**Policy summary**

1. **Introduction**

The mission of the Ministry of Education (MINEDUC) is to transform the Rwandan citizen into skilled human capital for the socio-economic development of the country by ensuring equitable access to quality education focusing on combating illiteracy, promotion of science and technology, critical thinking, and positive values

Three goals have been identified to support MINEDUC in achieving its mission of facilitating the development of human capital for the socio-economic development of Rwanda. These goals are: promoting access to education at all levels, improving the quality of education and training, and strengthening the relevance of education and training to meet labour market demands. Equity in access to education is emphasised across all three goals to ensure that disadvantaged students, such as girls, the poor and disabled, have access to meaningful learning opportunities.

This ESSP aims to build on progress made in recent years on improving access to education, and to extend this by increasing the coverage and the quality of twelve-year basic education and school readiness programmes. We will also prioritise skills development to strengthen the quality and relevance of education and to better equip our students to meet the requirements of the diverse labour market. This requires a focus on core literacy and numeracy skills in basic education as well as strengthening technical and vocational education and training and higher education provision coupled with a focus on skills-based science and technology. Foundational to all of this is ensuring that our teachers are well trained and motivated.

The Education Sector Strategic Plan (ESSP) outlines how the education sector will strive to achieve this mission over the next 5 years. It has been developed in line with Rwanda’s second Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) to support Rwanda achieve national aspirations for economic transformation, rural development, accountable governance and improved productivity and youth employment. The plan is centred on three overarching goals: expanding access to education at all levels, improving the quality of education and training, and strengthening the relevance of education and training to meet labour market demands.

Based upon these goals and priorities, 10 outcomes have been developed for the education sector: 1. Increased equitable access to 9 years of basic education for all children and expanding access to 12 years of basic education. 2. Increased equitable access to education for students with special educational needs within mainstream and special schools. 3. Improved quality and learning outcomes across primary and secondary education. 4. Qualified, suitably-skilled and motivated teachers and trainers to meet the demands of expanding education access. 5. Increased equitable access to relevant, high-quality, demand-driven TVET programmes. 6. Increased equitable access to affordable, relevant, academically excellent higher education that also delivers quality research outputs. 7. Improved access to school readiness programmes by 2017/18, accompanied by expanded access to three-years of early learning for four-to-six-year olds. 8. Strengthened performance in science, technology and innovation at all levels of education, and application of science, technology and innovation in relevant sectors of the economy. 9. Increased access to Adult Basic Education to improve adult literacy and numeracy. 10. Improved administrative and management support services, including the management of policy, information,finances, and human resources across the education sector.

**Key challenges confronting the sector**

1. **Increasing Access to All Levels of Education**

It is at the secondary school level that the greatest challenge remains in expanding access. While impressive gains have been made during the course of EDPRS I following the introduction of 9YBE and 12YBE, the current secondary NER of 28% will need to increase significantly over the next five years to meet the targets of EDPRS 2. This implies an expansion of the system, particularly at the upper secondary level in line with the 12YBE strategy – expanding infrastructure, and increasing the number of teachers, and teaching and learning materials, all of which require significant investments. The TVET stream within the upper secondary school level will also have to be expanded significantly within the 12YBE programme, including an increase in the number of public and private TVET institutions at the post 12YBE level, in order to meet the targets set for EDPRS 2.

1. **Improving Equity on the Basis of Poverty, Disability and Geographical Location**

The cross-cutting issue of access and participation of children with disabilities is one of the key challenges for the sector and has thus been prioritised as one of the ten strategic outcome areas for the ESSP. EICV3 shows that disabilities are a major factor affecting children’s early access to school. A 7 to 8 year old child with disabilities is three times less likely to start school at the right age than a child with no disabilities. The EICV3 also revealed that a child with disabilities has an 18% greater chance of repeating a primary school class than another with no disabilities and that his or her chance of dropping out of school is four times higher than those of a child with no disabilities. Not all schools and learning institutions are adequately equipped with appropriate facilities, learning materials and teaching aids and specially trained teachers to integrate children with special needs. Ensuring that all schools in Rwanda are Child-Friendly and Disabled-friendly is a challenge which has to be further addressed during this ESSP. Special schools for children with more severe disabilities also need to be adequately resourced and supported. Education for children with disabilities also demands strong coordination between different Ministries and agencies beyond the education sector, particularly those in the Health, Social Protection and Local Governance sectors, which itself contains the challenge of coordination across multiple sectors and Ministries.

1. **Improving the Quality of Education**

An important challenge for the sector remains the need to address quality education throughout the system. The establishment of the Rwanda Education Board (REB) in 2011 was an important development in addressing the quality of education, with REB providing a comprehensive approach to the key priority of quality education and a mechanism of coordination across implementing agencies. There is now a great opportunity to approach the 12YBE reforms from a holistic point of view, addressing the issues of quality improvement and increased access side by side – to ensure an optimum balance between increasing access and improving quality.

The challenge of improving the English language proficiency and pedagogical skills of teachers is being addressed through the School-Based Mentoring Programme, which aims to improve teaching methodology as well as the language skills of teachers. The programme was initiated in 2012 and a joint Ministry of Education and Development Partner Taskforce is now in place to guide this strategy over the course of this ESSP. Increased regional integration provides the opportunity to attract well qualified teachers from the EAC to support the school-based mentoring programme.

In the TVET sub-sector quality education and training is displayed in the development of skills that are orientated towards the future working environment that students will face, and practical, competency-based training. Progress has been made in this direction with the introduction of competency-based training, but there are still challenges to strengthen private sector involvement and training of trainers to ensure quality and relevance. This ESSP outlines strategies to propel forward quality improvements including strengthening learning in the private sector (for example through internships and industrial attachment programmes), initiatives to support the transition to employment and development of quality assurance systems in the TVET sub-sector.

Within higher education, educational standards of the student intake, qualifications of academic staff, research capacity and full use of ICT continue to restrain improvements to the quality of teaching, learning and research. The establishment of the University of Rwanda aims to be a catalyst to drive forward quality reforms by improving quality assurance, consolidating the skills and expertise of academic staff, creating centres of excellence for teaching and research, and improving utilisation of resources and facilities.

1. **Improving School Readiness and Pre-Primary Education Provision**

The Rwandan Early Childhood Development (ECD) Policy and its Strategic Plan was developed and approved by Cabinet at the end of September 2011, providing a framework to ensure a holistic and integrated approach to the development of young children between the ages of 0-6. MINEDUC has been tasked with providing leadership for ECD across all concerned Sectors

1. **Improving the Relevance of Education and Addressing Labour Market Demands**

As Rwanda’s economy grows, diversifies and becomes subject to regional and global influences, ever increasing levels of skills and competencies will be required. Some studies have pointed to significant challenges in the employability of the graduates from the upper secondary, TVET and higher education institutions. National and international evidence suggests that employers, both in the public and private sector, value very highly a common set of “generic business” or “catalytic” skills. These include good skills in communication (written and oral), problem-solving, teamwork, creative and critical thinking, and an understanding of how businesses work. The challenge for the sector is to ensure that the curriculum, pedagogical, and language of learning practices reforms result in a higher proportion of the graduates of the various sub-sectors demonstrating these skills in abundance

It is also recognised that science and technology are increasingly important fields in the education sector and throughout the system, from primary to secondary level to higher education much progress has been achieved though challenges remain such as shortage of laboratory equipment and materials at secondary and higher education level, as well as a lack of adequately qualified teachers and lecturers.

There is also a need for increased public private partnerships as a means to increase available financing for education and this becomes even more pertinent with implementation of the 12YBE strategy.

1. **Strengthening Administration and Management of the Education Sector**

During the five years of this ESSP this will be addressed through specific training to raise individual capacities to mount reforms, coordinate implementation with multiple stakeholders and engage in monitoring and evaluation of the sector; improved use of information systems such as the Education Management Information System (EMIS) and the Labour Market Information System (LMIS) from the school to national level; improved accountability, monitoring and evaluation through School Boards and Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs); and comprehensive training in whole school management and development.

**Who are involved in implementation of this policy?**

1. **Central Government**

The education sector comprises educational activities that take place under the governance of several ministries. Of these, MINEDUC has the major responsibility and has been designated in EDPRS 2 as the lead Ministry for the education sector with responsibility for policy formulation, and setting norms and standards for the education sector. MINEDUC also undertakes planning, monitoring and evaluation at the national level.

The other Ministries which have significant involvement in education provision and development are:

Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN) which sets broad economic policy and planning frameworks, oversees financial planning, the Medium Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF), the EDPRS 2 and the Long-Term Investment Framework. It plays an important role in the performance assessment and monitoring of budget execution.

Ministry of Public Service and Labour (MIFOTRA) which sets and administers salary levels and conditions of service for all civil servants, including teachers.

Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC) which oversees decentralisation functions of education; administers the Assistance Fund for Genocide Survivors (FARG) and community development funds; monitors performance at decentralised levels (provinces and districts, including performance contracts) and manages the Vision 2020 Umurenge social protection programme (VUP) which impacts on education as well as health.

MINEDUC and its affiliated agencies also work closely with a number of other Ministries on crosssectoral issues. These include:  Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM) and the Rwanda Development Board (RDB) on issues relating to skills development and employment, and  Ministry of Health (MINISANTE) on educational programmes related to issues such as health, nutrition and HIV/AIDS prevention, and early childhood development;  Ministry of Agriculture (MINAGRI) on issues relating to school feeding and provision of milk to primary school children students;  Ministry of Youth and ICT (MYICT) on issues relating to youth skills and ICT literacy;  Ministry of East African Community Affairs (MINEAC) to coordinate work on Rwanda’s education commitments as part of regional integration;  Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) on girls’ education.

1. **Ministry of education (MINEDUC)**

The Ministry of Education sets policy, norms and standards for the education sector and undertakes planning, monitoring and evaluation at the national level. Figure 1 below shows the current MINEDUC organisation chart, which illustrates the range of responsibilities.

1. **Semi-Autonomous Agencies**

In the education sector there are a number of semi-autonomies agencies. These are public institutions established by Acts of Parliament. They are affiliated to MINEDUC but have administrative and financial autonomy. These institutions include the Rwanda Education Board (**REB**), the Higher Education Council (**HEC**), the National Science and Technology Commission (**NSTC**), the Workforce Development Authority (**WDA**), the Rwandan National Commission for UNESCO (**CNRU**), the Institute of Scientific and Technological Research (**IRST**), and public Tertiary Education Institutions (**TEIs**). All these institutions have particular mandates to implement specific education policies which are designed at Ministry level.

**Monitoring and evaluation**

1. **SECTOR MONITORING ARRANGEMENTS**

The lead institution for the monitoring of the education sector is MINEDUC. Within the Ministry, this is led by the Policy, Monitoring and Evaluation Unit, supported by the Planning Unit, plus professionals from within MINEDUC and its associated agencies as required. MINEDUC is responsible for the collation and analysis of data in line with Education Sector Monitoring Matrix (see below). There is quarterly monitoring of activities and progress against agreed outputs in the Education Sector Annual Action Plan. The implementing agencies (REB and WDA) carry out quarterly monitoring and report to MINEDUC for analysis. Progress reports and a consolidated annual activity report are submitted to the Prime Minister’s Office and published.

In addition, for internal monitoring and evaluation there are regular senior management meetings in MINEDUC with representatives from all the affiliated government education agencies, at which progress on activities, projects and programmes are reviewed. Senior management also appoint dedicated task forces to review and report on key education initiatives and priorities.

At District level, there are regular Joint Action Forums with stakeholders to review District Development Plans and achievement against targets. There is also close liaison between DEOs and the Ministry of Education, REB and WDA via planning and inspection processes. Districts and schools are required to provide data for national level monitoring and evaluation. Regional inspectors in every province carry out routine school inspections, reporting directly to REB’s Education Quality Standards Department and to district education officers (DEO’s). In addition, schools carry out their own self-assessments of performance, based on targets they have set themselves in their School Improvements Plans. These self assessments include data and indicators that they may not be reported to another level, but rather is used to inform their own planning and to improve their performance. Each school and district is required to draw up their own monitoring framework, with the involvement of PTAs.

The principal review process at national level takes place at the biannual Joint Reviews of the Education Sector (JRES), one which is forward-looking (April), and one which is backwardlooking (September). At the backward-looking review, budget execution and education achievements against agreed indicators and targets are reviewed, whilst at the forwardlooking review priorities for the year ahead are identified and plans reviewed informing policy development and annual operational plans. The JRES is supported by all education stakeholders, including a range of government institutions, development partners, civil society and district and school officials. A summary report indicating performance against the core education indicators of the Common Performance Assessment Framework (CPAF) is jointly signed by MINEDUC and the lead development partners before submission to MINECOFIN.

1. **SECTOR EVALUATION PLANS**

The education sector’s evaluation plans include a combination of formative and summative evaluations. The formative evaluations will take place at the end of key project phases and focus on the effectiveness and immediate impact of projects. In particular, they will focus on whether or not activities are on track and if outputs are being achieved. They will then identify lessons learnt from the initial phases of implementation that can be used to improve further delivery on the project being assessed or other projects.

The summative evaluations will take place at the end of projects/programmes focusing on the impact and sustainability of projects and whether or not overall outcomes have been achieved. Again they will also assess what lessons can be learnt for delivery of other projects.

**Conclusion**

Rwanda’s vision is oriented toward a future that offers a life of dignity and happiness for all, calling upon its citizens to fulfil their potential for their own benefit and that of their state. A harmonious and prosperous Rwanda can only be realised when each citizen, regardless of age, gender, ability or circumstance, is empowered to contribute to the development process. An accessible, equitable and high-quality education system is needed to develop in every Rwandan the foundational skills of literacy and numeracy, the habits of reading and life-long learning, the skills of analytical reasoning and creativity, and mastery of both the general and job-specific knowledge demanded by the labour market. The Rwandan people must also embrace positive, constructive engagement in the social and political life of their community and country, contributing their unique talents and energies to ensuring better lives for themselves and their neighbours. For these reasons, the Government of Rwanda has committed to developing educational institutions that strive to deliver against national and international standards while cultivating the flexibility and responsiveness of the education system, to allow adaptation to evolving needs. This will entail thorough diagnosis of the available skills and competencies set against the requirements for national, regional and international markets and reforming the education curriculum to meet these evolving demands.