

# **TERTIARY EDUCATION COUNCIL**

## **POLICY AND PLANNING**

### **BRIEF NO: 1**

#### **TERTIARY EDUCATION TO BE REFORMED**

With the recent approval of the Tertiary Education White Paper (April 2008) by the National Assembly, the tertiary education sector is about to enter a period change and transformation.

The White Paper, which bears the tag line, '*Towards a Knowledge Society*', represents the Government's commitment to further developing the tertiary education sector and sets out the reform strategy that will be undertaken. A key underpinning of this commitment is the recognition that tertiary education has a significant role to play in driving Botswana's successful transition from a resource dependent economy to the next stage of development. The goal is a diversified economy characterized in terms of an innovative knowledge intensive service sector with high skilled well paid knowledge workers employed in knowledge rich jobs. This represents the first value proposition of the tertiary education sector as a key driver of Botswana's economic development and a significant source of value add to the economy.

The second value proposition of the tertiary education sector that underpins the thinking of the White Paper is that it makes Botswana a better place to live in through the major benefits it delivers to society. From improved health and life expectancy, community participation, informed criticism, debate and dialogue, building and maintaining democratic

values, increased social cohesion, tertiary education provides a broad payoff to society as a whole.

The third value proposition relates to the individual recipients of tertiary education who enjoy an improved quality of life, with enriched life potentials and an enhanced level of personal and career fulfillment. To the individual, tertiary education brings significant life rewards, while the development of smart and adaptable people raises the intellectual level of society and provides a key stimulus to societal advancement.

The White Paper recognizes to achieve these goals a number of problems within the current tertiary education sector need to be addressed. Some of those that that need to be dealt with include:

- The need for a coherent, co-ordinated and strategic focus to drive the tertiary education sector,
- The need to improve the quality of tertiary education institutions. This will require a series of interventions to strengthen institutional and management capacity, ensure value for money, increase access, quality and relevance and strengthen the linkages of tertiary education institutions with their immediate communities and society.

*Towards a Knowledge Society* sets out the reforms that will be undertaken to ensure that tertiary education will contribute to the realisation of the national development goals which are encompassed within Vision 2016. ‘An Educated and Informed Nation’ provides the specific anchor but it will also act as a key driver of the other six vision pillars. Tertiary education will directly contribute to Vision 2016 through the following strategic goals:

- **Human Resource Development** – increasing access and educating highly skilled, knowledgeable and competent graduates in order to promote their personal well being and progress as well providing them with the capabilities and competencies to advance the economic and social development of Botswana.
- **Research and Innovation** – strengthening the research and innovation, knowledge creation and discovery potential of the tertiary education sector to drive the uptake and application of new ideas that can build Botswana’s innovation record and develop its economic development and social progress.
- **System level Capability** – strengthening the capacity and quality of the tertiary education sector and its individual institutions. This will involve a series of reforms to lift the performance of the sector, to raise the quality of each tertiary institution (both public and private) to ensure that tertiary education can make a real and substantial contribution to Botswana’s long term prosperity.

Botswana’s tertiary education system is clearly about to face dramatic changes in the coming years ahead. The White Paper on tertiary education with its overarching goal of establishing a “single integrated and differentiated tertiary education system” is a portent of the magnitude of the change that will take place.

For this ambitious goal to be realised effective planning and co-ordination are essential. The Tertiary Education Council has recently completed the formulation of a sector wide plan which it has recommended to Government for adoption and implementation during the NDP10 plan period. The purpose of the plan is to ensure that the policy recommendations of the White Paper are properly implemented. Without such planning, Botswana runs the risk of failing to meet the educational needs of its people as well as the broader aspirations of creating a Knowledge Society.

The Plan builds on the foundations laid in previous plan periods, in particular the achievements of the Government National Development Plan Nine (NDP9). It provides a shared vision for the development of Botswana’s tertiary education system over the forthcoming plan period (2009/2015) which is consistent with Government’s broader strategies for the nation’s economic and social development and a key driver of Vision 2016.

The task of implementing the White Paper, *Towards a Knowledge Society*, during the NDP10 plan period will be an enormous challenge and will require both a willingness to change, a sustained

commitment to transformation and the collective creative energy from all who work in the tertiary education sector. The citizens of Botswana deserve nothing less as the future of this country as well as the realisation of their own individual potentials requires a quality tertiary education system. While the challenge may be great and the agenda demanding, the end state in terms of what the nation wants to achieve should be the primary focus of NDP10 – a tertiary education system that can provide the cutting edge of the larger change and transformation that the country is undertaking in line with the long term ambitions of the national vision 2016.

Subsequent policy briefs from the Tertiary Education Council will focus on: 1) Human Resource Development 2) Research and Innovation 3) System and Institutional Capacity Development and progress on rolling out the implementation of the White Paper on tertiary education through the NDP10 plan period.

**For further information on the White Paper ‘Towards a Knowledge Society’ check our website at [www.tec.org.bw](http://www.tec.org.bw) or**

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