

Linkages between skills production and productive sectors: Social partners' perceptions from different African countries

Employer Engagement: Preparing Young People for the Future
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Literature on VET in Africa: Why is it persistently small and weak despite reforms?

- Disrupted and weak industrialization—low numbers of well-paying jobs requiring technical expertise.
- Very small numbers of jobs that would be considered ‘middle class’ or ‘mid-level’ in wealthy countries, and in which most people are in survivalist work.
- Palliative approaches to development resulted in mass poor quality education.
- Extreme inequality in the labour market, and the history of how it has related with the education system since colonial days, creates a vicious cycle that works against the development of technical skills required by the labour market. More unequal labour markets undermine TVET provision.

Allais, S. (2020). Skills for industrialization in sub-Saharan African countries: Why is systemic reform of technical and vocational systems so persistently unsuccessful? *Journal of Vocational Education and Training*.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/13636820.2020.1782455>

Literature: links with productive sectors in Africa

- Main challenges seem to be more on the demand side than on the supply side.
- Very few companies have formal relationships with TVET colleges
- While formal VET systems are tiny, formal apprenticeship systems are even smaller—a fraction of these small systems.

Lit mainly WB:

Arias, O., Evans, D. K., & Santos, I. (Eds.). (2019). *The Skills Balancing Act in Sub-Saharan Africa: Investing in Skills for Productivity, Inclusivity, and Adaptability*. The World Bank—and a series of background papers.

Research questions

- Ways in which skills development is integrated into economic development policies, industrial policies, or sectoral trajectories
 - Including, if there is any formal provision that is located within the broader industrial strategy.
 - if training is a sector-wide phenomenon or company specific.
- If there are any formal VET programmes that are actually valued, and which they are.
- Which qualifications companies prefer at the point of hiring—high school and university graduates or VET (and at which levels), or, if they primarily value only company specific training.
- Which kinds of companies train new entrants/existing employees, what kind of training they conduct, the extent of their training, and whether it is formalized at all (against any kind of credential or formal curriculum) and in what way.
- Why companies don't train: what do they see as the main constraints to training.
- How the picture of training differs in terms of size of companies and the extent to which the sector is part of a global value chain/focuses on exports.
- The importance of skills and training for unions and collective bargaining.

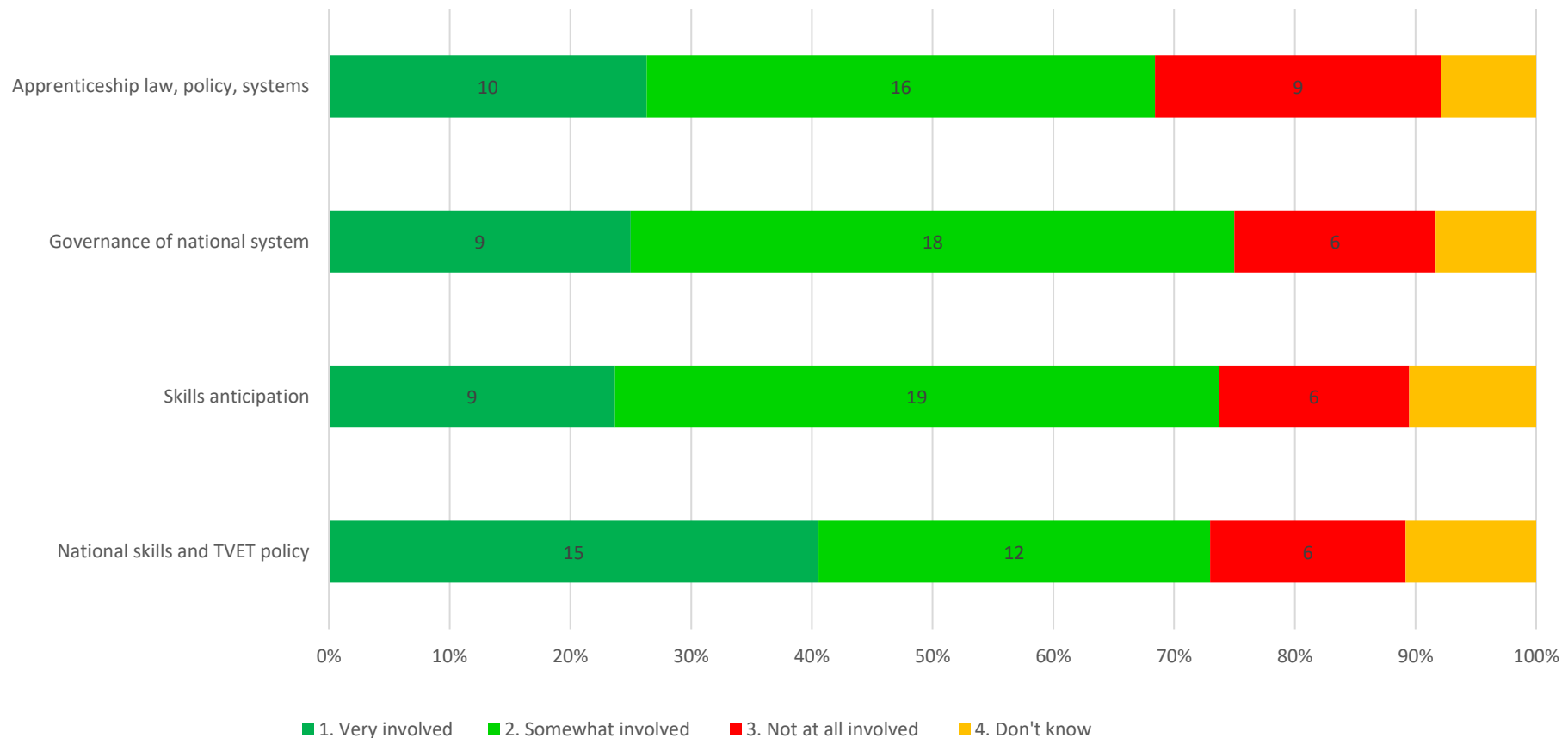
Methodology

- Three focused surveys; only two languages—English and French.
- Surveyed:
 - companies,
 - employer associations, and
 - trade unions
- Questions on formal relationships and formal collaboration with structures, systems, and policies;
- Tested employer perceptions of TVET, use of TVET qualifications in hiring decisions, and the nature of training taking place in companies;
- Unions and union federations about whether training benefits employees;
- Questions to assist in analysis, anticipating low responses.

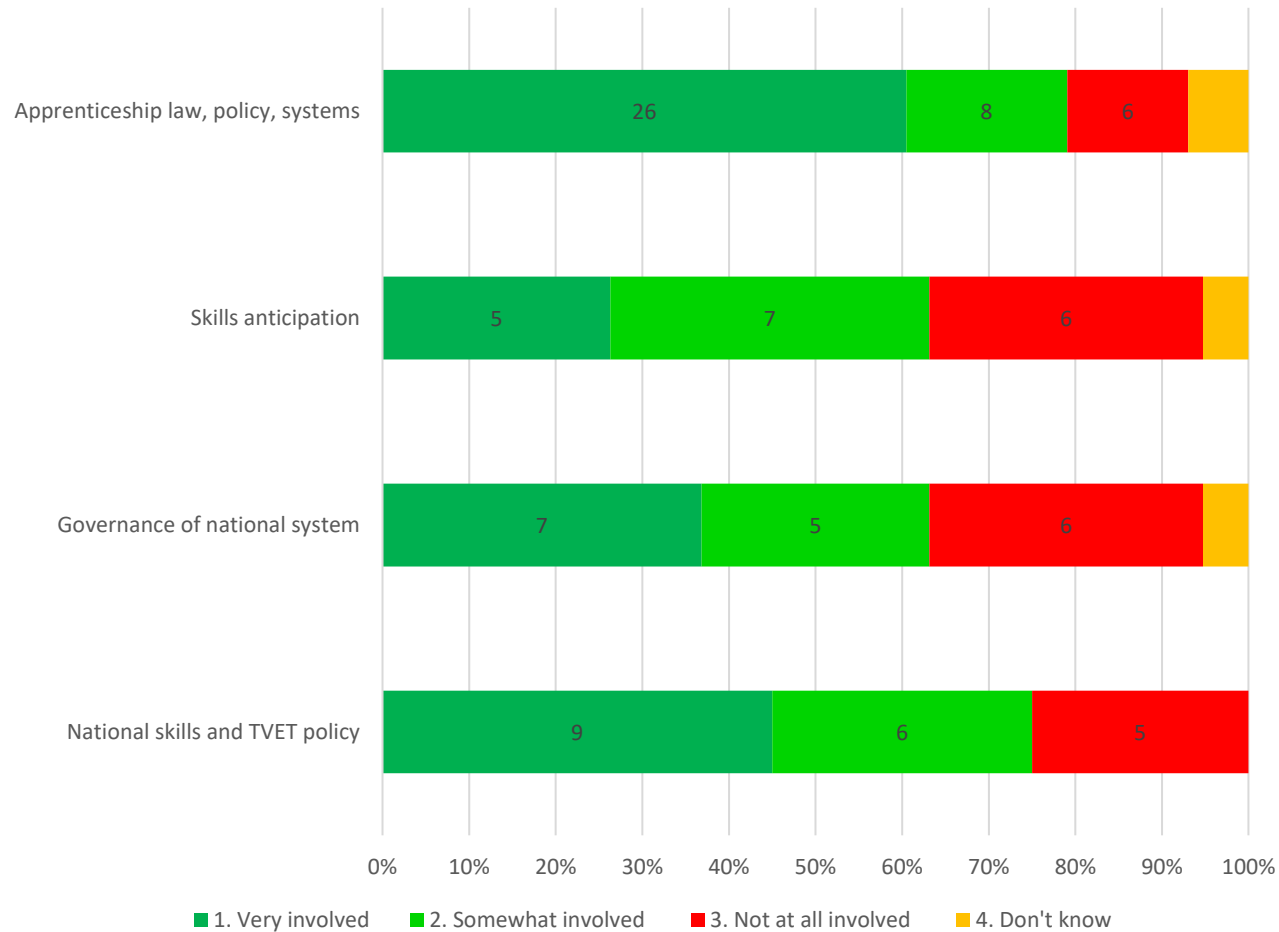
Response rate

- 38 employer associations from 31 countries; 22 from 18 English-speaking countries, 17 from 13 French and Portuguese speaking countries.
- 119 responses from individual companies
 - 37 responses from companies with over 250 employees
 - 20 from companies with between 51 and 249 employees
 - 37 from companies with between 50 and 11 employees
 - 24 responses from companies with fewer than 10 employers
- Largest number of companies in manufacturing (26); 13 in agriculture, the rest scattered across the sectors.
- 20 union federations from 13 countries.
- 19 unions from 6 countries.

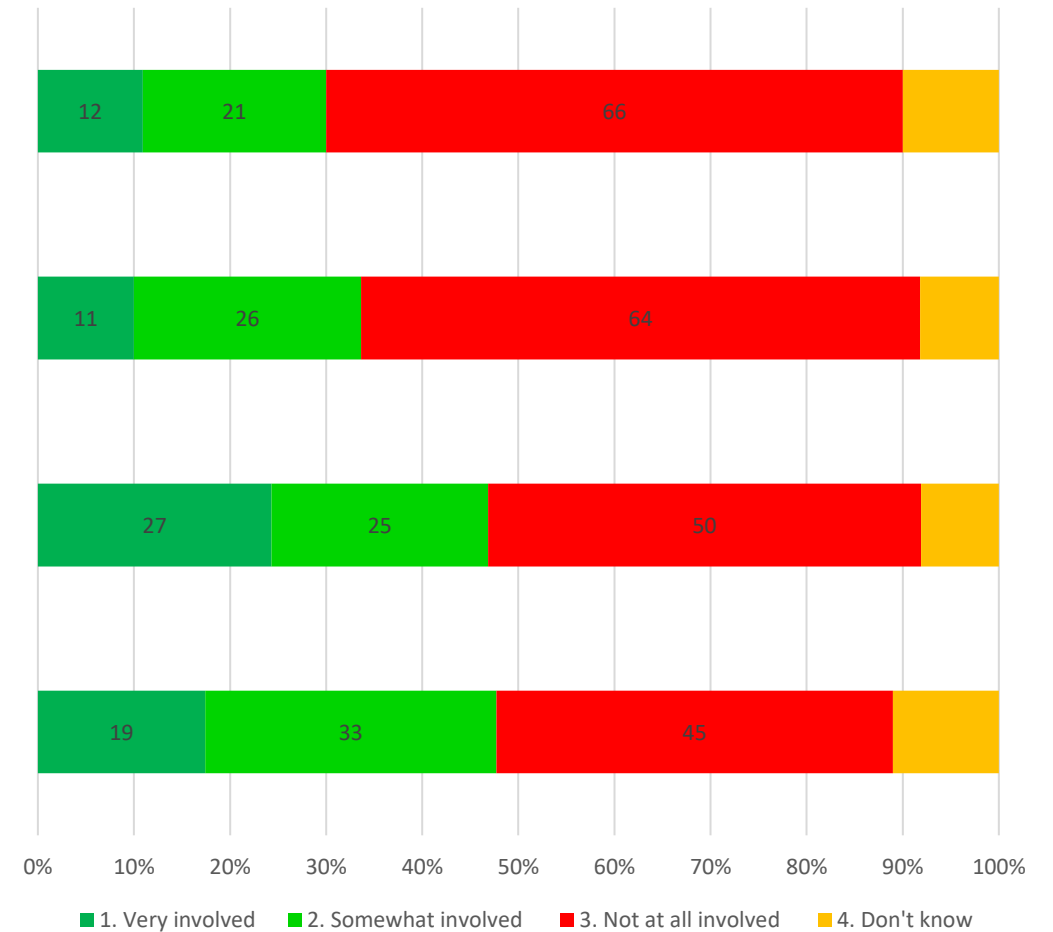
Highest areas of reported TVET involvement: employer associations



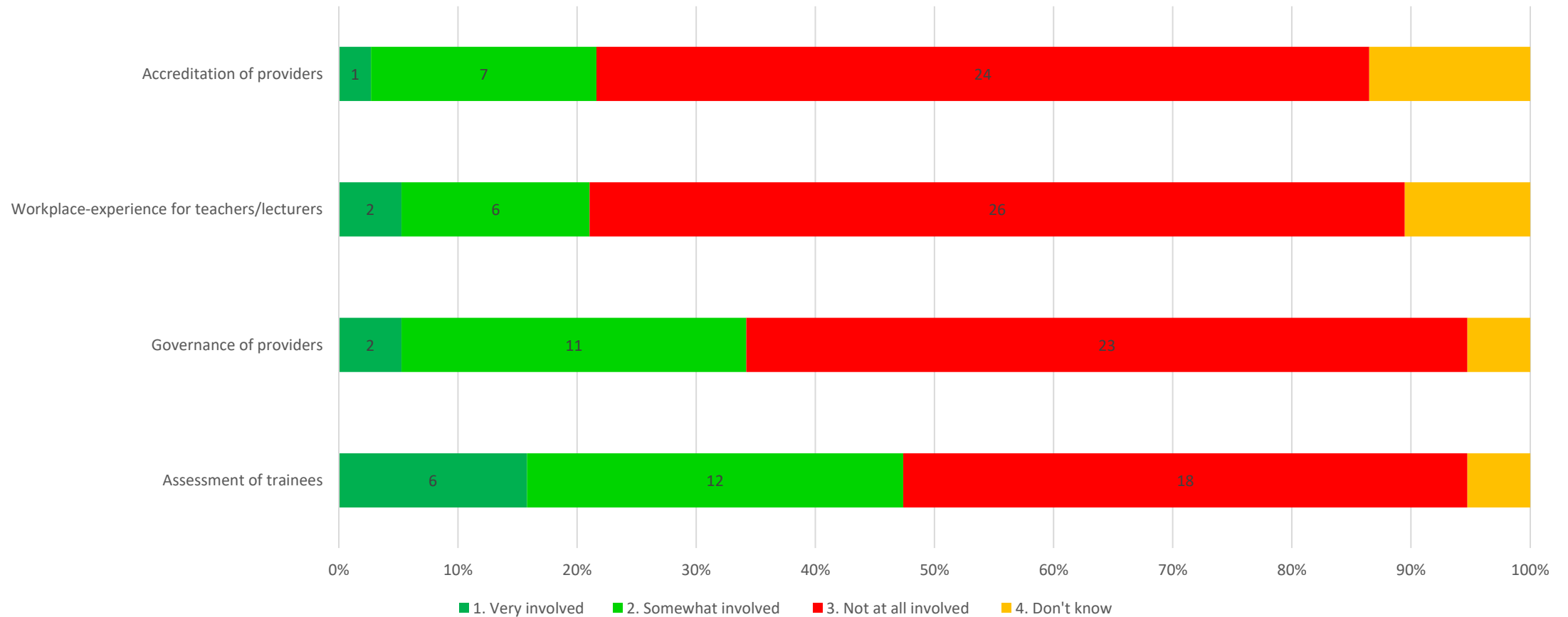
TVET involvement: Union federations



Companies



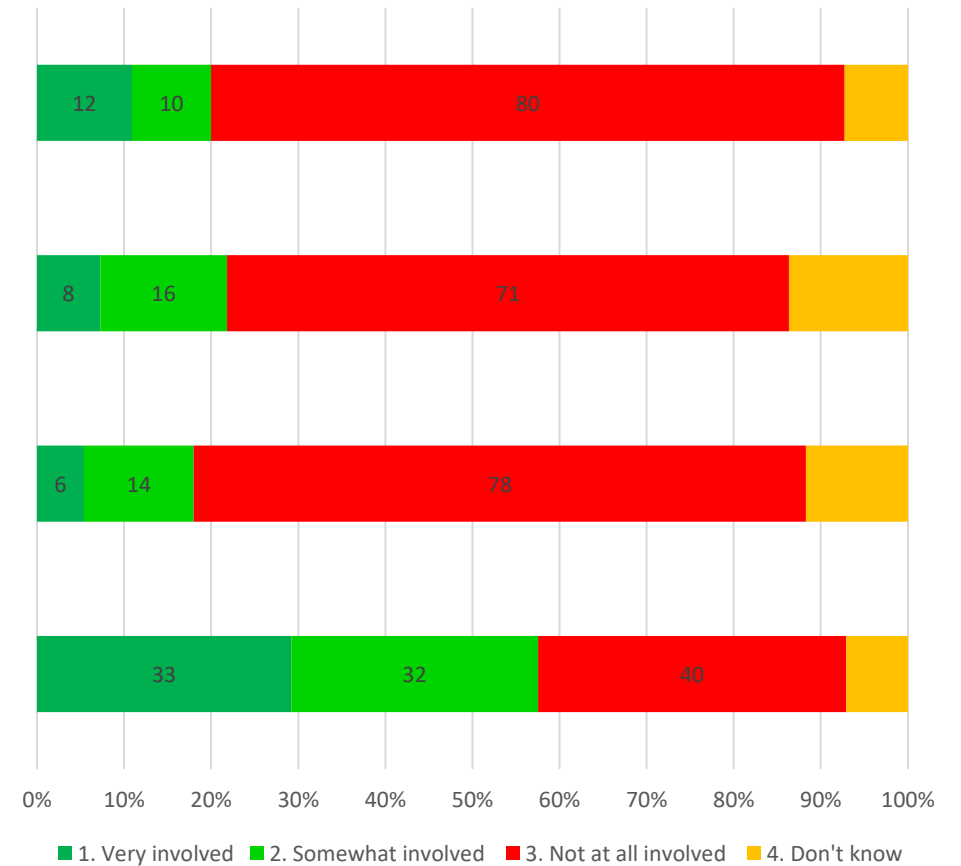
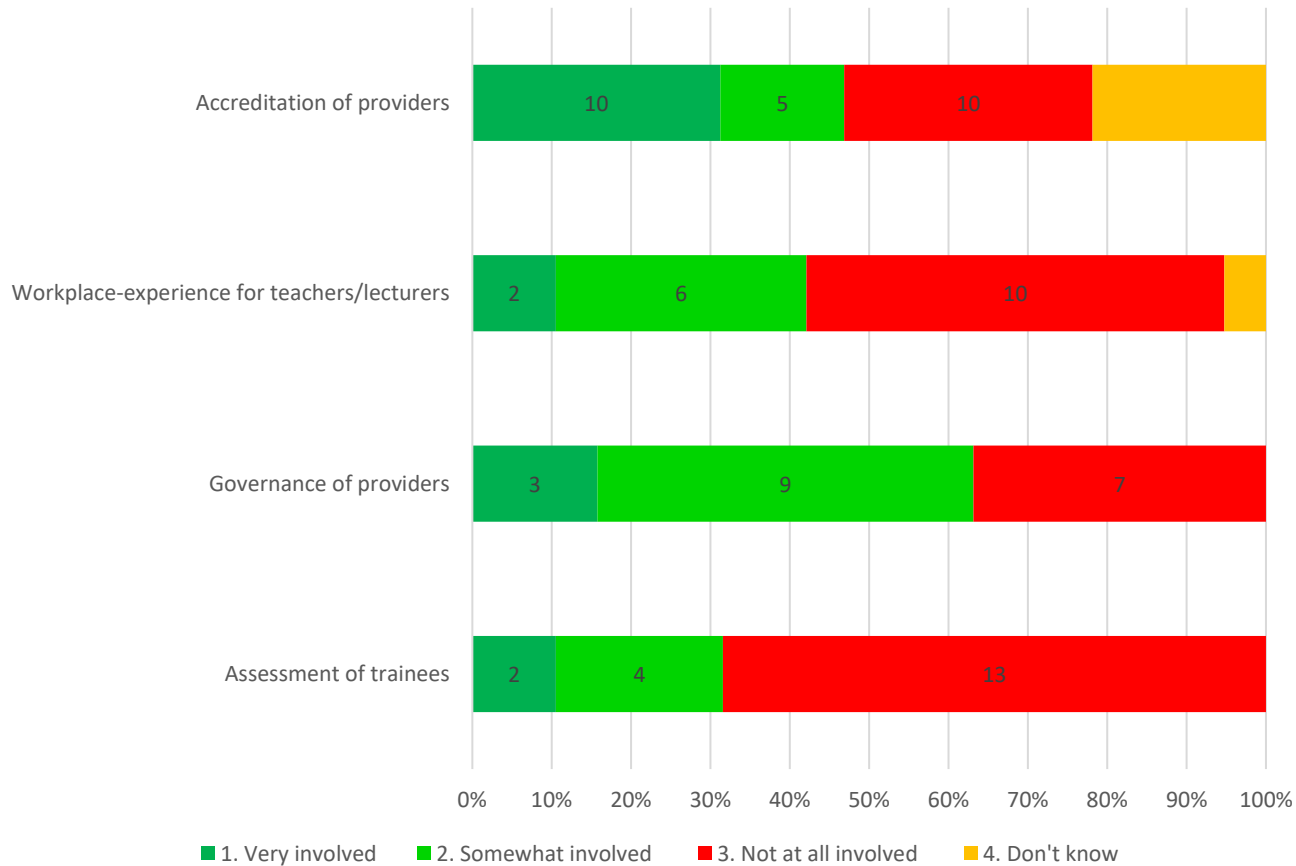
Lowest areas of involvement, employer associations



Lowest areas of involvement

Union federations

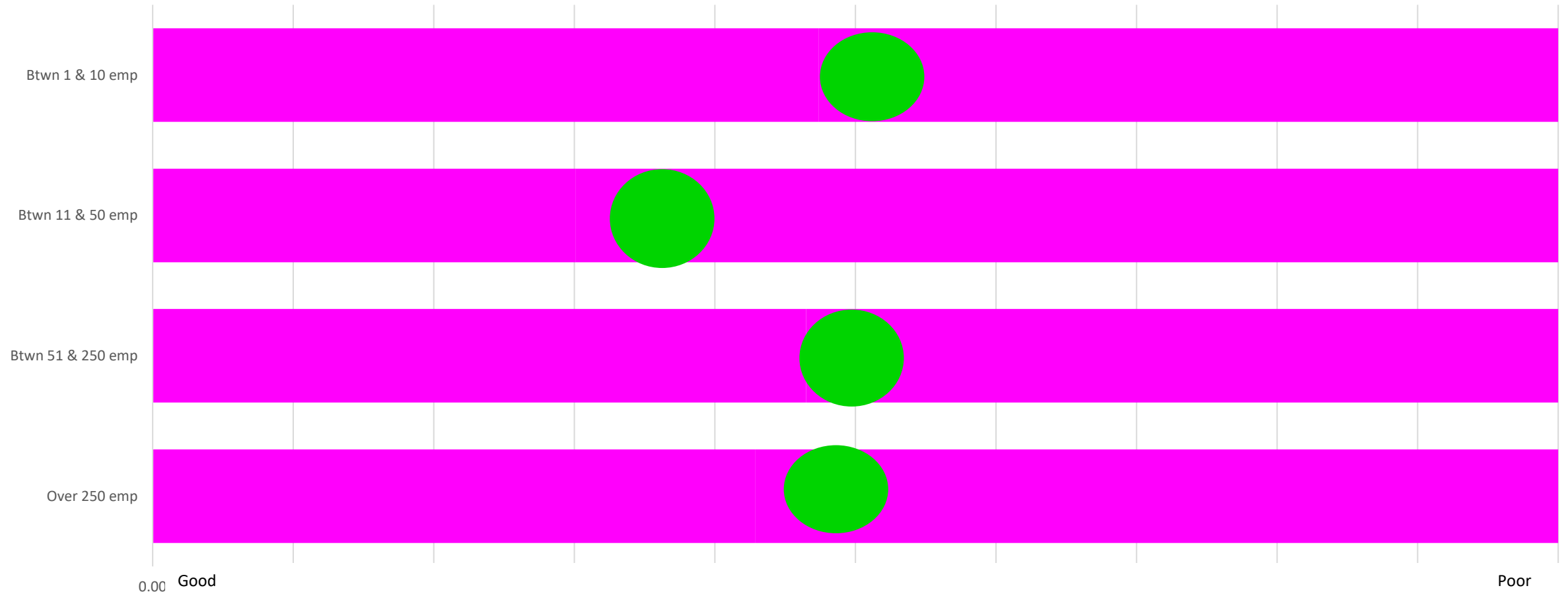
Companies



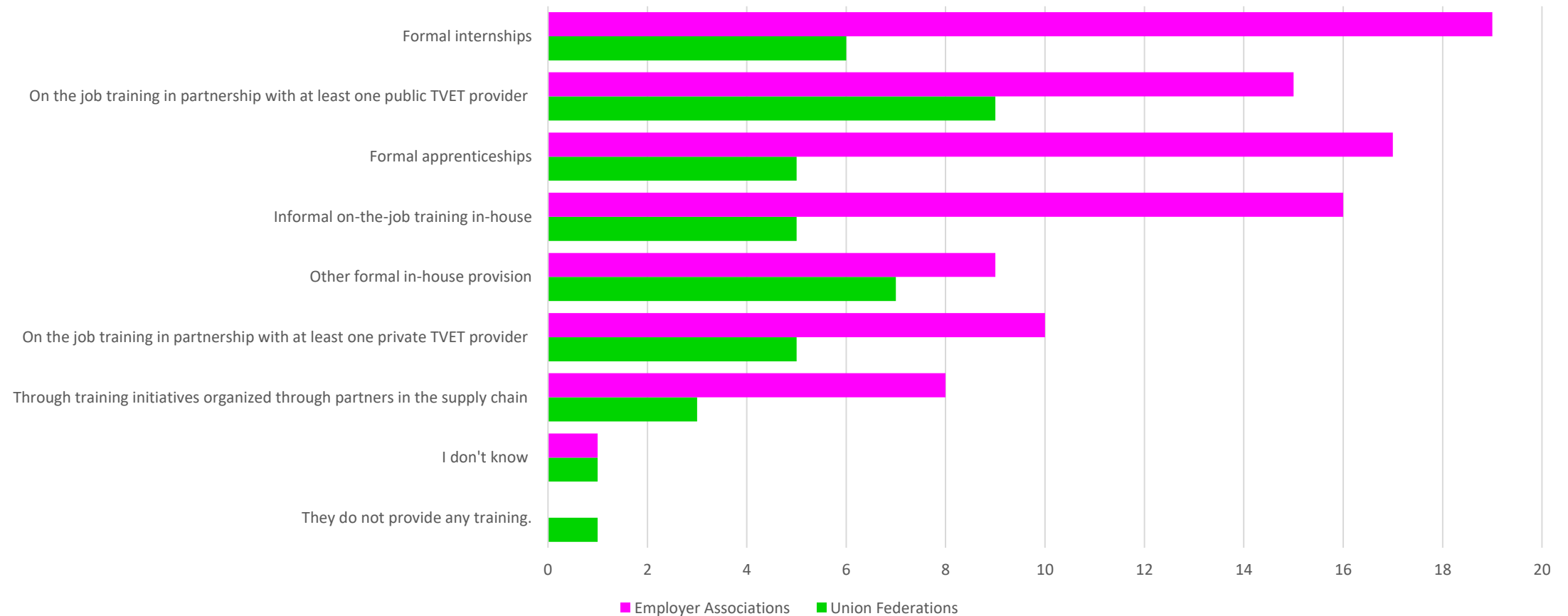
Areas of medium involvement

- Employer associations report some involvement in implementation of apprenticeships, development of occupational standards, and provision of TVET programmes. Low numbers for work-integrated learning. Slightly more involvement in design and implementation of apprenticeship programmes from French speaking countries.
- Low levels of union federations involvement in these four areas, with the highest in design of work-integrated learning.
- A small majority of companies report involvement in offering work-integrated learning opportunities, and 38 report some or considerable involvement in the design and implementation of apprenticeships. Low levels of involvement in TVET provision.
- **The amount of involvement of employer associations, union federations and companies declines as the areas of involvement become closer to provision.**

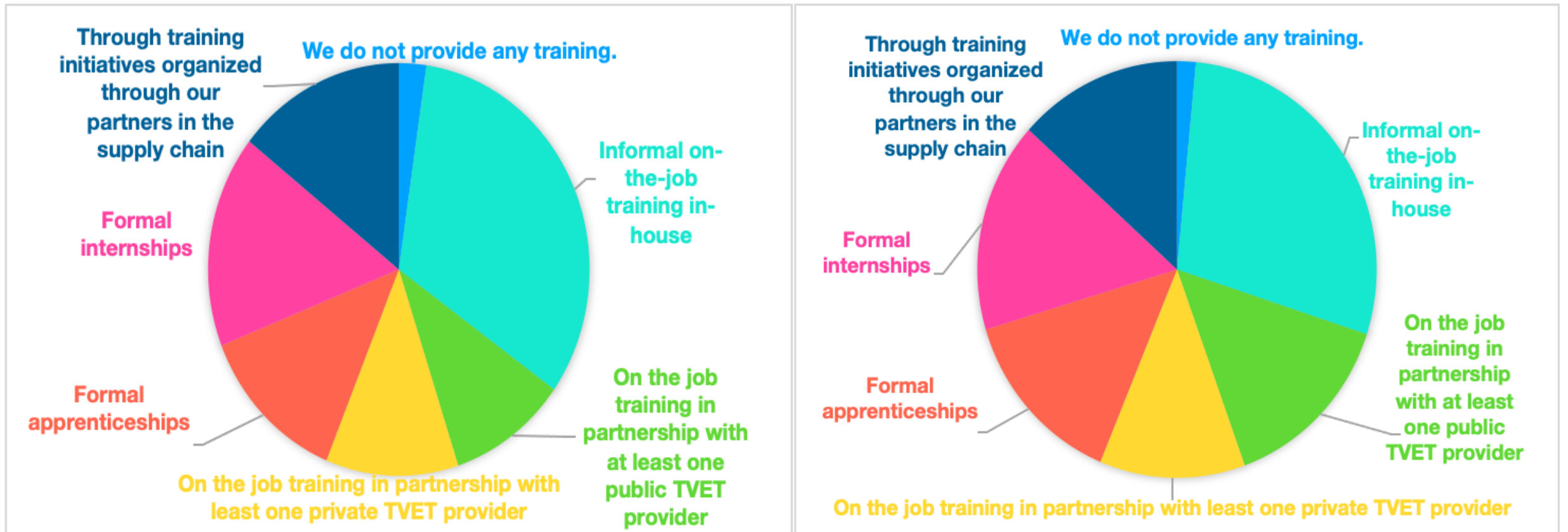
Rate quality of collaboration with TVET providers



Most frequent types of training, employer associations and union federations, semi-skilled workers

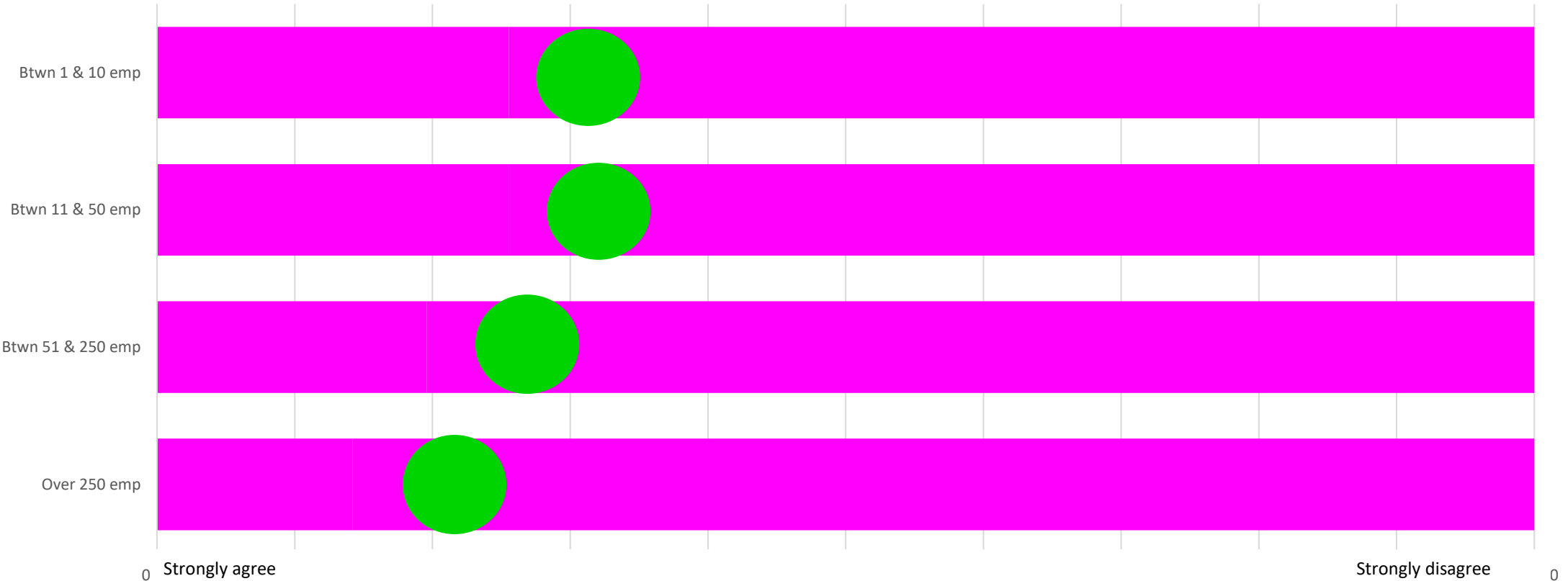


Companies, semi-skilled and skilled workers

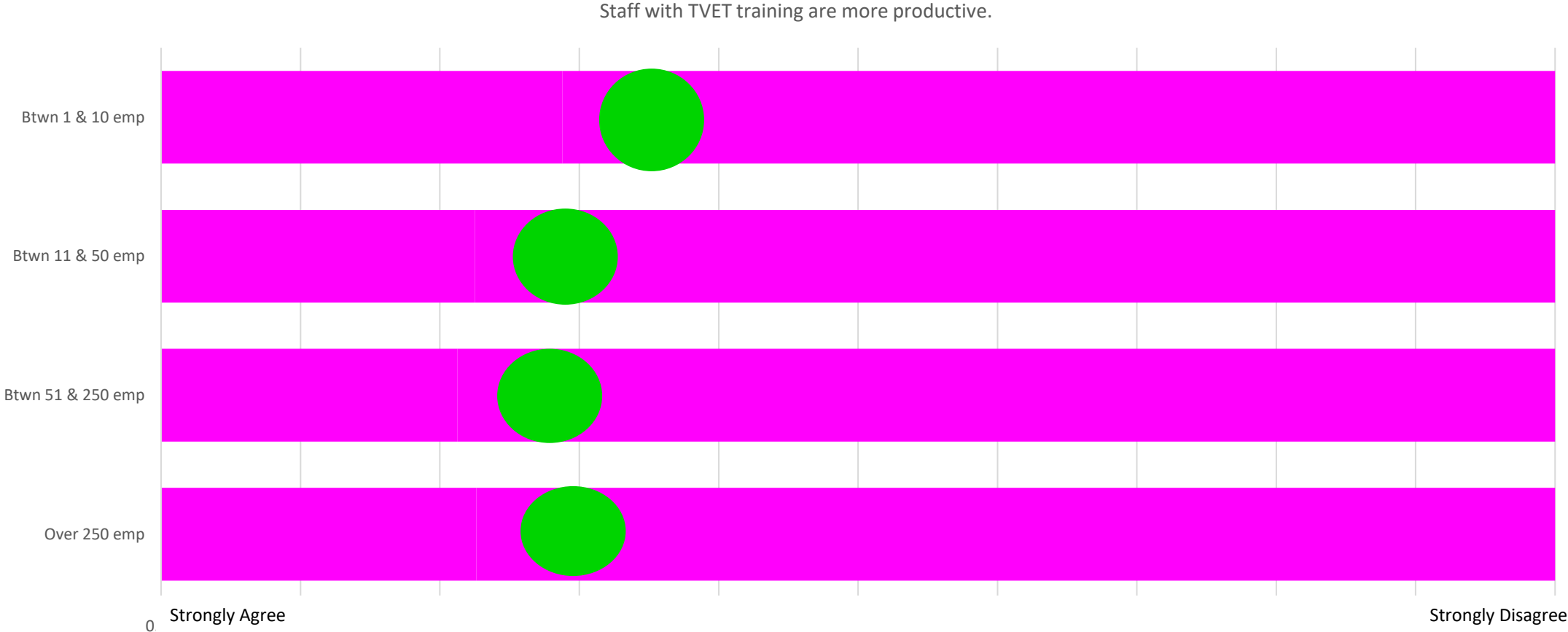


TVET quals importance for new tech

Having staff with TVET qualifications is an important factor when we are making decisions about introducing new technology.



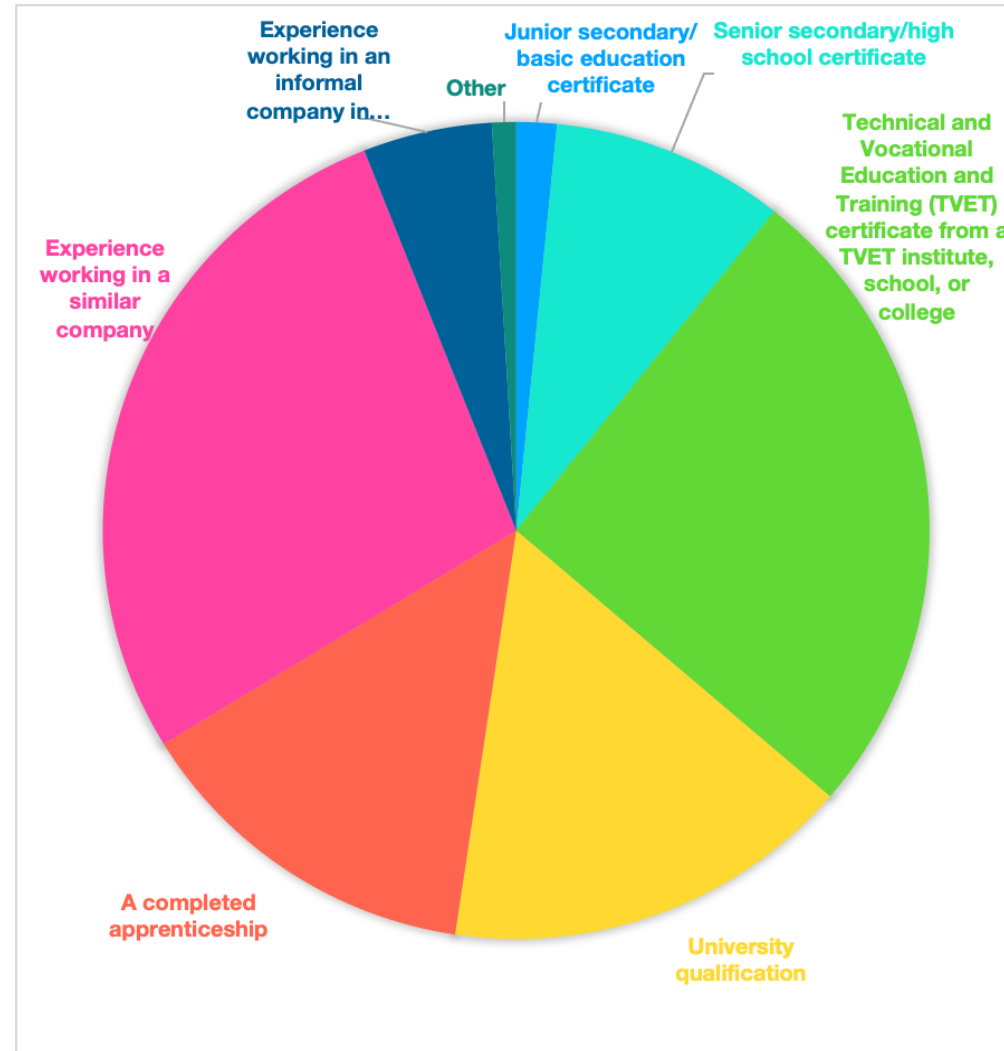
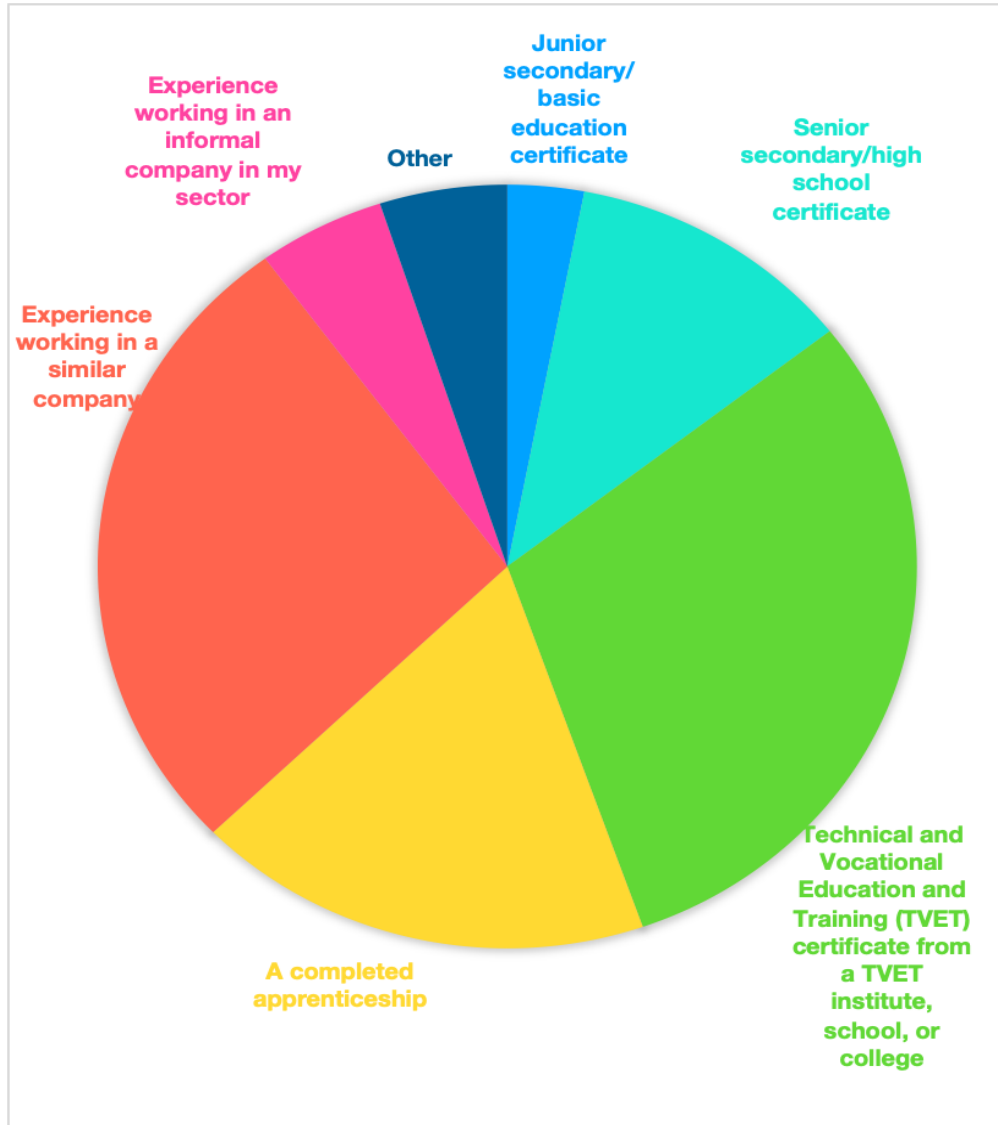
TVET quals, importance for productivity



TVET quals, trainability



Quals in hiring, semi-skilled and skilled



Findings pull in different directions

- Regardless of company size, company respondents rated TVET favourably in terms of three important ways in which it could be a factor in workplaces.
- TVET qualifications were seen as a significant factor in hiring decisions—possibly counteracts general perception that companies are dissatisfied with TVET.
- However, small number of specific qualifications mentioned, together with the strong emphasis on soft skills and personal attributes in open-ended comments, confirm ongoing challenges.

Factors which could shape involvement

- Industrial policy: 11 employer associations agreed that skills policy is incorporated into industrial policy, 7 disagreed, 18 were not sure. Unions and union federations split.
- Lack of clarity not surprising—what it means for skills to be incorporated into industrial policy is complex. cursory analysis of industrial policies suggests that skills are *mentioned* in the policies, but usually listed as an add on, or, as a necessary ingredient. It is not easy to find examples of specific policy levers within industrial policy incorporating skills in an embedded way.

Factors which could shape involvement

- Supply chains: 48 companies out of 118 report training workers from other companies in formal supply chains, and 49 in informal supply chains.
- New tech: 80 companies in the 3-year period before March 2020 vs 36 not
- New work organization: 86 companies versus 31 not.
- New products or services: 80 companies versus 34 not.
- However, when controlling for new tech, work organization, and products, no substantially different patterns for dominant types of training, nor for hiring.
- Collective bargaining: literature suggests that industry-level collective bargaining could support stronger training systems. Unions report a stronger role for national and sectoral collective bargaining, and almost no company level collective bargaining; employer associations report a mix, but more at company level in Anglophone countries, and more at national level in Francophone countries.

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