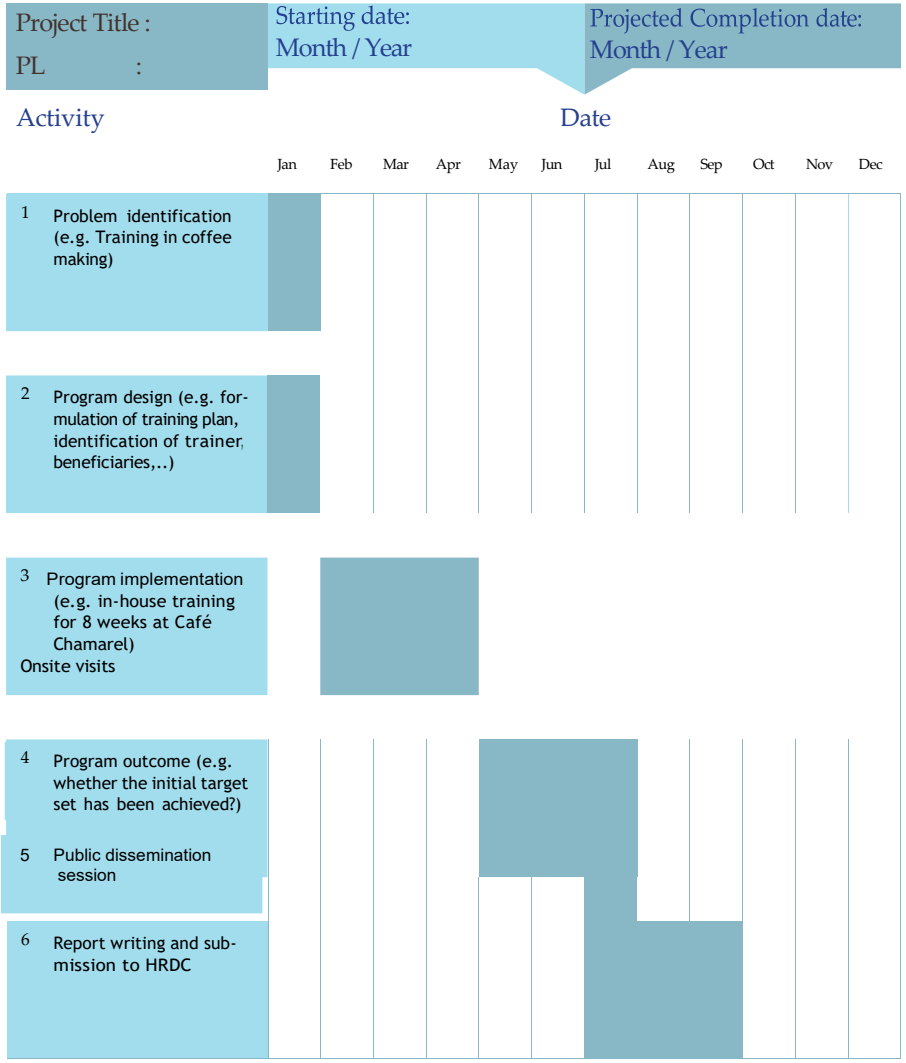
Briefs and reports are required to be submitted at different phases of the project. At the end of the project, a summary is submitted by the applicant (template attached with project proposal) for dissemination.

4. Annex 1: SSDS Template Guideline

1. **Introduction**
2. **Project cover sheet**
3. **Background and analysis of the problem to be addressed (including need and rationale of the project)**
4. **Proposed objectives of the project**
5. **Target beneficiaries**
6. **Implementation plan**
7. **Desired outcome of the project**
8. **Risk management**
9. **CV of Resource and brief of similar experience**

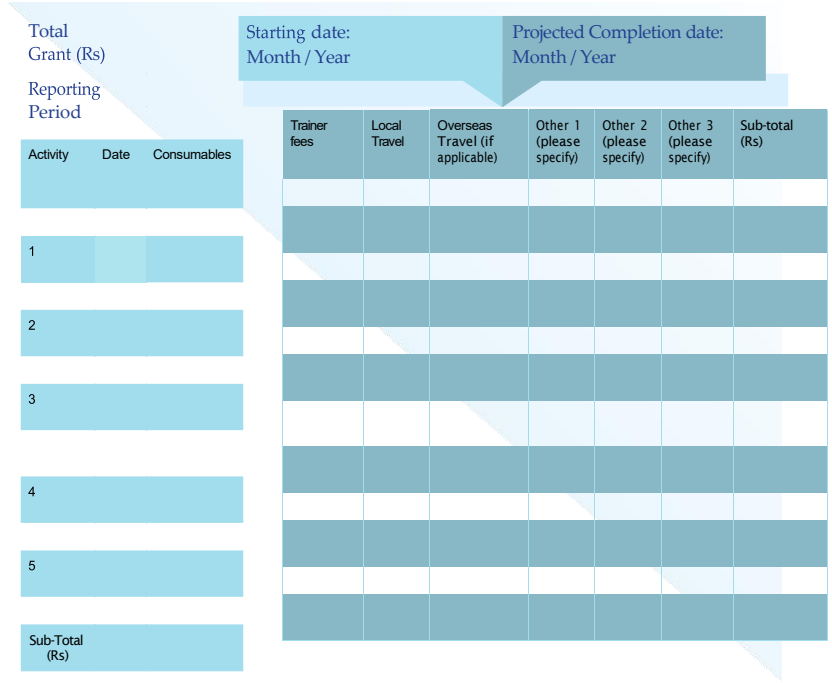
10. Gantt Chart

Fill in the Gantt chart below to locate the different phases of the project as identified in the implementation plan:



11. Project Work Plan & Budget

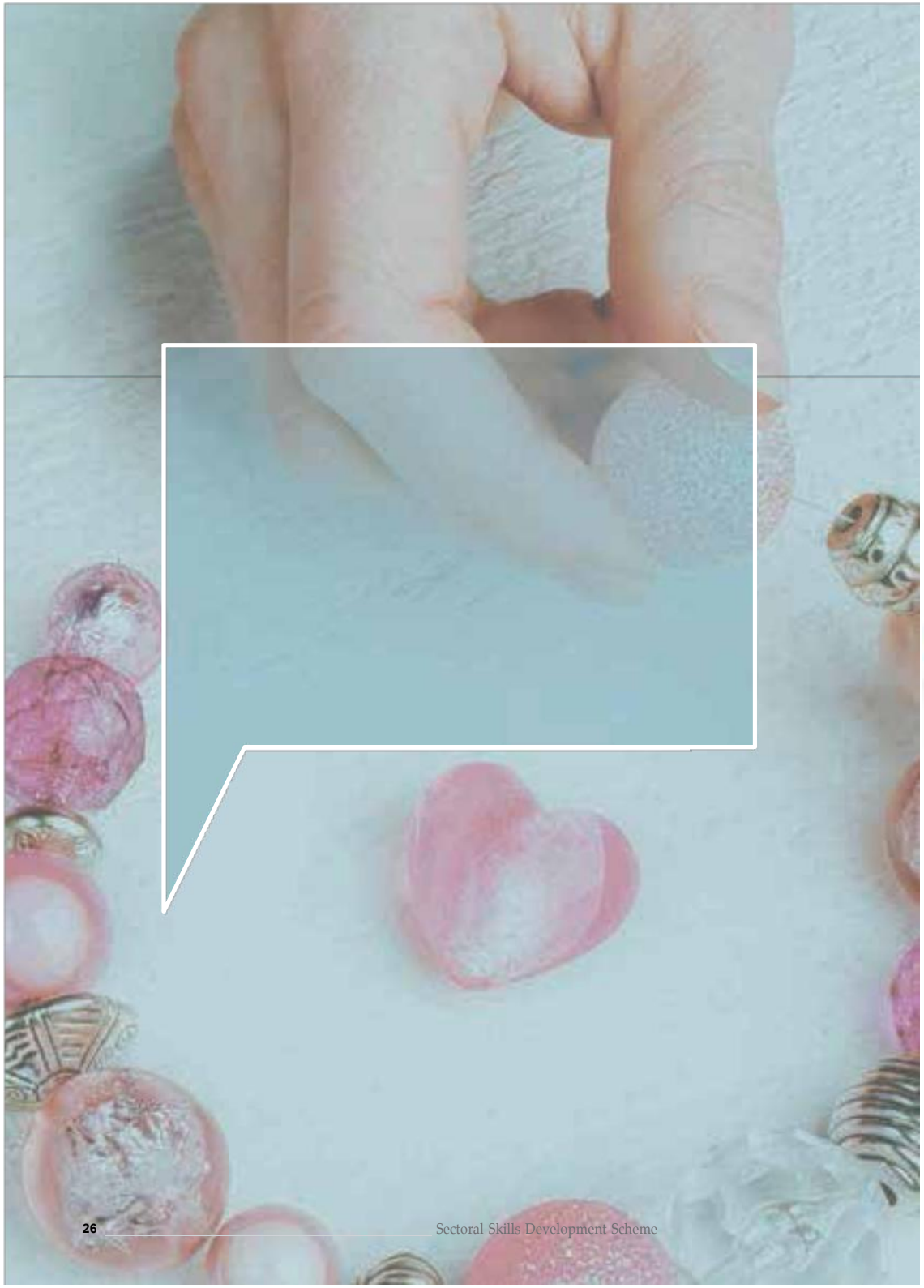
- Provide a work plan as described in the table below.
- Provide an item budget line in Mauritian rupees.



**Approval of the HRDC is mandatory prior to any reallocation of funds*

12. Other Relevant Information

- May include any other information that will support the request for project funding as well as other upcoming projects to complement this initiative.



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