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Swiss Cooperation Office in Cambodia

Labour Economics Conference 2026 on "Cambodia's Labour Market Transformation and Economic Transition in the ASEAN Context: Skills, Technology and Resilience amid Global Economic Uncertainty"

Theme 2. Industry-Led Skills Development: Advancing Public–Private Partnerships and Work-Based Learning in TVET

Scaling Public–Private Partnerships in TVET: Evidence and Models for Cambodia

Wednesday, 11 November 2026

Presented by Mr. Ros Va, Senior National Programme Manager, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)

Key Challenges

- Skills gaps and shortages in the labour ma
- Weak links between training and employer needs
- Limited opportunities for practical workplace experience
- Difficult school-to-work transition
- Low workforce productivity

Solution

- Public–Private Partnerships (PPP): Strengthen collaboration between government, TVET institutions and employers.
- Work-Based Learning (WBL): Provide learners with practical skills and real workplace experience.

Switzerland's Successful VET System

#1

Global Competitiveness (World Competitiveness Ranking 2025)

#1

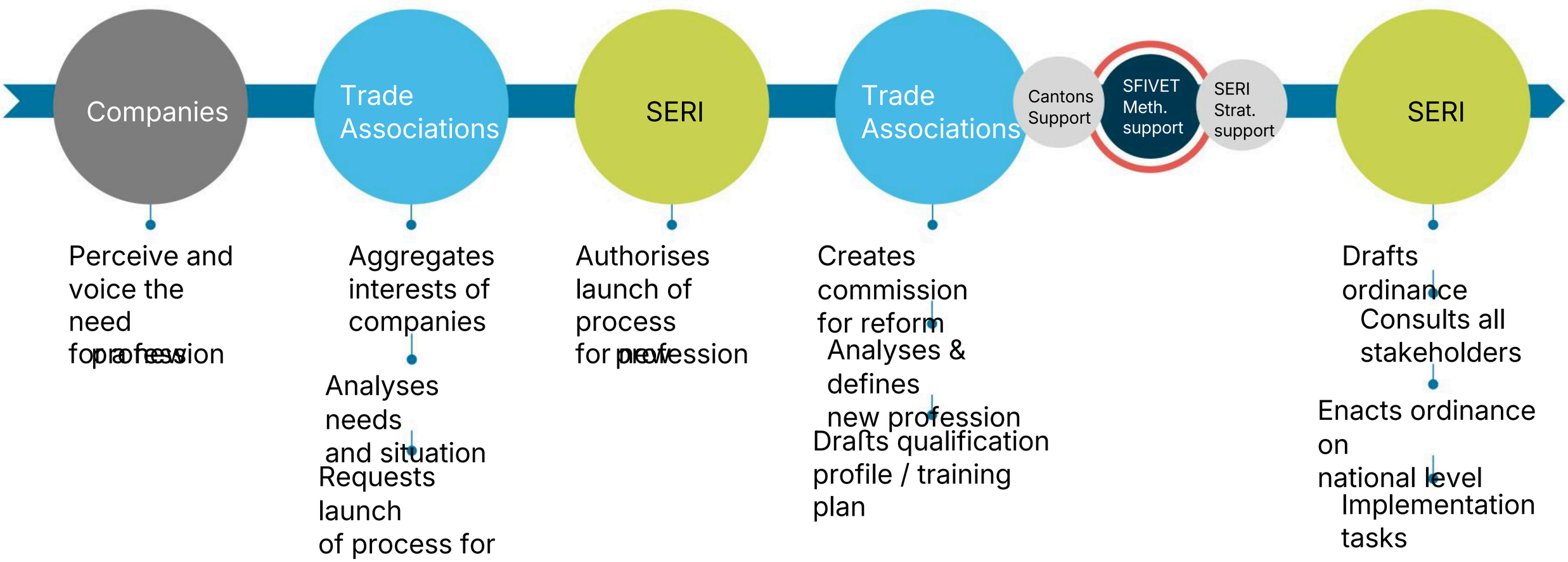
World’s Most Innovative Country (2025)

70%

of the workforce are TVET graduates

- The Swiss VET system is industry-led from the beginning. Employers create training solutions because they need skilled workers
- Approximately two-thirds of young people in Switzerland pursue VET after compulsory education, making it a major pathway to employment

Development of occupations –a new profession in VET



Note: The State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation (SERI) is part of the Federal Department of Economic Affairs, Education and Research. SERI is the federal government's specialized agency for national and international matters concerning education, research and innovation policy.

Dual-track VET programs on upper-secondary level



Federal VET Diploma (3-4 years)
Federal VET Certificate (2 years)

Practice

Theory





In-company training at host companies, 3 – 4 days per week

Branch courses at branch training centres, several times a year

Classroom instruction at vocational schools, 1 – 2 days per week

The Economic Benefits of PPP and WBL

EMPLOYERS



- Higher enterprise productivity and competitiveness
- Reduced recruitment and onboarding costs
- Better skills matching
- Stronger talent pipeline and retention

LEARNERS



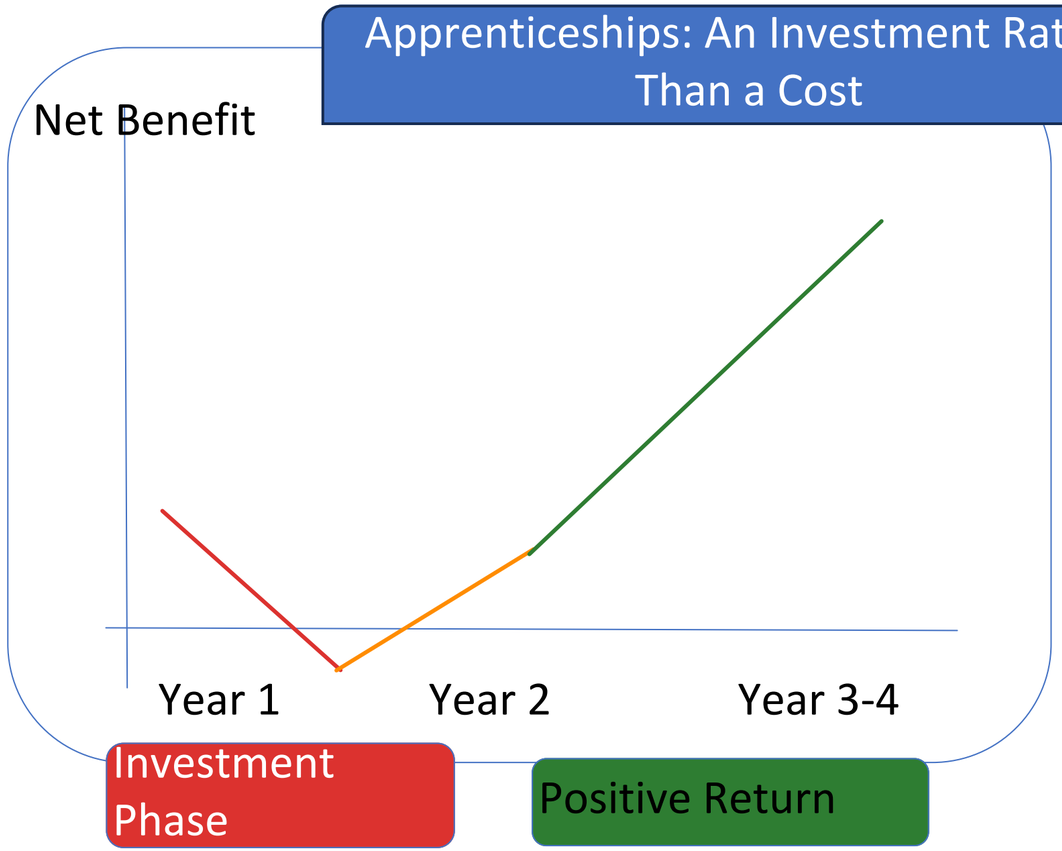
- Relevant technical and transferable skills
- Practical work experience and workplace readiness
- Improved employability
- Stronger school-to-work transition

GOVERNMENT & ECONOMY



- Better skills matching across the labour market
- A more capable and productive workforce
- Stronger employer participation in skills development
- Potential gains in competitiveness and employment

Why Do Swiss Companies Invest in Apprenticeships?



SWISS EVIDENCE

71% of apprenticeship contracts generate a positive net benefit during the training period.
Average net benefit: ≈ CHF 4,500 per apprentice per year.
Additional benefits arise when firms recruit former apprentices after graduation.

Around two-thirds of Swiss youth choose a VET pathway

Apprenticeship training contributes directly to labour market integration

Most firms recover training investments during the apprenticeship period and benefit further when apprentices become employees

- Year 1: Training and supervision costs, apprentice wages, mentor time, and lower initial productivity
- Year 2-4: Productive work by apprentices, lower recruitment and onboarding costs, better skills matching, strong talent pipeline, and higher retention.

Swiss education report 2026:
https://www.skbf-csre.ch/fileadmin/files/pdf/bildungsberichte/2026/BiBer_2026_EN.pdf

What Can Cambodia Learn from Switzerland?

Adapting the principles of a successful employer-led VET system to Cambodia's context

SWISS VET MODEL



What makes the Swiss system successful?

- Strong employer ownership
- Dual-track VET system
- Industry-led occupational standards
- Shared responsibility and financing
- Qualified in-company trainers
- Strong institutional coordination

CAMBODIA'S ADAPTATION



What can Cambodia do?

- Strengthen employer participation in TVET governance
- Expand structured WBL and quality apprenticeship/internships
- Engage industries in curriculum development
- Introduce co-financing and employer incentives
- Train and certify in-company mentors
- Strengthen PPP coordination mechanisms and monitoring

Cambodia does not need to replicate the Swiss VET system. It can adapt its core principles to local conditions, building on existing PPP initiatives, institutional capacity and private-sector engagement.

Promoting PPP and WBL through Swiss-funded projects

ASEAN-Swiss TVET Initiative (ASTI)-WBL project

- Support the development of national WBL standards, Standard Training Packages (NOSS) and national WBL guidelines.
- Promote joint design, delivery, assessment and certification involving employers and TVET providers.
- Establish tripartite partnerships among host companies, TVET providers and BCPs.
- Strengthenthe role of CAMFEBA and IBC in mobilising companies, coordinating partners and monitoring trainees.
- Promote co-financing arrangements

Skills Development Programme (SDP)

- Engage PTBs, TVET advisory boards, employer associations, chambers of commerce, private companies and government stakeholders.
- Strengthen employer ownership through participation in curriculum development and improvement.
- Expand WBL opportunities through internships, dual training, apprenticeships and other workplace-learning models.
- Formalise partnerships through tripartite agreements among TVET institutes, employers and interns.
- Improve training quality and labour-market relevance through practical training, workplace exposure and in-company trainers.

Decent Employment for Youth (DEY)

- Foster partnerships between training institutions and enterprises to co-design and deliver industry-relevant training, particularly in the automotive and electronics sectors (new education pathway).
- Develop WBL models informed and validated by industry.
- Strengthen the capacity of selected high-school teachers and in-company trainers to deliver workplace learning and mentoring.
- Support youth employability and school-to-work transitions through employer engagement, workplace exposure, apprenticeships and competency-based training.
- Facilitate public–private partnership dialogue.


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ឯកជនដើម្បីការអភិវឌ្ឍជំនាញ
Dialogue on
Strengthening Public-Private
Partnership for Skill Development in
TVET Program

THE GRADUATE INSTITUTE GENEVA

INSTITUT DE HAUTES ÉTUDES INTERNATIONALES ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT

GRADUATE INSTITUTE OF INTERNATIONAL AND DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

INTERNATIONAL EXECUTIVE MASTER IN DEVELOPMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES (DPP)

ACADEMIC YEAR 2020-2021

THESIS

Public-Private Partnership in Technical and Vocational Education and Training

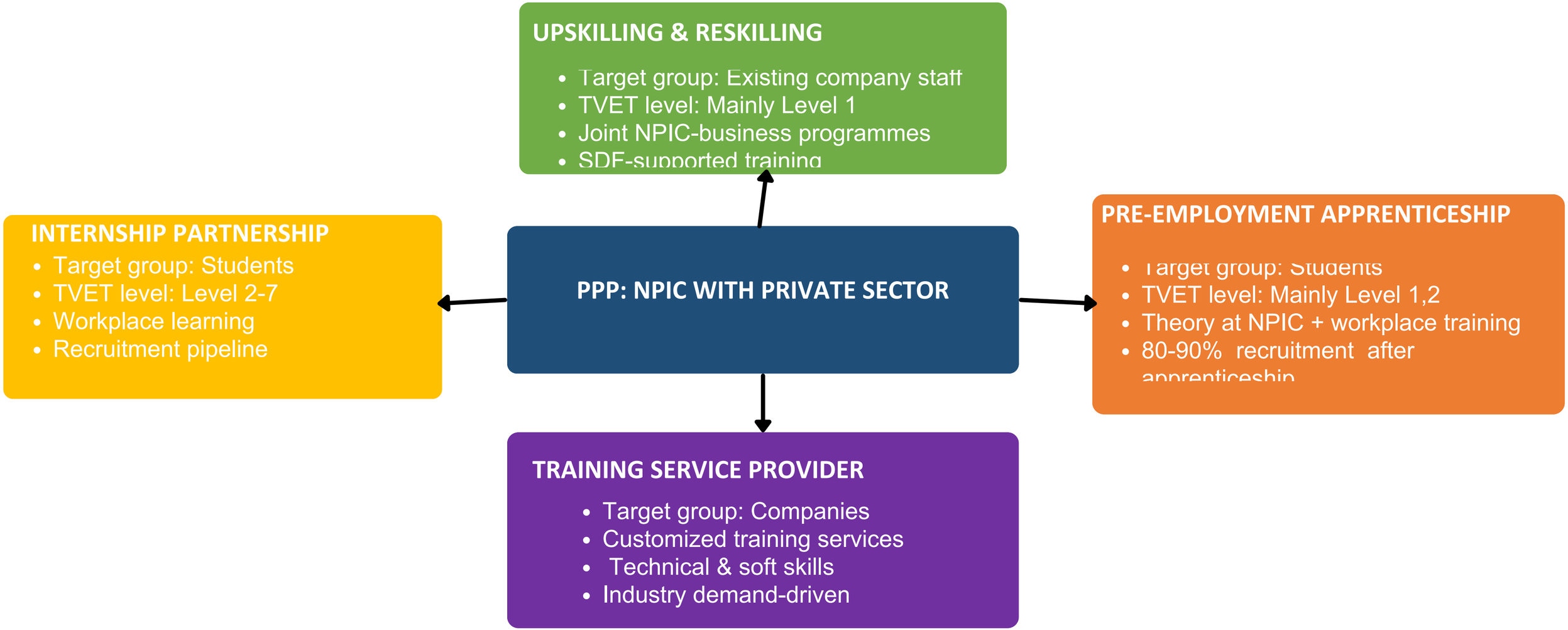
A case study of collaboration between the National Polytechnic Institute of Cambodia (NPIC) and Businesses in Cambodia

DPP participant's name: Va Ros

Supervisor: Dr. Willi Zimmerman

Date: June 2021

Public-Private Partnerships: NPIC with the Private Sector



PPP and Work-Based Learning at NPIC

Skills Development

- Four PPP models established between NPIC and businesses
- Approximately 110 employees trained annually through SDF-supported programmes
- Training in mechanics, optics, electricity, automotive, hospitality, baking and food processing

Work-Based Learning

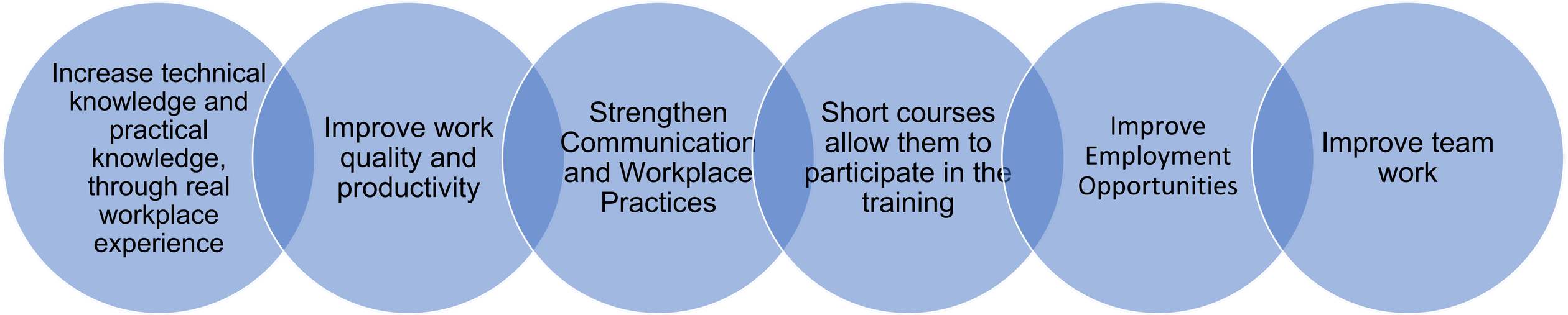
- Apprenticeships combine theory at NPIC with practical training in companies
- Internships provide workplace exposure for students
- Businesses actively participate in training delivery and workplace learning

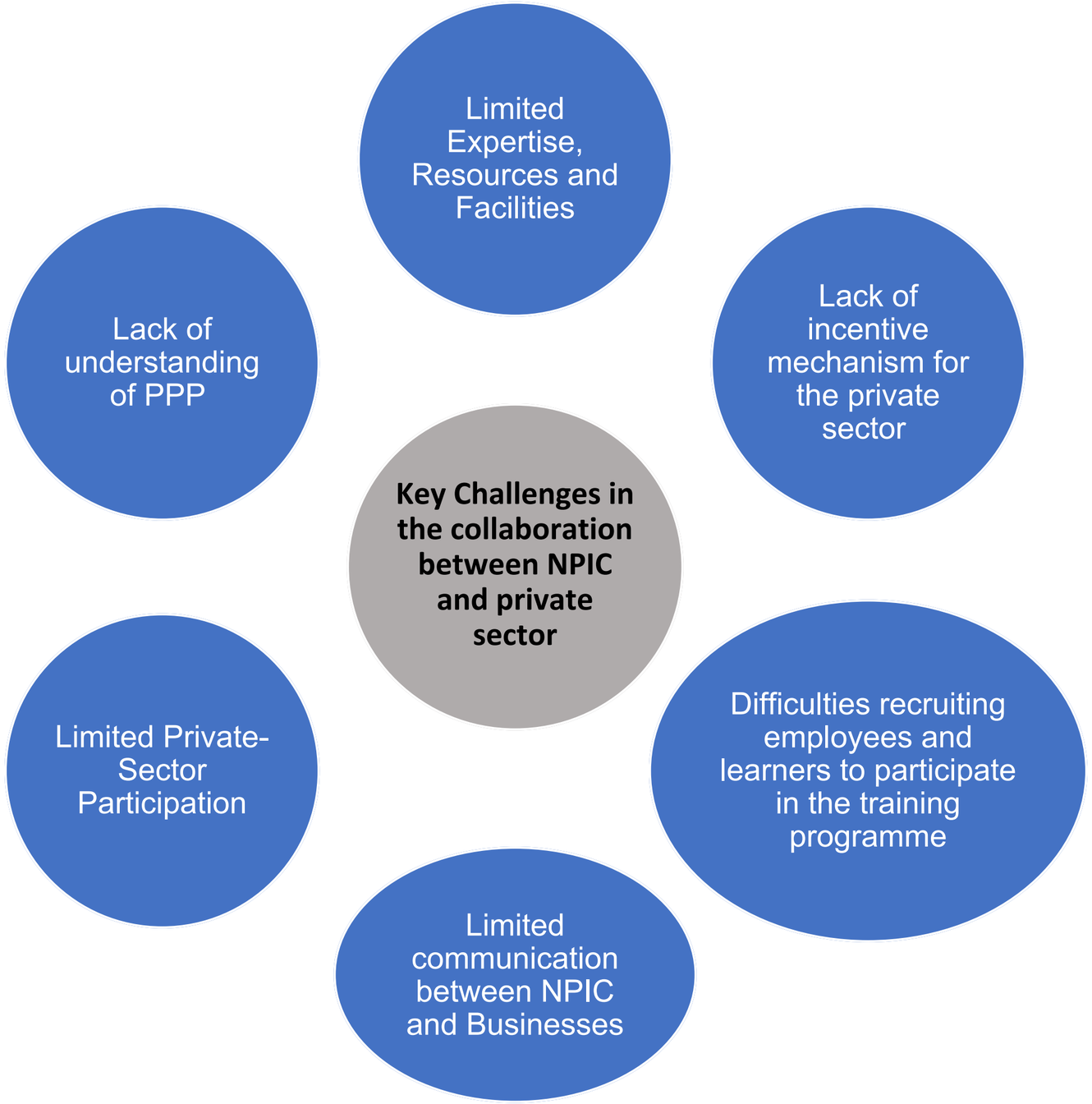
Employment Outcomes

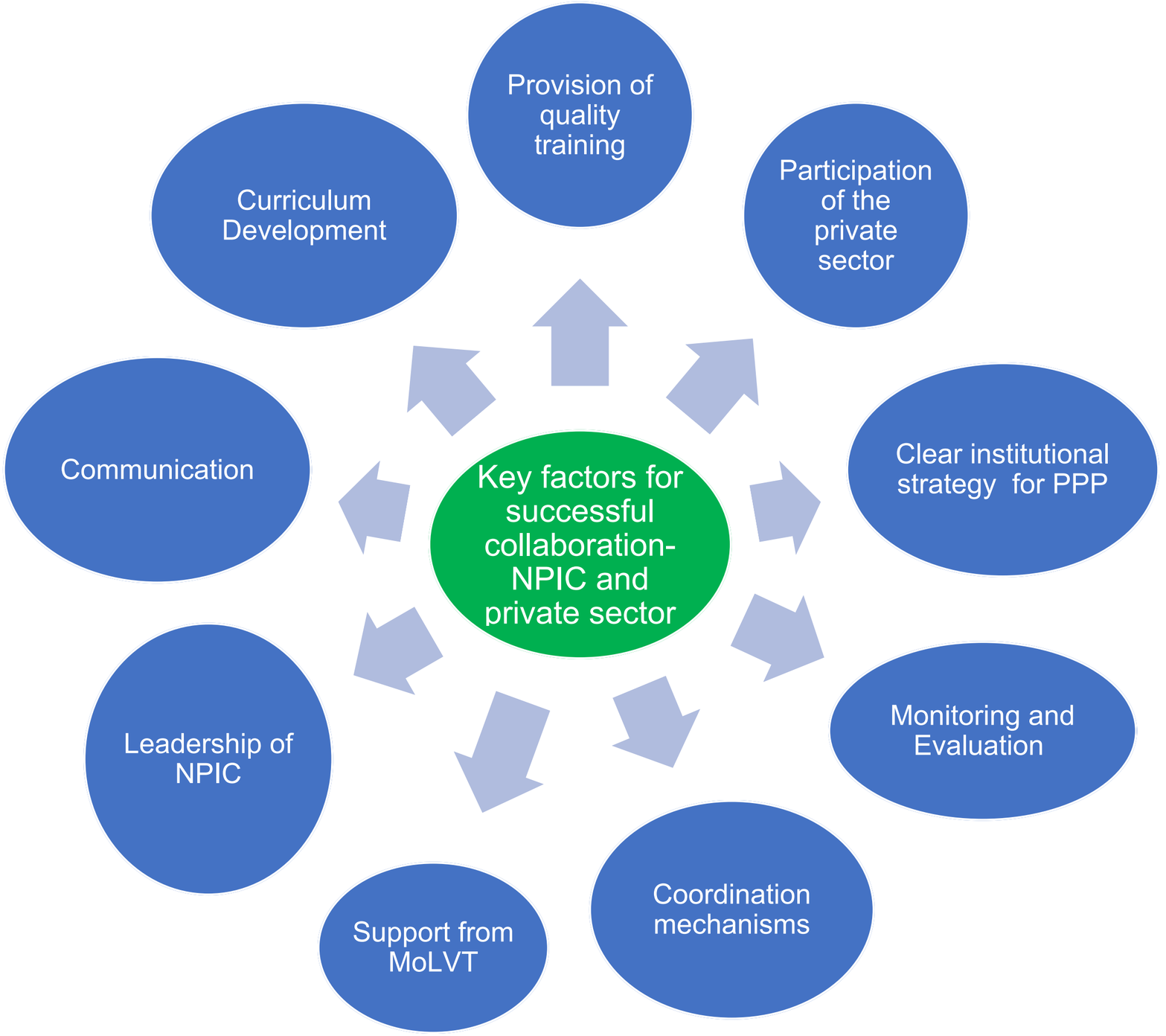
- 80–90% of graduates recruited under apprenticeship partnerships
- Improved transition from training to employment
- Stronger alignment between skills development and labour market needs

The NPIC experience demonstrates that Public-Private Partnerships can support skills development through multiple collaboration models, while Work-Based Learning provides an effective pathway from training to employment.

Benefits of PPP and WBL for learners




Limited Expertise, Resources and Facilities
Lack of understanding of PPP
Lack of incentive mechanism for the private sector
Key Challenges in the collaboration between NPIC and private sector
Limited Private-Sector Participation
Difficulties recruiting employees and learners to participate in the training programme
Limited communication between NPIC and Businesses


Provision of quality training
Participation of the private sector
Clear institutional strategy for PPP
Monitoring and Evaluation
Coordination mechanisms
Support from MoLVT
Leadership of NPIC
Communication
Curriculum Development
Key factors for successful collaboration- NPIC and private sector

Key Conclusions and Recommendations

Key Conclusions

- PPP and WBL improve the relevance of TVET, facilitate school-to-work transition, and strengthen employability.
- Strong employer engagement is critical for aligning skills development with labour market needs.
- TVET cannot be delivered by government and training institutions alone. Employers must become active partners in skills development.

Switzerland demonstrates the value of employer-led vocational training, while Cambodia's experience shows that PPP and WBL can work in the local context. By strengthening partnerships, expanding workplace learning and building on existing initiatives, Cambodia can develop a more skilled, productive and employable workforce

Key Recommendations

1. Institutionalise Public–Private Partnerships (PPP) and Work-Based Learning (WBL)

- Strengthen the regulatory framework, including the TVET Law, policies, guidelines and their effective implementation.
- Strengthen existing mechanisms such as Sector Skills Councils and TVET Advisory Boards.
- Integrate PPP and WBL systematically into TVET planning and delivery

2. Strengthen Employer Engagement and Ownership

- Involve employers in curriculum development, training delivery, assessment and certification.
- Expand co-financing arrangements and introduce incentives for private-sector participation.
- Promote employer ownership of workplace training and apprenticeship programmes.

3. Improve Training Quality and Employability

- Expand structured work-based learning opportunities, including internships, apprenticeships and dual training programmes.
- Strengthen the capacity of TVET trainers and in-company mentors.
- Ensure training programmes respond to industry needs and labour market demand.

4. Scale Up Successful Partnership Models and Ensure Sustainability

- Build on successful experiences from ASTI, SDP, DEY and other development partner-supported initiatives.
- Strengthen monitoring, evaluation and quality assurance systems to assess training quality and employment outcomes.
- Promote sustainable partnerships that continue beyond donor-funded projects.

5. Strengthen Labour Market Information and Tracer Studies

- Strengthen labour market information systems to support evidence-based planning and decision-making.

Thank you very much.