

Advancing TVET through industry partnerships and innovation

BILT Bridging Event

19-21 May 2026

**Coastlands Umhlanga Hotel and Convention Centre
Umhlanga, Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa**

Organized by UNESCO-UNEVOC and the University of South Africa, in collaboration with the Durban University of Technology and JET Education Services

With the support of the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training and sponsored by the German Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth

Theme

Advancing TVET through industry partnerships and innovation

Sub themes

- Work-based learning and sustainable partnerships with the private sector
- Innovative pedagogies such as AI-enabled teaching, learning and assessment
- Flexible qualification frameworks, lifelong learning pathways and micro-credentials

Rationale

Technical and vocational education and training (TVET) systems worldwide are adapting to fast changing labour market demands, new technologies, and evolving qualification frameworks. Across Africa, these shifts are particularly pronounced as countries reform TVET programmes, strengthen industry engagement, and integrate digital and green skills into training pathways. These reform efforts and innovations are consistent with the priorities articulated in the African Union's [*African Continental TVET Strategy 2025–34: Sustainable Development, Social Justice and Employability for All*](#), which emphasizes strengthened partnerships with the productive sector, inclusive and high-quality provision, policy coherence, and the digital and green transformation of TVET systems. The Continental TVET Strategy identifies four foundational pillars: policy, governance and finance; quality and inclusion; partnerships, knowledge and resource sharing; and institutional development, technology and innovation, as mutually

reinforcing levers for building responsive, efficient and inclusive TVET systems aligned with the African Union's [Agenda 2063](#).

South Africa's transition to occupational qualifications accredited by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) exemplifies this momentum, yet many institutions continue to face challenges in establishing sustainable partnerships with the private sector, securing work-based learning, and adopting emerging technologies at scale. At the same time, innovations in education – such as micro-credentials, AI enabled teaching, learning and assessment and digital learning ecosystems – are reshaping how TVET programmes are designed and delivered. They take shape in regional initiatives, such as the '[Potential of Microcredentials in Southern Africa](#)' (PoMiSA) project, or in the development of digital educational technology led by the private sector.

The thematic focus of the BILT Bridging Event reflects and engages with these priorities, particularly in relation to work-based learning (WBL), industry co-creation, innovation, digitalization (including AI), and regional cooperation. The event also contributes to the aspirations of Agenda 2063 by supporting skills development as a driver of inclusive growth, industrialization, and youth employability across the continent.

The event, hosted near Durban, KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa, will offer a platform for global and regional stakeholders to explore how sustainable industry partnerships can support the design, delivery and scaling of high-quality, work-based, and innovation-driven programmes. The event will draw on the combined expertise of South Africa's three UNEVOC Centres: University of South Africa (UNISA) as lead, Durban University of Technology (DUT), and JET Education Services, supported by national bodies such as the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and the QCTO. The event will build on the discussions and insights of the 2025 BILT Bridging Event in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia, which explored 'Policies for the integration of AI and the digital transformation of TVET' and will feed into the second Bridging Event in 2026, to be hosted in Latin America.

BILT Bridging Events are part of UNESCO-UNEVOC's Innovation and Excellence in TVET project, contributing to the initiative '[Towards a global TVET agenda](#)' (TGTA). This multilateral initiative is led by the German Federal Ministry for Education, Family Affairs, Senior Citizens, Women and Youth (BMBFSFJ) and coordinated by the German Federal Institute for Vocational Education and Training (BIBB). It aims to strengthen global collaboration and coordinated action to reposition TVET as a driver of sustainable economic development, social cohesion, and inclusive growth. BILT Bridging Events contribute to the initiative by fostering policy dialogue, peer learning, and exchange on innovative TVET within and across regions.

Objectives

Overall goal:

Strengthen the capacity of TVET systems to design, deliver, and scale work-based and innovation-driven programmes through sustainable industry partnerships. In doing so, the event seeks to contribute to broader continental and global efforts to strengthen TVET systems, including those reflected in the African Continental TVET Strategy 2025–2034 and the UNESCO strategy for TVET 2022–2029.

Specific objectives:

1. **Provide a platform for dialogue and knowledge exchange** that supports stakeholders in national TVET reform processes, particularly towards partnerships with the productive sector.
2. **Examine enabling conditions for sustainable TVET-industry partnerships**, including supportive policy frameworks, incentive mechanisms, quality assurance of work-based learning and alignment with evolving labour market needs.
3. **Facilitate cross regional peer learning** on effective models for co-designing, delivering and scaling programmes with employers, particularly in response to digitalization, the green transition and emerging occupations.
4. **Showcase innovative practices**, including micro-credential pathways, AI enabled teaching, learning and assessment, and new industry partnership models.
5. **Strengthen collaboration among UNEVOC Centres** and enhance cooperation with employers, regulators, social partners, digital ecosystem partners and international organizations.
6. **Produce a discussion paper** with insights, case studies and recommendations for innovative TVET programme design and delivery in collaboration with industry.

Target groups

The event is aimed at TVET institutions in all Member States, with a particular focus on Africa, including:

- UNEVOC Centres
- National Ministries and regulatory bodies responsible for TVET
- Training providers, universities and research institutes
- Social partners, training companies
- Organizations advancing AI, micro-credentials, and digital learning
- Regional skills development networks and multilateral organizations working on TVET and skills development systems, including TGTA partners
- Researchers, curriculum designers, and occupational qualification specialists

Immediate outputs

- 2.5-day Bridging Event and a complete programme package (presentations, recordings)
- Documented policy insights, case studies and digital innovations
- Improved collaboration among participating organizations
- Discussion paper led by JET Education Services

Longer-term impact

- Enhanced collaboration across the UNEVOC Network and TVET stakeholders in Africa and beyond
- Improved capacity to design and deliver occupational programmes
- Contributions to policy development and system alignment
- Increased relevance, attractiveness and innovation in TVET systems
- Strengthened regional models for WBL, micro credentials, and AI enabled learning

The BILT project is implemented



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