LODA
LOCAL ADMINISTRATIVE ENTITIES DEVELOPMENT AGENCY

VISION UMURENGE PROGRAM (VUP) OPERATIONAL MANUAL

POVERTY GRADUATION GUIDELINES

July, 2026

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

BDA	Business Development Advisor
CBHI	Community Based Health Insurance
CHW	Community Health Worker
COP	Community of Practice
CSO	Civil Society Organization
CTSC	Cash Transfer for Start-up Capital
DS	Direct Support
EICV	Enquête Intégrale sur les Conditions de Vie des Ménages (Integrated Household Living Conditions Survey)
FSMIS	Financial Services Management Information Sytem
GRM	Grievance Redress Mechanism
HGP	Household Graduation Plan
HH	Household
IGA	Income Generating Activity
SRIS	Social Registry Information System
JADF	Joint Action Development Forum
LODA	Local Administrative Entities Development Agency
MEIS	Management and Evaluation Information System (District-level)
MINAGRI	Ministry of Agriculture and Animal Resources
MINALOC	Ministry of Local Government
MINECOFIN	Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSSG	National Strategy for Sustainable Graduation
NST2	National Strategy for Transformation 2 (2024–2029)
PGMIS	Poverty Graduation Management Information System
PSW	Para-Social Worker
RDRC	Rwanda Demobilization and Re-Integration Commission
MEL	Monitoring Evaluation and Learning
RTB / NESARTB	Rwanda TVET Board
SACCO	Savings and Credit Cooperative
SEDO/EHCDO	Socio-Economic Development Officer/Economic and Human Capital Development Officer
SPO	Sector Social Protection Officer
SRSP	Shock-Responsive Social Protection
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
VC	Village Coordinator
VSLA	Village Savings and Loan Association
VUP	Vision Umurenge Programme
WB	World Bank

GLOSSARY OF KEY TERMS

Able to work	An individual aged between 18 and 64 years of age who is not severely disabled or in fulltime education or caring for someone with severe disability (NSSG, 2022).
Case Management	A collaborative process of assessment, planning, facilitation, and advocacy for options and services to meet an individual household's needs. Under this programme, it is the mechanism through which Para-Social Workers understand each household's specific situation, support the development of Household Graduation Plans, link households to services, and monitor progress over time.
Cash Transfer for Start-up Capital (CTSC)	A conditional cash start-up capital provided to graduation participants on the livelihood pathway to enable them to establish or expand an income-generating activity.
Civil Society Organization (CSO)	A non-State, voluntary entity formed in the social sphere, separate from government and the market. CSOs include community-based organizations and NGOs. Under this programme, CSOs are engaged as implementation partners through formal MoUs with districts.
Graduation	A situation whereby a previously poor household increases their household productivity and resilience to the extent that their consumption permanently remains over and above the official poverty line.
Household	An individual living alone or a group of persons sharing the same dwelling, cooking facilities, and common budget, whether or not they are related. The household is the unit of enrolment, assessment, and support under this programme.
Household Graduation Plan (HGP)	An individualized plan developed jointly by the PSW and the household, documenting the household's assessed situation, pathway allocation, agreed livelihood activities, targets, and the support to be provided at each stage. The HGP is the primary operational document guiding each household through the programme and is signed by the household and the Cell Executive Secretary. It is referred to as the Personal Graduation Plan in the National Strategy for Sustainable Graduation
Income Generating Activity (IGA)	An IGA or productive activity undertaken by a graduation participant to generate income. IGAs are developed with PSW support, validated at cell, sector, and district level, and funded through CTSC upon approval.
Livelihoods Pathway	One of two programme pathways, that households select, after they are assessed as having sufficient labor capacity and agency to develop a sustainable livelihood and graduate within approximately two years of intensive support.
Para-Social Worker (PSW)	A community-based volunteer selected from the village they serve, trained and facilitated by LODA through districts. PSWs provide proximity advisory services: conducting home visits, developing HGPs with households, linking households to services, facilitating group training, and monitoring progress through PGMIS.
Poor Household	A household whose per adult equivalent per capita consumption falls below the official poverty line (RWF 560,127 per adult equivalent per year, as defined by EICV 7).
Extremely Poor Household	A household whose per adult equivalent per capita consumption falls below the official extreme poverty line (RWF 356,432 per adult equivalent per year, as defined by EICV 7).

Resilience	The capacity of a household to absorb, adapt to, and recover from economic, social, or environmental shocks without falling back into poverty. Building resilience—through savings, diversified income, VSLA membership, and CBHI coverage, insurance — is a core graduation objective.
Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP)	A set of mechanisms and protocols that allow the programme to adjust its support in response to shocks affecting households or communities, so that graduation progress is protected and households do not fall back into poverty due to events outside their control.
Social Pathway	One of two programme pathways, selected by households with identified barriers, such as disability, chronic illness, GBV, or deep social exclusion, that prevent immediate engagement in livelihood activities. Social pathway households receive tailored social support and referrals, with periodic reassessment for transition to the livelihoods pathway.
Social Protection	Policies and programmes that reduce poverty and vulnerability by protecting households from risk and promoting productive capacity. Rwanda's Social Protection Policy (2020) organizes social protection around three functions: Protection, Promotion, and Prevention.
Sustainable Livelihood	A livelihood that maintains a household above the poverty line over the medium to longer term, can absorb and recover from shocks, and does not depend on ongoing social transfers. Built on diversified income, accumulated assets, savings behavior, and market linkages.
Vision Umurenge Programme (VUP)	Rwanda's flagship social protection programme, implemented through LODA, providing safety nets (direct support, categorical grants), cash-for-work programmes (classic public works, expanded public works), shock response and graduation support to poor and extremely poor households across all sectors of the country.

0. BACKGROUND

0.1. Policy context

The Graduation approach is Rwanda's structured, multi-sectoral strategy to support poor households with graduation potential to move permanently and durably above the poverty line. It was approved by Cabinet in November 2022 through the National Strategy for Sustainable Graduation (NSSG) and is anchored in the National Strategy for Transformation (NST2, 2024–2029). The NSSG provides the overarching policy framework for graduation programming in Rwanda, under which multiple graduation programmes are implemented for different target populations, including the Vision Umurenge Programme (VUP) Graduation programme, the graduation programme for Genocide Survivors, and the graduation programme for Refugees. While these programmes share the common objective of enabling sustainable socioeconomic graduation, they differ in design, target groups, and benefit packages to reflect the specific needs and contexts of the populations they serve.

It is implemented is coordinated by the relevant institutions, with LODA leading the Vision Umurenge Programme (VUP) graduation programme under the oversight of MINALOC, with financing support from MINECOFIN and development partners.

The approach rests on seven pillars**:**

Pillar	Description
Pillar 1	Income transfers through safety nets to stabilize household consumption
Pillar 2	Multi-sectoral support for sustainable livelihoods
Pillar 3	Access to complementary public and non-State services
Pillar 4	An enabling environment for graduation (infrastructure, markets, land, connectivity)
Pillar 5	Understanding participant realities so that support is effective
Pillar 6	Aligned policy and institutional arrangements across all levels
Pillar 7	Lesson-learning and adaptive management

The Graduation Framework:

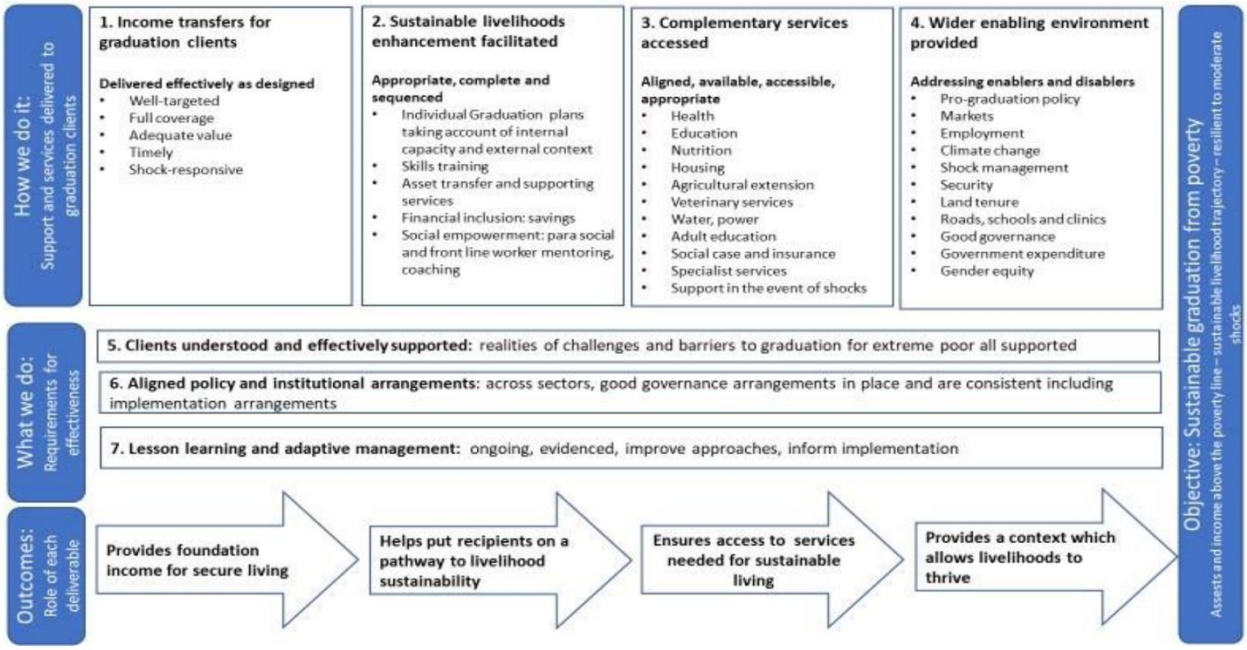


Figure 1: Graduation Framework (NSSG, 2022)

Implementation is guided by six operating principles:

Principle	What It Means in Practice
Community awareness and sensitization	All participants and communities are informed of programme objectives, entitlements, and responsibilities before and throughout the programme
Coordinated multi-sectoral action	Graduation is delivered through aligned contributions across health, agriculture, infrastructure, financial services, and social protection
Defined targeting criteria	There are two targeting criteria; (i) Poverty status, where the household must be identified as poor or extremely poor through the Social Registry Information System (SRIS). (ii) Labour capacity, where at least one household member must have labour capacity and the potential to engage in productive livelihood activities with appropriate support.
Maintenance of an enabling environment	Implementing authorities ensure infrastructure, market access, and service availability and access to Government and non-state services that make graduation achievable
A defined timeline	Two years of intensive, sequenced support per cohort, with light-touch monitoring in year three to ensure the HH continues to meet the criteria for graduation
Shock-Responsive Social Protection	Households at risk of falling back into poverty due to shocks receive responsive support to protect graduation gains

The Graduation approach aligns with Rwanda's Social Protection Policy (2020), which organizes support around three interconnected functions:



Figure 2: Pivot to Promote, Protect and Prevent

A key feature of the approach is its emphasis on durable outcomes. A household has not graduated if it crosses the poverty line and subsequently falls back into poverty. This 'churning' is specifically what the programme is designed to prevent through shock-responsive support and resilience-building throughout the programme period.

Beyond poverty reduction, the Graduation programme contributes to Rwanda's broader economic transformation and human capital agenda. It is a direct instrument of productive employment and labour market integration: by linking participants to wage employment, skills certification, and value chain participation, it supports Rwanda's NST2 objectives on job creation and economic diversification. The programme specifically advances women's economic empowerment and youth employment by prioritising female-headed households and directing young working-age members toward certified vocational pathways and employment opportunities. It also contributes to climate resilience by integrating climate-smart livelihood practices, promoting income diversification, and building the adaptive capacity of households in climate-exposed sectors. These contributions position the Graduation programme not only as a poverty reduction instrument but as a vehicle for inclusive, resilient, and productive economic inclusion.

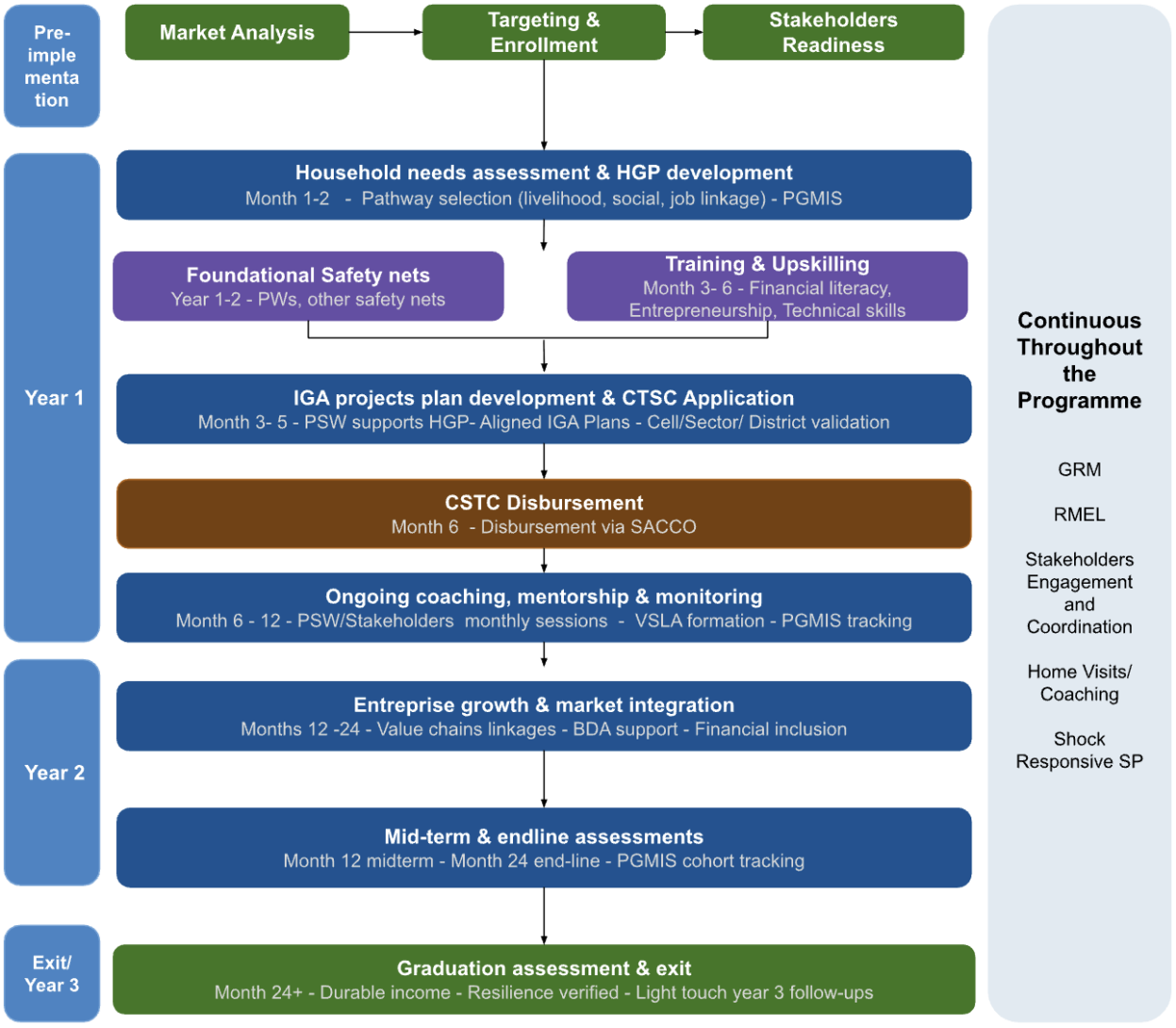
0.2. Purpose of the guidelines

This guideline provides operational guidance for the implementation of the Graduation programme under the VUP. It sets out the processes, roles, and standards that all implementing partners need to follow to support poor and vulnerable households to move sustainably out of poverty.

The guidelines covers the full graduation package: Market analysis, targeting and enrolment, case management, Household Graduation Plans (HGP), safety nets, training and upskilling, the Cash Transfer for Start-up Capital (CTSC), stakeholders coordination, para-social worker deployment, monitoring, and grievance redress. They ensure that the programme delivery is holistic, coordinated, and results-oriented, enabling households to move beyond short-term support toward long-term self-reliance.

0.3. Graduation process

The programme operates in 2 years cohorts. Each cohort of enrolled households progresses through a defined, sequenced package of support over two years of intensive engagement, followed by light-touch monitoring in year three. The diagram below shows the full sequence of the graduation programme from pre-implementation through to graduation exit. Components that operate continuously throughout the programme, including the GRM, RMEL, and PSW home visits, are indicated in the right column.



1. LABOUR AND MARKET ANALYSIS

Labour and market analysis is the evidence base that anchors the entire graduation programme in local economic reality. It is conducted by districts before each cohort launches and is not a bureaucratic formality. Its findings guide districts in identifying relevant market actors, employers, local businesses, training institutions, and service providers to engage in programme delivery, including businesses that can provide apprenticeship opportunities, practical exposure, and skills training for graduation participants. The analysis also supports Para-Social Workers (PSWs) and other frontline actors to advise households in making informed livelihood decisions by identifying viable trades, employment opportunities, and income-generating activities that reflect actual market demand and local economic opportunities. This helps ensure that households select livelihood pathways with realistic potential for sustainable income generation and graduation out of poverty. A programme built without labour and market analysis risks training participants for activities with no viable local demand, a failure that wastes public resources and demoralises households.

The programme uses a demand-driven approach: districts first map what economic opportunities exist locally, in jobs, value chains, growing sectors, and available employers, and then align training and livelihood support to match those opportunities. This is the foundational logic that runs through every subsequent section of this manual.

1.1. The two components

Labour and market analysis is structured around two interrelated components that must both be completed and documented before a cohort begins. Neither is optional; together they constitute the district's labour and market analysis report.

- **Context analysis** provides a comprehensive picture of the local economic environment within which graduation participants will operate. It examines both the opportunities available and the constraints that may limit access to them. The district examines the dominant and emerging sectors of the local economy, agriculture, livestock, trade, services, small-scale industry, agro-processing, green jobs, and the social and health care services among others, alongside the presence of employers and businesses, seasonal and permanent labor market trends, and the infrastructure conditions that affect whether participants can actually reach and participate in markets: roads, transport, market access, utilities, digital connectivity, and land availability.

Context analysis data is collected through three methods: consultations with local private sector actors, cooperatives, and employers; review of District Development Plans and relevant sector reports; and direct field observation. The district is responsible for coordinating this process and ensuring findings are documented.

- **Market linkages mapping** goes one step further: it identifies specific connections between graduation participants and real economic opportunities. It maps the key value chains with growth potential and the input suppliers, buyers, and aggregators operating within them; the private sector actors willing to engage in training, sourcing, or employment; labor-intensive public works programmes and other government and private sector projects with labor demand; and the available apprenticeship, internship, and on-the-job training opportunities by trade.

- Labor market demand mapping, In addition to mapping value chains and IGA opportunities, districts must explicitly map local labor market demand as part of market linkages mapping. This includes:
    - Occupations currently in demand and those projected to grow in the district over the next two years
    - Major employers operating in or near the district, including private firms, cooperatives, processing facilities, and public institutions
    - Government infrastructure investments, industrial parks, special economic zones, and large-scale agricultural or construction projects generating labour demand
    - Identified skills shortages, trades or competencies where employer demand exceeds local supply
    - Emerging sectors with employment potential, including digital services, green economy, and care economy roles;

Labour market demand mapping findings must be documented and used to guide the selection of job-oriented upskilling trades and employer MoU negotiations. Districts that fail to map labour demand are not permitted to offer job linkage route training in that cohort.

The output of market linkages mapping is a service providers /market actors list, a practical, living document listing key contacts by sector and trade. This directory is shared with all sectors and PSWs at cohort launch so that participants can be directly connected to market actors during their graduation journey, not left to find those connections on their own. Districts shall keep this directory updated throughout the cohort and refresh it before the next cohort begins.

1.2. How findings must drive graduation programme decisions

Labour and market analysis findings are not filed and forgotten. They are the mandatory evidence base for five specific activity decisions. Implementing partners must be able to demonstrate, when asked by LODA or a district, that each of the following decisions was informed by the market analysis.

- At cohort launch, the district briefs all sectors, Cells and PSWs on the key findings and distributes the service providers /market actors list.
- Training selection. Only trades with confirmed local demand and a viable employment or IGA pathway shall be included in a cohort's training plan. A district may not procure training for a trade that is not supported by the labor and market analysis findings.
- IGA plan validation. PSWs and validation committees must confirm that each household proposed IGA is viable in the local market before approving a CTSC application. An IGA plan that cannot be linked to a market opportunity identified in the analysis should not be approved without additional justification.
- Service provider selection. Service providers are engaged for the specific trades identified through market analysis. No training shall be procured for trades without documented market justification.
- HGP development. When households fill their HGP, PSWs use labor and market analysis findings to advise them toward livelihood options that are realistic for the local economy and appropriate to the household's assessed capacity. A household's HGP should not propose a livelihood activity that has no identified market basis in the district.

- Cohort design adaptation. If market conditions change significantly between the planning phase and cohort implementation, for example, a major employer closes or a new value chain opens, the district may revise the proposed trainings and livelihood options. Any such revision must be documented and notified to LODA before implementation proceeds.
- District Partnerships: Effective graduation programming requires active, sustained partnerships with a range of market actors, not only training providers. Districts shall develop and maintain partnerships across three categories:
    - Private sector actors and employers: local businesses, workshops, garages, factories, hospitality establishments, and agro-processors that can provide apprenticeships, practical upskilling, job placements, or procurement of participants' products. Partnerships are documented through MoUs specifying obligations on both sides, training delivery, placement commitments, or offtake arrangements.
    - Cooperatives, business associations, and value chain actors: input suppliers, buyer cooperatives, aggregators, producer groups, and sector associations that can link participants to structured markets, supply chains, and group enterprise opportunities. These partnerships address market access, not only training.
    - Financial institutions: SACCOs, MFIs, and banks that can provide graduation-linked savings products, facilitate access to the start-up capital.

All key partnerships must be formalised through a signed MoU with a Joint Action Plan, reviewed at every regularly in District Graduation Committee meeting. Districts must maintain a live register of all active partnerships, updated each cohort, and submitted to LODA with the labour/market analysis report.

1.3. Gender and climate considerations

Labour and market analysis must explicitly address two dimensions that are too often treated as afterthoughts.

- **Gender.** The analysis must identify which livelihood opportunities are equally accessible to women, female-headed households, and men, and identify any, barriers that may limit participation, including distance to markets, limited access to land or finance, mobility constraints, unpaid care responsibilities, safety concerns, or discriminatory practices and which barriers, distance to market, land access constraints, mobility limitations, care responsibilities, may prevent access. Findings should inform programme design and support measures to ensure that women and men can participate in and benefit from a wide range of livelihood opportunities, including non-traditional and higher-return sectors. Training and apprenticeship opportunities should therefore be designed to expand household choice and economic inclusion, rather than reinforce existing gender norms. Moreso, districts are encouraged to identify opportunities for women, youth, persons with disabilities and other vulnerable groups to participate in higher productivity and non-traditional sectors. This would better support inclusive and resilient economic inclusion.

- **Climate.** Districts shall note the climate risks relevant to the livelihood sectors they propose, flood exposure, drought vulnerability, soil degradation, seasonal disruption, and prioritize climate-smart practices and diversified income options where sectors are climate-exposed. Single-crop agricultural IGAs in areas with high climate risk should be accompanied by documented risk mitigation options in the HGP.

1.4. District responsibilities and process

The district is responsible for conducting or commissioning the full labor and market analysis before each cohort and for keeping the service providers /market actors list current throughout the cohort period. This responsibility cannot be delegated to sectors or PSWs, though their knowledge of local conditions should inform the analysis.

The process runs as follows. The district begins data collection through the three methods described under context analysis above, targeting completion before cohort launch. Findings are compiled into the labour and market analysis report. The report is submitted to LODA, along with the service providers /market actors list and the proposed training list with market justifications, before the start of the fiscal year's graduation activities. LODA reviews submissions to inform national planning and budget allocation. At cohort launch, the district briefs all sectors, Cells and PSWs on the key findings and distributes the service providers /market actors list.

Sectors and PSWs are then responsible for applying those findings throughout the cohort, especially when advising the households through their selection of livelihoods pathways, as well as their development of IGA plans.

Support available to districts conducting labour and market analysis for the first time

Responsibility: The Graduation Committee coordinates the labor and market analysis at district level. The District Social Development Unit, is the accountable lead and signs off the final report.

LODA support: LODA provides the standard labor and market analysis report template (Annex 4), a facilitator's guide, and one orientation session for district teams before their first cohort. Districts that have completed a prior analysis are expected to update and deepen it for each subsequent cohort.

Minimum standard for a first cohort: a district's first labor and market analysis must cover at minimum the three dominant livelihood sectors in the district, the main employers or buyers in each sector, and at least three viable trainings with documented local demand. This baseline is built on in subsequent cohorts.

1.5. Documentation requirements

The district must document labour and market analysis findings in a written report and submit it to LODA before any training service provider selection or CTSC planning begins for the cohort. This report informs LODA's national planning and the allocation of programme budgets.

Documents required when submitting the labour and market analysis report to LODA

1. Labor and market analysis report; a written summary covering both context analysis and market linkages mapping findings, signed by the District Mayor or authorized representative.
2. Service providers /market actors list updated list of private sector contacts, cooperatives, aggregators, employers, and apprenticeship/internship opportunities by trade, and other.
3. List of proposed trainings with a brief written justification for each trade, referencing the labor and market analysis findings.
4. Extract from the District Development Plan or relevant sector report confirming the priority sectors identified.
5. All documents must be uploaded to MEIS before the fund request for training and CTSC is submitted to LODA.

2. HOUSEHOLDS TARGETING AND ENROLLEMENT

Targeting for the Graduation programme combines data-driven systems and community-based validation to ensure that the right households are reached, those who are genuinely poor, have graduation potential, and are not already receiving equivalent support elsewhere. Accuracy in targeting is not only a matter of fairness to the households concerned; it is a condition of programme effectiveness. Resources directed at ineligible households are resources that cannot reach those who need them.

2.1. Targeting approach

The Social Registry Information System (SRIS)is the primary tool for identifying eligible households. It uses proxy means testing and a range of socio-economic indicators to determine poverty status, producing a ranked list of poor and extremely poor households by sector and cell. The SR-IS is maintained at national level and is the authoritative source for graduation targeting, no household may be enrolled in the programme unless it appears on the SR-IS as poor or extremely poor, and is identified as having labor capacity.

The SR-IS data is complemented by community validation at cell and village level. Local authorities and community members know realities that a registry cannot always capture: a household that has recently moved, one that is already receiving equivalent support through another programme, or one whose circumstances have changed since the last registry update. Community validation is therefore not a discretionary add-on but a required step in the enrolment process.

The two mechanisms work in sequence, not in parallel. The SR-IS provides the list; community validation verifies and refines it. Neither alone is sufficient.

2.2. Eligibility criteria

To be eligible for enrolment in the graduation programme, a household must meet all of the following criteria.

- Poverty status. The household must appear in the SR-IS as poor (per adult equivalent consumption below RWF 560,127 per year) or extremely poor (below RWF 356,432 per year), as defined in EICV 7.

- Graduation potential. A household has graduation potential when it demonstrates readiness across the following four dimensions, assessed during the Household Needs Assessment:
    - Labor capacity: at least one household member aged 18–64 is physically and cognitively able to engage in a productive activity with appropriate support and is not severely disabled or in full-time caregiving that prevents participation.
    - Aspirations and agency: the household expresses a motivation and willingness to invest effort in improving its economic situation. Household aspirations are explored during the needs assessment and inform HGP development and pathway selection.
    - Employability and skills base: the household has at least one member with skills, education, or prior work experience relevant to available livelihood opportunities, or who can develop that readiness through the programme's training package within the cohort timeline.
    - Care constraints: the extent of unpaid care responsibilities within the household is assessed and factored into pathway allocation. High care burden does not exclude a household from the livelihoods pathway, but it informs which route is more appropriate and what scheduling flexibility is needed.

These four dimensions are assessment considerations, not pass/fail gates. A household may be assessed as having graduation potential even where one dimension is weak, if the programme package can address that gap within the cohort period.

- Residence. The household must be resident in the sector and cell where it is registered in the SR-IS
- Non-duplication. The household must not currently be enrolled in an active graduation cohort through this programme. or an equivalent graduation programme funded by another partner anywhere.

Households not eligible for graduation targeting:

Households where all members have no labour capacity due to severe disability, chronic illness preventing work, or extreme age remain on long-term social protection support without a time limit. They must not be enrolled in a graduation cohort and no graduation timeline or pressure may be applied to them.

This exclusion protects these households from inappropriate expectations. It does not reduce their entitlement to safety net support.

In most districts the number of eligible households will exceed the available cohort allocation. Where this is the case, districts shall apply the following prioritisation criteria, in order, to determine which households are enrolled first.

- Female-headed households are prioritised, reflecting their disproportionate representation among the poorest and their demonstrated graduation outcomes when supported.
- Households with persons with disabilities who have labour capacity are prioritised, recognising the additional barriers they face and the importance of inclusive programme design.
- Households not previously enrolled in other graduation cohort.

2.3. Enrolment process

The enrolment process runs from national allocation through to household needs assessment and contract signing. The table below shows each step, the responsible actor, the action required, and the timeframe. All steps are mandatory; no step may be skipped.

Step	Actor	Action
1	MINALOC	MINALOC avails the list of all household under poverty line to districts through PGMIS.
2	District	Districts based on the national graduation plan, determines household targets/quotas for their local administrative entities.
2	Sector	The list shared by district is disaggregated by cell/village.
3	Cell	Cell authorities leads the community validation at village level, and through PGMIS confirms the households to be enrolled.
4	District/ Sector	District and Sector, approves the enrollment through PGMIS. District consolidates the validated list, resolves flagged discrepancies, and submits the final household list to LODA through MEIS.
6	Cell	Graduation contracts are signed between the household and the Cell Executive Secretary.

The entire process is done through the Poverty Graduation MIS (PGMIS)

2.4. Managing household changes after enrolment

The circumstances of enrolled households can change materially after enrolment. The programme is designed to respond to these changes without removing households from the programme or resetting their graduation journey. Three categories of change require a defined response:

- Household shocks: the Shock-Responsive Social Protection protocol is activated immediately (see Section 5). The household retains its pathway allocation and CTSC eligibility. The pathway may be temporarily adjusted (e.g. from livelihoods to social pathway) with Cell approval if the shock prevents livelihood engagement.
- Migration: if an enrolled household relocates within Rwanda, the originating district notifies the destination district through SR-IS, PGMIS and MEIS. The household transfers to the destination district's cohort at the same programme stage. If the household leaves Rwanda, it is exited from the programme and the record archived in PGMIS.
- New vulnerability: if a previously assessed household member develops a severe disability or chronic illness after enrolment, the PSW updates the needs assessment in PGMIS and submits a pathway revision request to the Cell. If labor capacity is lost and no other household member is able to take up the livelihood pathway, the household may be transitioned to other social protection program for vulnerable people.

All changes must be flagged by the PSW at the next home visit and recorded in PGMIS. No change may be processed without Cell approval. Households affected by changes retain their safety net entitlements throughout.

2.5. Systems integration

The Graduation programme relies on three core information systems used throughout implementation to support targeting, enrolment, planning, monitoring, and reporting.

- **The Social Registry Information System (SRIS)** serves as the primary source for identifying eligible households based on poverty and vulnerability data, in line with the Social Registry operational framework, with any identified discrepancies requiring formal verification and update through the established process.
- **The Poverty Graduation Management Information System (PGMIS)** is the main programme management tool used to register enrolled households and track participant progress throughout the graduation journey, including assessments, household development planning, service delivery, coaching, training, and graduation outcomes.
- **The Management and Evaluation Information System (MEIS)** supports district-level planning, budgeting, fund requests, financial accountability, and programme reporting to LODA. Maintaining consistency, accuracy, and timely updates across these systems is essential for effective programme implementation, decision-making, and performance tracking.

3. HOUSEHOLD NEEDS ASSESSMENT AND GRADUATION PLAN

The household needs assessment and the Household Graduation Plan (HGP) are the operational foundation of the graduation programme. All subsequent interventions, pathway allocation, training, CTSC, and monitoring, are anchored in what is assessed and agreed here. References to the HGP elsewhere in this manual point back to this section.

3.1. Purpose and timing

The household needs assessment serves two purposes. First, it builds a holistic picture of the household's situation, its strengths, assets, constraints, and aspirations, so that the support it receives is genuinely tailored to its reality rather than a generic package. Second, it determines which of the pathways the household selected, and therefore what support sequence it follows. Assessments are conducted by the PSW during home visits, using PGMIS as the recording tool.

The Cell reviews all assessment records in PGMIS and formally approves pathway allocations. No pathway allocation is valid without Cell approval in PGMIS.
All assessments must be completed within the first two months of the cohort. The HGP must be developed, agreed with the household, and signed within the same period. Graduation contracts are signed with the Cell Executive Secretary at Month 2. No CTSC fund request may be submitted for a household that does not have a signed HGP on file in PGMIS.

3.2. Assessment

The assessment covers four domains. Each domain is assessed through direct conversation with the household during a home visit. The PSW does not make assumptions, every field in the assessment must be based on what the household reports and what the PSW observes. The assessment is a dialogue, not an interview, and all data is recorded through the PGMIS.

The assessment covers different domains. All the domains are explored through direct conversation with the household during a home visit. The PSW does not make assumptions, every entry must be based on what the household reports and what the PSW observes. All data is recorded in PGMIS.

Domain	What is assessed	Relevance to pathway allocation
Economic situation	Household income and consumption; assets (land, livestock, tools); current IGAs; debts; savings and SACCO/VSLA membership; financial access	IGA route viability, and financial inclusion support needs
Human capital	Education level and literacy of each member; health status and nutrition; disability; skills and work experience; CBHI coverage	Identifies skills gaps, employability for job linkage route, and members who may benefit from different pathways
Labour capacity and care constraints	Working-age members (18–64) and their availability; physical and cognitive ability; caregiving responsibilities (children, elderly, disabled members) limiting participation	Determines graduation potential and informs pathway allocation and scheduling flexibility
Labour market readiness	Certifications, prior training, work experience relevant to available market opportunities.	Key basis for job linkage route allocation and trade selection
Financial inclusion	VSLA or SACCO membership; savings history; prior credit access; financial literacy level	Informs CTSC readiness, savings targets in HGP, and financial services referrals
Climate vulnerability and aspirations	Exposure to floods, drought, soil degradation, or seasonal disruption in the household's proposed livelihood sector; household-stated goals, priorities, and livelihood aspirations	Climate exposure informs HGP risk mitigation; aspirations ensure the HGP reflects what the household wants to achieve, not what the PSW assumes

3.3. Pathway allocation

Based on the assessment, each household selected one of two pathways, recorded in the HGP and approved by the Cell in PGMIS.

- **Livelihood pathway** for households where at least one member has labour capacity and no barriers preventing engagement in productive activities. These households receive the full graduation package: safety nets, training, IGA development, CTSC, and post-CTSC support.
- **Social pathway** for households where identified barriers (GBV, social exclusion, other) currently prevent livelihood engagement. These households on this pathway receive targeted social support and specialist referrals. No other graduation package is given until the barrier is resolved and the Cell approves transition to the livelihood pathway.

Pathway allocation is reviewed at every monitoring visit and can be changed in either direction as household circumstances evolve. All changes are recorded in PGMIS and require Cell approval. Households on the livelihood pathway further choose between two graduation routes. The PSW explains both options; the household decides which fits their situation and aspirations. The table below shows what each route requires and how support differs.

	Enterprise/ IGA route	Job linkage route (upskilling and jobs)
Participants	Households choosing to start or grow an income-generating activity; agriculture, livestock, or petty trade	Households choosing to enter formal or informal employment through skills and certification.
Key support	• Business and financial skills training • CTSC to acquire productive assets • Post-CTSC IGA mentorship and BDA linkages	• Certified vocational training (TVET / RTB certificate) • Apprenticeships and on-the-job training • Job placement linkages with employers
CTSC	Primary use: start-up capital for the IGA through VUP financial service (up to RWF 500,000 per household). This is also applied to those that went through vocational training with their IGA requires tool kits.	Tools for trade where the household needs specific equipment to take up employment.
HGP focus	• IGA chosen by the household • Market linkage • Income and savings targets	• Employment goal chosen by the household • Training selection • Employer or apprenticeship placement

3.4. Differentiated Support within the Livelihoods Pathway

While all livelihoods pathway households follow the same overall programme structure, implementation must be differentiated to reflect the specific situations and opportunities of distinct beneficiary groups. PSWs and districts should apply the following guidance when supporting household to develop their HGPs and selecting training:

Group	Differentiated guidance
Youth (18–35)	Prioritize the job linkage route and certified TVET training where labor market demand is confirmed. Facilitate apprenticeship placements, internships, and connections to employers. Where youth prefer self-employment, support digital, and emerging sector IGAs.
Women and female-headed households	Ensure training schedules are compatible with caregiving responsibilities, flexible timing, location near home, or group-based delivery. Identify livelihood options that are accessible from the household or within walking distance. Facilitate women-only training groups where cultural or safety barriers exist. Prioritize women for higher-return sectors identified in the labor and market analysis.
Persons with disabilities (able to work)	Follow the DMIS disability classification to identify appropriate activities. Offer adapted training, home-based enterprise options, or assistive tools as part of the CTSC package. Ensure transport and physical access to training venues is feasible. Do not exclude persons with disabilities if they have labor capacity.
Urban and secondary city households	The market analysis must cover urban value chains, formal and informal employment in services, trade, and manufacturing, and digital economy opportunities. HGPs for urban households should reflect the different market structure, lower agricultural opportunity, higher employment and service sector potential. Job linkage route is often more viable for urban households.
Households with high care burden	Help them to assess whether a part-time training schedule or home-based enterprise option can make programme participation feasible. Consider household-based IGAs (e.g. small livestock, tailoring, food processing at home, and other).

3.5. The household graduation plan

The HGP is the single document that governs a household's journey through the programme. It is not a form to be completed and filed, it is a living agreement between the household, the PSW, and the programme. Every subsequent intervention the household receives should be traceable to the HGP. Every monitoring visit should review progress against it.

The HGP is developed jointly by the PSW and the household during months one and two of the cohort, following the needs assessment. The plan belongs to the household and is done based on the assessment findings and the household's own stated aspirations and priorities, the plan should reflect what the household wants to achieve, not what the PSW thinks is easiest to deliver. The draft is reviewed with the household, revised as needed, and then signed.

HGP element	Required content
Household identification	Head of household name, HH code, sector, cell, village, number of household members, IS-SR registration number
Assessment summary	Brief narrative of the household's situation covering the four assessment domains; key strengths and constraints identified
Pathway	Livelihood or social pathway; the basis for the decision, discussed and agreed with the household; date of Cell approval
Livelihood activity or employment goal	The specific IGA or employment activity chosen by the household; commodity, trade, or sector; individual or group; graduation route (IGA or wage employment)
Support schedule	Which safety nets the household is entitled to and from when; trainings and expected start date; expected CTSC tranche dates; PSW visit frequency
Results targets	Measurable outcome targets, set jointly by the PSW and household at HGP sign-off and reviewed at each formal HGP update: • Income target: expected household income at Month 6, Month 12, and Month 24, expressed in FRW per month (must reach or go beyond the resilience line of RWF 2,305/AE/day by Month 24). • Employment or IGA performance goal: specific employment position or enterprise turnover target by Month 12 and Month 24. • Savings milestone: VSLA or SACCO savings balance target by Month 12. • Resilience indicator: agreed household-level resilience target by Month 24 (e.g. food security (at least 3 meals/day for all members), active CBHI coverage, or at least one additional income source, and other. • Certification target (job linkage route only): RTB/TVET certificate to be obtained /duration, or other relevant training certificates from other providers
Referrals	Any referrals to specialist services (health, GBV, disability, child protection) with the name of the service, contact, and follow-up date
Signatures	Signed by the head of household and the PSW; countersigned by the Cell Executive Secretary

Updating the HGP

The HGP is a living document. It must be reviewed at every PSW monitoring visit and formally updated at three points: at Month 6 when the first CTSC tranche is disbursed and the IGA begins, at Month 12 when the mid-term assessment is conducted, and at Month 24 at the endline assessment. Updates are recorded in PGMIS; the paper copy held by the household should also be updated and re-signed where targets or the support schedule change materially.

If a household's circumstances change significantly between scheduled reviews, due to a shock, a change in household composition, a business failure, or a pathway transition, the PSW must update the HGP within two weeks of becoming aware of the change and seek Cell approval.

3.6. Roles and responsibilities

- **PSW:** conducts the household needs assessment during home visits using PGMIS; develops the HGP jointly with the household; uploads the signed HGP to PGMIS; updates the HGP at each monitoring visit and at the three formal review points; and flags any household whose situation has changed significantly to the SEDO/EHCDO without delay.
- **SEDO/EHCDO:** reviews all assessment records in PGMIS and approves pathway allocations; countersigns all HGPs within five working days; reviews a sample of HGPs during monthly cell coordination meetings to assess quality; and escalates any household with complex needs or unresolved barriers to the sector case management meeting.
- **Sector Social Affairs Officer:** oversees assessment quality across all cells; chairs the sector case management meeting where complex cases are reviewed; and reports on assessment completion rates and pathway allocations to the district in the quarterly progress report.
- **District:** monitors assessment completion rates through PGMIS/MEIS; ensures no CTSC request is submitted without a valid HGP.

4. FOUNDATIONAL SAFETY NETS & JOB LINKAGES

4.1. Purpose

Foundational safety nets form the entry point and stabilising foundation of the Graduation pathway. They address immediate consumption needs and stabilise household welfare, providing predictable income and essential services that allow households to meet basic needs while reducing their exposure to shocks. By ensuring that essential needs, food, health, and shelter, are met, safety nets allow households to move beyond short-term coping strategies and begin investing in productive activities.

The role of safety nets differs across the two graduation routes. For households pursuing the enterprise/ IGA route, safety nets provide the basic household stability necessary for participants to invest in income-generating activities without compromising immediate welfare needs. For households pursuing the wage employment route, upskilling and employment opportunities are the primary pathway to graduation, while safety nets provide temporary support during training and transition into employment.

Safety nets are not standalone interventions. They form the foundation upon which livelihoods development, skills development, human capital strengthening, and economic inclusion are built. Public Works programmes in particular incorporate skills development and employment linkages, enabling participants to transition from temporary income support to sustainable livelihoods.

4.2. Foundational safety net

Graduation participants are entitled to a package of foundational safety nets based on eligibility and targeting outcomes, determined at the household needs assessment and recorded in the HGP. The following principles guide provision across all instruments: support must be predictable

and adequate to meet basic needs; it must continue throughout the graduation period unless early graduation occurs. The safety nets includes;

Safety net	Description	Eligibility	PSW action at every home visit
Public Works (PW)	Providing income through labour-based activities, increasingly linked to skills development and employment pathways	Poor and extremely poor households with labour capacity	Verify PW status; use participation period to confirm livelihood track, begin VSLA savings, and connect to training
Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI)	Subsidized Medical Insurance (Community-Based Health Insurance – CBHI) – reducing vulnerability to health-related financial shocks	All graduation programme participants	Confirm CBHI enrolment at assessment; report any unenrolled household to the Cell
Smart Start (First 1,000 Days)	Targeted support for pregnant and lactating women and children under two years, promoting nutritional diversity, early stimulation, and caregiving practices to strengthen human capital development	Households with pregnant or lactating women or children under two years	Identify eligible members at assessment; link to health facility and Community Health Workers; follow up on participation

Districts must maintain a record within PGMIS of which safety net each graduation participant is receiving, and flag any household enrolled in the graduation programme that is not receiving their entitled support.

4.3. Strengthening human capital and resilience

A central feature of the Graduation approach is the strengthening of human capital, particularly among vulnerable populations such as young children and pregnant and lactating women. The Smart Start (First 1,000 Days initiative) plays a critical role by:

- Promoting nutritional diversity and maternal-child health
- Supporting early childhood development and cognitive stimulation
- Strengthening caregiving practices at household level

These interventions build the long-term productivity and labour market readiness of future generations. They also enhance household resilience by reducing vulnerability to health-related shocks and improving capacity to withstand income and climate-related risks.

4.4. Transition from protection to economic inclusion

Household transition pathway

Stage	Activities	Measurable parameters	Safety net status
Stage 1 Months 0–6	Enrolment, HNA, HGP signed. Introductory training. Foundational safety nets active. Training selection confirmed. IGA or employment goal agreed.	Signed HGP in PGMIS. Training commenced. Safety nets received. Savings begun (VSLA).	Full safety net package active throughout.
Stage 2 Months 6–18	Training completed. CTSC disbursed (IGA route) or job placement underway (job linkage route). BDA/PSW Coaching/mentorship ongoing. IGA growing or employment consolidating.	RTB/other relevant certificate obtained (job linkage). First CTSC tranche invested (IGA). Income above 50% of resilience line. SACCO account open.	Safety net tapered for households whose income is sustainably above the poverty line. SRSP protocols on standby.
Stage 3 Months 18–36	Full market and value chain integration. Light-touch monitoring. Graduation assessment at Month 24.	Household income at or sustainably above resilience line (RWF 2,305/AE/day). IGA viable for 12+ months or employment stable. Savings balance meets HGP target. At least two resilience indicators met.	Safety net exited at graduation. Year-3 follow-up monitoring activated.

The Graduation programme supports a structured transition from protection to economic inclusion, ensuring that households move beyond immediate consumption support toward sustainable livelihoods and self-reliance. Safety nets provide income stabilization, while the wider programme package promotes (i) skills development, (ii) employment opportunities, and (iii) IGA creation in parallel. The transition is managed through the Household Graduation Plan (HGP), which sets out the timeline and sequence of support for each household, including when they will begin training, receive CTSC, and be assessed for graduation. Every enrolled household must have an active, signed HGP within the first two months of enrolment (see Section 4).

4.4.1. Public works as a bridge to economic inclusion

Public works programmes play a central role in facilitating this transition by serving as both a protective and promotive instrument.

They contribute to:

- Skills development and job-readiness training
- Exposure to structured work environments
- Work-based learning opportunities
- Facilitated linkages to labour markets and employers

Through these functions, public works provide participants with the experience, confidence, and competencies required to engage in more sustainable economic activities.

Public Works participants who are also enrolled in the graduation programme must be tracked through PGMIS as dual-track beneficiaries. Their PW participation period should be actively used for: (i) identifying and confirming their livelihood pathway, (ii) beginning savings through VSLAs, and (iii) connecting them with relevant skills training.

4.4.2. Integration with job creation systems and private sector linkages

Graduation participants on the livelihood pathway are supported along two economic inclusion tracks (see Section 4.3). Districts shall map available job placement opportunities at least annually and match participants to openings based on their HGP. Both tracks are flexible, a participant may begin on one and transition to the other as their situation evolves. Pathway assignment is recorded in the HGP and updated by the PSW during monitoring visits.

> **Safety net gaps must be treated as urgent.**
> A household that loses safety net access mid-cohort is at immediate risk of falling back below the poverty line. PSWs must not wait for a scheduled reporting cycle to flag a gap, it must be reported to the Cell as soon as it is identified.

5. TRAINING AND UPSKILLING

5.1. Purpose and Scope

Training and upskilling interventions support graduation participants to develop the knowledge, technical skills, work readiness, and practical competencies required to engage in sustainable livelihoods and economic inclusion opportunities. Training interventions are implemented as part of the Household Graduation Plan (HGP) and are aligned with the district labour and market analysis findings, household aspirations, labour capacity, and available market opportunities.

The programme supports both: (i) IGA development for households pursuing self-employment and income-generating activities (IGAs); and (ii) job linkage route for households seeking employment through technical skills development, certification, apprenticeship, and job placement opportunities.

Training interventions may include entrepreneurship training, financial literacy, technical and vocational skills training, apprenticeship and practical upskilling, social and health care services training, work-readiness preparation, and ongoing coaching and mentorship. Districts are responsible for coordinating training delivery, selecting and contracting service providers, managing participant lists, and ensuring training outcomes are recorded in PGMIS and MEIS.

5.2. Eligible participants

Training and upskilling support is provided primarily to households enrolled on the livelihood pathway. Eligibility for specific training interventions is determined through the household needs assessment and documented in the HGP criteria to be considered:

- Only one household member per household may participate in the training and upskilling programme (head or member of household); households choose the participant based on education level and aptitude
- Participants must be willing to engage in the training and in the livelihood activity that follows
- For agricultural and livestock training: no minimum education level required; participants must be practicing or willing to take up farming
- For off-farm vocational training (e.g. tailoring, carpentry, hairdressing): participants should have basic literacy and numeracy; some advanced trades require A2 level or above
- For employment-oriented training (apprenticeships, TVET): priority is given to individuals who are (i) female, (ii) have a disability and are able to work, and/or (iii) aged 18–64

5.3. Training interventions: types, duration, service provider, and cost

Training is structured around five distinct intervention types. Each has a defined purpose, a typical duration range classified as short, medium, or long-term, a designated category of service provider, and a cost structure that determines how the district budgets and pays, and where applicable parent's approval cost by trade should be considered. The table below provides the overview; detail on each type follows.

No.	Intervention	Examples	Term	Duration	Who delivers	Cost
1	**Introductory training and graduation orientation**	Behaviour change, financial literacy, HGP development, programme rights and responsibilities	Short-term	1–3 months (weekly sessions)	PSWs, CSOs, NGOs, local government	No direct cost covered under PSW facilitation package. Materials budgeted under PSW operational costs.
2	**Business and financial skills training**	Financial literacy, entrepreneurship, business management, savings and investment	Short to medium-term	1–3 months	CSOs, NGOs, institutions, private sector training providers	Agreed with service provider in the MoU. No participant cost.
3	**Apprenticeship and practical upskilling**	Mechanics, welding, masonry, carpentry, tailoring, hairdressing, pedicure, manicure, massage, sauna, SPA, milking,	Short to medium-term	15 days – 3 months	Private sector workshops, garages, farms, Udukiriro centres, community enterprises	Indicative cost: 2500RWF per participant per day. Indicative ceiling for service provider: from 150,000RWF to 250,000 Rwf

No.	Intervention	Examples	Term	Duration	Who delivers	Cost
		roasting, agro-processing, crafts, oil processing.				for 3-month placement. Participant costs: transport, protective wear were needed.
4	**Agricultural job-oriented upskilling**	Tea harvesting, coffee growing, harvest and processing, beekeeping, mushroom farming, tomato farming, rice production	Short-term	15 days – 1 month	Tea factories, coffee washing stations, sector-specific institutions (agriculture, environment), accredited training centres	Indicative cost: 2500RWF per participant per day. Any other cost to be agreed in MoU with the service provider where applicable.
5	**Technical and vocational skills training (TVET)**	Masonry, carpentry, blacksmithing, fabrication, mechanics, plumbing, welding, tailoring, agricultural production, agro-processing, livestock keeping, hairdressing, pedicure, manicure, handicraft production, food and beverage, housekeeping, front-office services	Medium to long-term	3–6 months	RTB/ NESA-accredited TVET institutions and training centres.	Ceiling: RWF 100,000 per participant per month, paid to provider per MoU. District negotiates actual unit cost. Participant costs: uniform, materials, transport. International placement above ceiling: LODA approval required.
6	**Social and health care services training**	Childcare, early childhood development, community health, first aid, elder care, domestic worker professionalisation, cooking and nutrition	Short to medium-term	15 days – 2 months	Health facilities, NGOs, CSOs, MoH/MINEDUC-certified providers	Ceiling: RWF 100,000 per participant per month per MoU. Participant costs: materials, hygiene supplies. Stipends where participants work during training.

No.	Intervention	Examples	Term	Duration	Who delivers	Cost
7	**Coaching and mentorship**	Business management, savings discipline, IGA problem-solving, market navigation, peer learning	Continuous, 3-year programme	Ongoing	PSWs, NGOs, CSOs, BDAs, private sector mentors	No separate budget line. Covered under PSW facilitation and BDA contracts. External mentors: cost in MoU. Estimated ceiling: RWF 50,000 per participant per quarter for BDA/mentor engagement.
8	**Financial services linkages**	VSLA formation and management, SACCO membership, start-up capital access and financial planning	Continuous, 3-year programme	Ongoing	PSWs, NGOs, CSOs, BDAs, SACCOs, MFIs, financial institutions	No separate training budget line. Facilitation costs covered under PSW package and partner MoUs. VSLA start-up materials budgeted under PSW operational costs.

5.4. Introductory training and graduation orientation

This is the entry point for every enrolled participant regardless of their livelihood pathway. It is delivered in the first two - three months of the cohort by PSWs and other designated facilitators and covers the following; (i) programme objectives and graduation principles, (ii) household responsibilities and participation expectations, (iii) overview of the HGP, (iv) introduction to savings culture and financial literacy, (v) safeguarding and prevention of fraud or misuse of funds, (vi) grievance redress mechanisms, (vii) and all the available programme support services.

This training is part of the PSW's core facilitation role and is delivered in group sessions of 10–20 participants at cell or village level. The LODA-approved curriculum governs content. Sessions typically run 1 – 1.30 hour per week, spread across the first two three months of the cohort. No separate budget line is required; materials are budgeted under PSW operational costs.

5.5. Apprenticeship and practical upskilling

Apprenticeship and practical upskilling interventions provide participants with hands-on technical experience and exposure to real work environments. These interventions are intended to strengthen practical competencies, improve employability, and facilitate transition into sustainable livelihoods. Districts shall identify local businesses, employers, cooperatives, artisans, and service providers capable of providing apprenticeship and practical learning opportunities through the district labor and market analysis process. The ability to provide accredited certification of competency is highly recommended when identifying service providers.

Apprenticeship placements may support: (i) technical and vocational skills development; (ii) IGA coaching and practical business exposure; (iii) workplace readiness; and (iv) direct linkage to employment opportunities.

All apprenticeship placements must: (i) be documented in the HGP; (ii) include clear supervision arrangements; (iii) define the expected duration and learning objectives; (iv) and be monitored by relevant district, sector or cell authorities.

Service providers, employers, or host businesses may be required to provide attendance verification and progress updates to support programme monitoring and accountability. Duration is typically 15 days to 3 months depending on the trade. Modular and competency-based curricula are developed in collaboration with RTB where applicable. The district has the flexibility of negotiating the allowance in the MoU to minimize cost.

5.6. Job-oriented upskilling for wage employment

Job-oriented upskilling is for participants that choose Job Linkage Route through targeted job-oriented upskilling interventions linked to labor market opportunities identified through the district market analysis. It is delivered by TVET institutions and RTB/ NESA -accredited training centers and leads to a recognized certificate that participants can present to employers.
Typical trades and sectors for job-oriented upskilling include:

- Construction and infrastructure: masonry, plumbing, electrical installation, welding and fabrication
- Services: hospitality and food services, housekeeping and front-office, beauty and wellness
- Manufacturing and industry: garment making and tailoring, mechanics and automotive repair
- Digital and emerging sectors: computer literacy, data entry, digital trade

Job-oriented upskilling may lead to: (i) formal employment; (ii) informal employment; (iii) contractual work; casual labour opportunities; or (iv) mixed livelihood strategies combining wage employment and self-employment.

Duration ranges from one to six months depending on the trade and certification level. Cost is structured as tuition fees not exceeding and also negotiable of 100,000 Frw per participant per month is paid by the district to the provider, plus participant costs for uniform and materials. Where a provider can link participants to international employment opportunities, unit costs above the standard ceiling require LODA approval before the MoU is signed. The district has the flexibility of negotiating more favorable payment terms with the service provider in the MoU.

Training quality is measured by outcomes, not completion. All providers are assessed against four indicators, reported to LODA regularlty

- RTB certification rate: at least 80% of enrolled participants certified within 30 days of course end.
- Employment placement rate (job linkage route): at least 60% placed within three months of certification.

- IGA survival rate (IGA route): at least 70% of participants have a functioning IGA at the 12-month follow-up.
- Earnings above baseline: at least 50% of participants show higher income at the 6-month follow-up.

Providers failing two or more indicators for two consecutive cohorts are placed on a performance improvement plan. Continued failure results in removal from the approved provider list.

Accreditation note for job-oriented upskilling
Providers delivering formal TVET curricula must hold current RTB/ NESA accreditation. Participants who complete accredited training receive an RTB-recognised certificate, which is required for formal employment pathways and for international labour placement programmes. Districts must verify accreditation status before signing the MoU. RTB accreditation is not required for apprenticeship hosts or for introductory and coaching interventions.

5.7. Social and health care services training

The care economy, childcare, early childhood development, community health services, elder care, and household management, is a growing employment and IGA opportunity, particularly for women. Training covers: childcare and ECD (safe environment, child stimulation, nutrition, hygiene); community health support (CHW skills, first aid, maternal and child health); and home and household management services. Duration 15 days to 2 months. Providers must hold MoH or MINEDUC-recognised certification. Particularly suited to female participants, those with caregiving responsibilities, and social pathway graduates with interpersonal skills but limited technical background.

5.8. Coaching and mentorship

Coaching and mentorship is not a discrete training event, it is continuous, personalised guidance provided throughout the three-year programme period. It begins with HGP development and continues through IGA start-up, growth, and graduation assessment.
Coaching and mentorship is provided through three channels:

- PSW home visits: minimum monthly, the PSW provides problem-solving support, reviews progress against HGP targets, and connects the household to services and market opportunities.
- Group coaching sessions: PSWs and CSO partners facilitate group learning sessions where participants share experiences, troubleshoot common challenges, and build peer networks.
- Business Development Advisors (BDAs) and private sector mentors: engaged for IGA growth support, value chain integration, and access to markets. BDA engagement is typically most intensive in Year 2 of the programme.

Coaching and mentorship has no separate training budget line. It is delivered as part of the PSW facilitation package, existing CSO/NGO programme budgets, and, where external BDAs or mentors are engaged — within service provider MoU costs. Districts should explicitly budget for BDA engagement in Year 2 planning.

5.9. Service provider selection

Service providers are selected based on three criteria: the ability to deliver market-linked, demand-driven training; the capacity to connect participants to employment or IGA opportunities; and demonstrated technical expertise and track record with similar participants.
The selection procedure is as follows:

- Districts identify potential providers based on: registration certificate from a relevant authority; RTB/ NESA accreditation for trades requiring formal certification; relevant trade expertise; and track record with similar programmes or participants.
- For employment-oriented training, providers must demonstrate the ability to link participants to apprenticeships or employment opportunities locally or internationally.
- The district engages shortlisted providers in a negotiation meeting to agree on trade content and staffing, unit cost per participant per trade, duration, certification arrangements, and attendance and reporting requirements.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is signed between the district and the service provider before any training begins. The signed MoU and agreed cost schedule must be uploaded into MEIS and submitted to LODA as part of the fund request.

5.10. Service Provider Accreditation

Accreditation requirements vary by intervention type as follows:

Intervention type	Accreditation requirement	Basis
Introductory training and graduation orientation	No accreditation required	Delivered by PSWs and programme partners as part of their standard facilitation role. Content is governed by the LODA-approved programme curriculum (Forward Course!).
Apprenticeship and practical upskilling (short-term, on-site)	No mandatory accreditation. RTB registration is an advantage but not a requirement.	Learning takes place in a real work environment under the supervision of a practitioner or employer. Training emphasises practical, competency-based learning and workplace experience while supporting participants, where feasible, to obtain recognised proof of skills, certification, or employer references that can strengthen future employment opportunities. Districts verify provider quality through field visits and monitoring of participant outcomes.
Job-oriented upskilling for wage employment	RTB/ NESA accreditation required for providers delivering formal TVET curricula.	Participants receive an RTB-recognised certificate upon completion, which is required for formal employment and international labour placement. Accreditation protects the qualification value.
Social and health care services training	Certification by the relevant health or social authority (Ministry of Health/MINEDUC	Social and health care services roles (childcare workers, community health aides) require minimum recognised certification for employment or self-employment in this sector.

Intervention type	Accreditation requirement	Basis
	recognised providers) required.	
Coaching and mentorship	No accreditation required.	Mentors are selected on demonstrated business experience and track record. Quality is assured through PSW supervision and PGMIS monitoring of participant outcomes.

5.11. Quality assurance, accountability, and performance

The following mechanisms apply throughout the training cycle. Districts are responsible for all steps. Results are reported to LODA in the quarterly progress report and used to determine whether a provider is eligible for a future MoU.

Mechanism	Timing	What it requires
MoU with defined deliverables	Before training begins	Specifies: trade, participant numbers, duration, unit cost, attendance method, minimum 80% completion rate for full payment
Pre-training site inspection by district	Before training begins	Confirms: facilities adequate; equipment and materials in place; qualified trainers available; accreditation current (where required)
Attendance tracking	Every session	For trainings delivered by the PSW, attendance is tracked via the PGMIS mobile app. For other trainings attendance is tracked by the relevant service provider. Participants missing less than 20% of sessions without justification are flagged
Mid-training quality visit (unannounced)	During training	SEDO/EHCDO or Sector Social Affairs Officer verifies delivery against MoU, interviews participants, assesses learning progress
Participant satisfaction assessment	At training completion	Brief feedback form administered by SEDO/EHCDO (not the provider). Results recorded in PGMIS. Minimum 70% satisfaction rate expected.
End-of-training report by provider	Within 10 working days of completion	Covers: attendance; content delivered; practical assessments; employment/IGA linkages; budget vs. expenditure. Final payment withheld until submitted.
Performance-based payment (more than 1 month training)	During and after training	60% on training start; 40% on satisfactory end-of-training report. Providers below 80% completion rate subject to proportional payment reduction.
Provider performance review	End of each training cycle	District assesses: completion rate (≥80%), skills pass rate (≥75%), employment/IGA linkage rate (≥50%, job-oriented only), certificate issuance (≤30 days, accredited providers). Reported to LODA quarterly.

Non-performance consequence
A provider that fails minimum thresholds in two or more indicators in the same cycle, or fails the same indicator in consecutive cycles, receives a performance improvement plan. Failure to meet the plan within one additional cycle results in removal from the district approved provider list and reporting to LODA. LODA maintains a national register of suspended providers.

5.12. Fund request requirements and payment

The following documents must be submitted to LODA to request training funds:

- Letter of request addressed to the Director General of LODA
- List of all training participants with National ID numbers, arranged by sector
- Minutes of the sector management meeting approving the participant list
- Signed MoU between the district and the service provider
- Resolution of the parents' meeting (Babyeyi) approving trade costs

All providers submit an end-of-training report to the district using the standard template, covering: provider name; location and dates; subject and duration; budget versus expenditure; assessment results; employment and IGA linkages; and a full participant list with names, HH codes, sector, National ID, age, and sex. Districts consolidate and submit to LODA; all trained participants are recorded in MEIS.

Payment modalities
Apprenticeship / on-the-job upskilling: daily facilitation allowance of not less than RWF 2,500 per participant, agreed in MoU.
Medium and long-term training (≥1 month): Training cost of not exceeding and negotiable of 100,000Frw per month per participant. Based on the total, 60% to be paid on training start, 40% on satisfactory end-of-training report.
Participant entitlements (where agreed in MoU): training fees, transport, uniforms, materials, hygiene supplies, and stipends in labor-intensive sectors.
International placement above standard cost ceiling: MoU and unit cost require LODA approval before signing.

5.13. Roles and responsibilities

Actor	Responsibilities
LODA	Overall oversight; fund approval; capacity building of districts; training quality monitoring; maintenance of national suspended provider register
RTB / NESARTB	Trade selection collaboration; curriculum design; provider accreditation and certification; issuance of certificates to participants
Sector Ministries	Technical guidance (MINAGRI, MOE, MININFRA, and others); extension services; social and health care services and agricultural sector alignment

Actor	Responsibilities
District	Training delivery coordination; provider selection, negotiation, and MoU management; site inspections; fund requests; quality visits; MEIS reporting
Sector and Cell	Participant list validation; delivery supervision; quality visits; participant feedback administration; reporting to district
Service providers	Training delivery per MoU; attendance tracking; end-of-training report; employment and IGA linkages; coaching as applicable

6. CASH TRANSFER FOR START-UP CAPITAL (CTSC)

6.1. Purpose

The Cash Transfer for Start-up Capital (CTSC) is a conditional cash transfer through VUP Financial services that enables graduation participants on the self-employment track to establish or expand income-generating activities (IGAs). It gives households the flexibility to procure the inputs, tools, and services that best align with their approved IGA plans and local market opportunities.

CTSC is designed to complement, not substitute, training, coaching, and financial inclusion. It is released only after a participant has completed relevant training and has a validated IGA plan. The objectives of CTSC are to enable participants to start or expand viable IGAs; support integration into agriculture and non-farm value chains; promote sustainable graduation through income growth and diversification; and enhance resilience through market-based and climate-smart livelihoods.

6.2. Eligibility

To be eligible for CTSC, a participant must:

- Be enrolled in the graduation programme and be allocated to the livelihood pathway
- Have completed relevant training (technical, business, and financial literacy)
- Have a signed and Cell-approved HGP (Household Graduation Plan) with specific IGA details
- Have an IGA project plan that has been reviewed at cell level, validated and approved at sector level, and endorsed by the District.

Priority for CTSC is given to female-headed households, households with persons with disabilities, and households demonstrating readiness and commitment through their training participation and savings behavior.

Participants may pursue individual livelihoods or group-based enterprises. Groups of 3 to 15 households with shared interest and complementary skills may form small group enterprises, particularly in value chains where collective production, aggregation, and improved bargaining power are beneficial.

6.3. CTSC value and financing modalities

The CTSC transfer value through VUP financial services varies between RWF 100,000 and 300,000 per household depending on IGA. Transfer amounts are tailored to the type of IGA and the specific input and capital requirements of the approved IGA. For group enterprises (3–15 members), the transfer amount is scaled by group size to ensure adequate capitalization for collective activities. CTSC may be used for the purchase of quality agricultural inputs (seeds, fertilizer, livestock); acquisition of tools and equipment; and investment in processing, storage, or transport. Funds must be invested in the approved IGA only. No portion of the CTSC may be used for household consumption or non-IGA expenditure.
CTSC transfers are reimbursable. Reimbursement for shall be processed using the same mechanisms as those for VUP Financial Services.

6.4. IGA development and section

IGA financing is determined by the district budget through the annual planning and budgeting process. The IGA development process runs as follows.
Following pathway allocation and the completion of foundational and financial literacy training, PSWs support households to form individual or small group enterprises. PSWs then support participants to develop and complete IGA project plans based on the participant's interest, the labour and market analysis findings, profitability, and the skills acquired through training. IGA plans must be grounded in real local market demand, a plan for an activity with no viable market will not be approved. Once developed, IGA project plans are submitted to Cell, reviewed and consolidated at sector level, and recorded into FSMIS.

6.5. Disbursement Mechanism

Disbursement is conditional on validation of IGA proposal at sector, and district level and signing of the cash transfer contract between the participant and the Sector Executive Secretary. Funds are transferred directly to the participant's SACCO account.

> **Note**
> Other details on disbursement mechanism will follow the VUP Financial Services Guidelines

6.6. IGA validation and disbursement process

The table below shows the full validation and disbursement sequence. All steps are mandatory. Special attention must be given to ensuring that training precedes or accompanies IGA plan development and submission.

Step	Actor	Action
1	**PSW and Village Coordinator**	Coach and mobilize the graduation participants and guide on development and application of IGA
2	**Cell**	Review, consolidate, and forward IGA applications to Sector
3	**Sector Loan Committee**	Review and approve IGA applications; submit approved plans and record them into FSMIS; return unqualified applications to Cell for revision
4	**Sector Executive Secretary**	Signs cash transfer contracts with participants before disbursement
5	**District**	Disburse funds to participants' accounts

6.7. Training IGA preparation timeline

Month	Activity
Month 1	The Cell organises introductory programme meetings; PSWs conduct household needs assessments; pathway and livelihood options identified and recorded in PGMIS
Month 2	Participants sign graduation contracts with Cell Executive Secretary
Month 3	Participants sign HGPs with specific IGA details; IGA applications collected and submitted to Cell. Training begins concurrently.
Months 3–6	PSWs deliver weekly training sessions: graduation/VUP introduction, financial literacy, entrepreneurship, VSLA formation. Attendance tracked via PGMIS mobile app.
Month 6	Recording the IGA plans into FSMIS and fund disbursement and implementation
Month 12	Monitoring and coaching

6.8. Post CTSC IGA support

Programme support does not end at disbursement. To ensure that enterprises move beyond start-up and achieve sustainability, the following post-CTSC support is provided throughout the remainder of the programme period:

- Financial management: BDAs/PSW support participants to maintain a simple cashbook and separate business from household finances. A functional record-keeping system must be in place by Month 9.
- Market diversification: by Month 12, each participant identifies at least one second sales channel or buyer. HHs introductions to cooperatives, aggregators, and market days is facilitated.
- Value chain linkages: PSWs and BDAs connect participants to buyers, processors, and input suppliers identified in the market analysis.
- Formal financial services: a SACCO or bank account is opened within three months of first CTSC receipt. A loan-readiness assessment is conducted.
- Ongoing coaching: PSWs coach at every home visit; BDAs provide quarterly business development support in Year 2.

Participants are expected to transition from start-up to growth-oriented enterprises over the two-year programme period, strengthening their position within value chains and building resilience so that graduation is durable beyond programme exit.

6.9. Monitoring, accountability and use of funds

The following monitoring and accountability requirements apply to all CTSC disbursements:

- The first tranche will be disbursed one week before planned expenditure, and participants must invest it in their approved IGA within one week of receipt.
- PSWs confirm fund use through a follow-up home visit within one week of disbursement and record findings in PGMIS
- PSWs continue monthly monitoring visits, tracking income stability, asset accumulation, food security, savings behaviour, and resilience to shocks
- Sector staff conduct regular follow-up on CTSC recipients in their areas in collaboration with PSWs
- Districts conduct periodic monitoring visits to a sample of CTSC recipient households
- LODA conducts regular field monitoring visits to sampled districts

Funds must be invested in approved IGAs only. Verification is conducted through field visits and PGMIS IGA tracking tools. Key performance indicators include: household income growth and stability; individual and group business sustainability; household savings, reinvestment, and income diversification; participation in value chains; and resilience to shocks.

6.10. Roles and responsibilities

- **LODA:** Coordination, capacity development, and M&E
- **District:** CTSC planning and budgeting; IGA disbursement management; periodic monitoring
- **Sector:** IGA project plan review and approval; cash transfer contract signing; disbursement reconciliation with SACCOs
- **Cell:** IGA application collection and consolidation; first-level review; supervision of PSW IGA support activities
- **PSW:** IGA plan development support; application submission; first tranche use verification; monthly monitoring and coaching; PGMIS data entry
- **Private sector and CSOs/NGOs**: market linkages; input supply; IGA mentoring and coaching; employment facilitation.

7. SHOCK – RESPONSIVE SOCIAL PROTECTION

7.1. Purpose

Shock-Responsive Social Protection (SRSP) is the mechanism through which the graduation programme protects households from falling back into poverty when shocks occur. It is one of the six guiding principles of the NSSG and is active throughout the entire programme period, from enrolment through to year-three follow-up monitoring.

The core principle is straightforward: a shock does not end a household's graduation journey. It triggers a response. The household retains its pathway allocation, its CTSC eligibility, and its place in the cohort. The graduation clock pauses; it does not restart. Support is adjusted to address the shock, and the household resumes normal programme participation once it has recovered.

Without SRSP, a sudden shocks including, household shocks (Death or severe injury/disability of the breadwinner), Covariate shocks (Drought, pandemics, flooding, landslides, winds, lightening or other climate-related disaster affecting multiple households), can undo months of programme progress and force a household back below the poverty line. The investment made in that household, training costs, CTSC, PSW time, is lost. SRSP protects that investment as much as it protects the household.

7.2. Types of shocks

Shocks affecting graduation households fall into two categories, each of which calls for a different response pathway. Both are covered under this section.

Type of shock	Examples
Household / individual shock	Death of primary income earner · Serious injury or disability of the household income earner · Gender-based violence or domestic abuse · Crop failure or livestock loss affecting a single household · Fire, theft, or destruction of productive assets · Loss of employment
Covariate shock	Drought, pandemics, flooding, landslides, winds, lightening or other climate-related disaster affecting multiple households.

7.3. Identification of shocks

House hold level shocks are identified primarily through PSW home visits. PSWs are the first point of detection and must be alert to signs of shock at every visit, not only when a household raises the issue directly. Shocks may also be reported by community members, Village Coordinators, or Community Health Workers, and other. Any shock reported through these channels must be followed up by the PSW with a home visit.

For covariate shocks affecting multiple households or a whole community, the Sector Social Affairs Officer is responsible for reporting to the district. The district activates the district-level shock response protocol and notifies LODA through MEIS. All shocks and the responses taken must be recorded in PGMIS by the PSW. This data is used to track cohort-level shock incidence, assess the adequacy of the programme's response, and inform SRSP policy at national level.

7.4. Response options

The following response options are available. The PSW, in consultation with the SEDO/EHCDO, selects the option or combination of options most appropriate to the household's situation. More than one option may apply simultaneously.

Response option	When it applies and what it involves
Timeline pause	Applied when a shock temporarily prevents a household from engaging in programme activities. The graduation clock pauses, it does not restart. The household retains its pathway allocation and CTSC eligibility. The PSW documents the pause in PGMIS and the Cell approves. The timeline resumes when the household is able to re-engage, as confirmed by the PSW.
Emergency cash support	Available for households that have experienced a shock that has disrupted their livelihood and put them at risk of adopting negative coping strategies. Requested by the district through LODA using the standard emergency fund request procedure. Amount is determined based on the household's documented need and available budget.
Re-entry into Public Works	Available for households whose income has collapsed due to a shock and who have labor capacity. PW re-entry provides immediate income stabilization while the household recovers. The PSW submits a re-entry request to the Cell, that approves and notifies the sector.
Specialist referral	Applied for GBV, child protection, mental health, or disability cases arising from or worsened by a shock. PSW links the household to the Isange One Stop Centre, IZU, or other specialist services as appropriate and records the referral in PGMIS.
IGA recovery support	Available where a household's income-generating activity has been destroyed or severely damaged by a shock and the household has already received CTSC. Recovery support is assessed case by case by the district and submitted to LODA for approval. It does not constitute a second CTSC disbursement.

7.5. Protecting graduation status

A household that has experienced a shock does not lose any of the following:

- Its enrolment in the graduation programme
- Its pathway allocation (livelihood or social)
- Its eligibility for CTSC, if not yet received
- Its right to a PSW home visit at the standard frequency
- Its entitlement to safety net support

Where CTSC has already been disbursed and the funded IGA has been destroyed or severely damaged by the shock, the household is not required to repay. IGA recovery support may be available (see Table above). The PSW documents the situation fully in PGMIS and the district submits the case to LODA for assessment.

The graduation clock pauses during a shock. It does not restart.
When a timeline pause is approved, the household's cohort end date is extended by the duration of the pause. The extended timeline is recorded in PGMIS and in the household's HGP. No household may be assessed for graduation during a pause period.

7.6. Roles and Responsibilities

Actor	Responsibility
PSW	Identifies shocks during home visits or through community reporting; documents the shock in PGMIS; selects the appropriate response option in consultation with the household; submits a pause request or referral to the SEDO/EHCDO.
Cell	Reviews and approves timeline pauses and re-entry into Public Works; escalates emergency cash requests and IGA recovery cases to the Sector Social Affairs Officer; ensures the household's PGMIS record reflects the shock and the response taken
Sector	Reviews and approves emergency cash requests at sector level; reports to the district; follow-up on the response aligning with the SRSP.
District	Activates the district-level shock response protocol; submits Shock Responsive Cash Transfer request to LODA through MEIS; consolidates and reports shock data in the quarterly progress report; coordinates with other district departments and partners as needed
LODA	Reviews, approves and issues Shock Responsive Cash Transfers; ensures coordination and M&E for the SRSP Component, and linkage with PGMIS.

7.7. Recording in PGMIS

Every shock and every response must be recorded in PGMIS. The PSW records: the type of shock; the date it occurred or was identified; the household members affected; the response option selected and the date activated; and the outcome of the response, including the date the household resumed normal programme participation. Shock records in PGMIS are permanent, they are not deleted when the household recovers. They form part of the household's programme history and are reviewed during the mid-term and endline assessments. Cohort-level shock data is reported by districts to LODA in the quarterly progress report.

8. PARA-SOCIAL WORKERS AND CASE MANAGEMENT

8.1. Purpose and Role

Para-Social Workers (PSWs) provide proximity advisory services to poor and extremely poor households enrolled in the graduation programme. Ground experience from VUP implementation shows that cash transfers and services alone are insufficient to achieve graduation: households face barriers of access to information, awareness of entitlements, and the ability to navigate available opportunities. PSWs are put in place specifically to break these barriers.

The case management system implemented through PSWs provides one-to-one and small group support to understand each household's particular needs and challenges and improve their access to appropriate services. For households on the livelihood pathway, this support contributes

directly to graduation. For households that are labour-constrained or on the social pathway, it improves quality of life and ensures they receive the services and transfers they are entitled to.

PSWs serve participants under VUP, as well as those supported under MINUBUMWE and RDRC Direct Support programmes. One PSW is selected per village and serves all graduation programme participants in that village.

8.2. PSW roles and responsibilities

PSWs visit enrolled households at home at minimum once monthly to:

- Understand the aspirations, priorities, needs, and constraints of each household; support pathway allocation; and help develop Household Graduation Plans aligned with available support and opportunities
- Inform households of their social protection entitlements (VUP, MINUBUMWE, RDRC, CBHI) and help address any gaps between what they should be receiving and what they are actually receiving
- Follow up on the resolution of complaints and appeals on behalf of households
- Link households to complementary services appropriate to their needs, including health, nutrition, GBV, child protection, agricultural extension, livestock services, financial services, and small business advice
- Update PGMIS with household livelihood conditions following each visit
- Support the organization of group-based livelihood training and community sensitization by informing households of session dates and times; PSWs do not deliver technical training themselves
- Attend and actively participate in all coordination meetings and trainings required under these guidelines

In addition to technical and livelihood support, PSWs play a critical role in mindset and behavior change. This includes promoting work ethic and productivity, savings and financial discipline, and entrepreneurial thinking; and supporting households to set realistic goals, build confidence and resilience, and adapt to changing economic conditions.

8.3. Selection criteria

A candidate for PSW must meet all of the following criteria:

- Rwandan national, able to communicate effectively with the community
- Available and willing to serve voluntarily as a PSW
- Minimum A2 education level
- Aged between 25 and 64 years
- Resident in the village they will serve for at least 6 months
- Demonstrates high standards of conduct, integrity, and performance; able to set a positive example
- Possesses life experience of success and overcoming challenges, serving as a role model to participants
- Demonstrates active listening, empathy, and humility
- Has the energy and commitment to follow up issues on behalf of community members

- Able to acquire capacity to monitor participants' interventions and livelihood progress
- Familiarity with or ability to acquire digital skills, mentorship, and coaching is an added advantage
- Having at least one year of experience as a youth volunteer or in proximity advisory services is an added value
- Not currently serving as a village committee member, Community Health Worker, IZU (Friend of Family), or Farmer Field Facilitator

Female candidates are particularly encouraged to apply.

8.4. Selection procedure

At least one PSW is selected per village through the following process:

- Selection is conducted at cell level by a committee comprising: the Cell Executive Secretary (chair), the SEDO/EHCDO (secretary), village committee members, and the Cell Youth Volunteer Coordinator. Villages with no social protection recipients nor graduation participants will not select PSWs.
- The committee proposes, by ranking, three eligible candidates to be confirmed at the village general assembly. Where the current PSW meets the criteria, they are ranked first; the remaining two candidates are placed on the waiting list
- Following confirmation at the village general assembly, the Cell submits a written selection report, listing confirmed PSWs and the waiting list, to the Sector
- The Sector submits the consolidated report to the District.
- All districts submit the final list of elected village PSWs and Cell PSW Deans to MINALOC and LODA

Selected PSWs from the village level select among themselves their Cell PSW Deans, who supports the SEDO/EHCDO in coordinating PSW activities, consolidating village reports, and performing other coordination duties. The Cell Deans retains their role as a village PSW. Cell Deans also select a PSW representative to the Sector Grievance Redress Committee. The sector representatives elect one District representative to join the district Grievance Redress Committee.

8.5. Para-Social Workers structural representation at local government levels

To strengthen PSW coordination, accelerate communication between the field and Local Government, and enable the Community of Practice (COP) to function effectively, a structured PSW representation is established at cell, sector, and district levels through the Dean of PSWs. This structure is a required element of programme implementation and must be in place before a cohort launches.

8.6. Purpose

The Dean of PSWs serves as the elected representative of PSWs at each administrative level. Their primary functions are to: chair Community of Practice meetings and ensure they take place

at the required frequency; relay field realities, household challenges, service gaps, and implementation bottlenecks, upward to Local Government quickly; and communicate programme decisions, guidance, and feedback from Local Government downward to PSWs rapidly. The Dean structure replaces reliance on individual PSWs to navigate upward communication and ensures that the collective PSW voice is systematically heard at every coordination level.

8.7. Structure and election

The Dean structure operates at three levels:

- **Cell PSW Dean.** Elected by all PSWs operating within the cell. One Dean per cell. The Cell Dean chairs monthly COP meetings at cell level, compiles the monthly COP report, and submits it to the SEDO/EHCDO. The Dean participates in the monthly cell-level PSW group meeting with the SEDO/EHCDO and may be invited to cell and sector-level coordination meetings.
- **Sector PSW Dean.** Elected by the Cell Deans within the sector. One Dean per sector. The Sector Dean participates in the quarterly sector PSW coordination meeting and the bi-annual sector case management meeting. They serve as the direct link between Cell Deans and the Sector Social Affairs Officer, and may be invited to sector and district-level coordination meetings when PSW-specific issues are on the agenda.
- **District PSW Dean.** Elected by the Sector Deans within the district. One Dean per district. The District Dean may be invited to district graduation committee meetings and other district-level coordination forums to represent the PSW body and ensure that field realities inform district programme decisions.

Election of Deans at each level is conducted at the first coordination meeting of each programme year. Results are documented in meeting minutes and submitted to LODA through the district. Deans serve for one programme year and may be re-elected.

8.8. PSW Dean responsibility

- Chair Community of Practice meetings at Sector and Cell level and ensure they take place at the required frequency.
- Prepare and submit COP reports according to the reporting schedule.
- Represent PSWs in coordination meetings at cell, sector, and district level when invited.
- Relay guidance and decisions from Local Government to PSWs promptly after coordination meetings.
- Flag systemic issues, patterns of household need, service gaps, or implementation problems, that individual PSWs may not have the visibility or access to raise alone.

Important: the dean continues all PSW duties

The Dean of PSWs role is additional to, not a replacement for the PSW's regular responsibilities. Deans continue to serve the households in their village, conduct monthly home visits, update PGMIS, and submit their regular PSW monthly reports. No additional financial incentive is provided for the Dean role. Deans retain their existing facilitation package.

8.9. Community of practice

The COP is the structured peer learning and experience-sharing forum for PSWs at the Sector. It is facilitated by the Sector Dean and provides PSWs with a regular, structured opportunity to share what is working, discuss complex cases, exchange solutions to common challenges, conduct refresher sessions for the Forward courses for graduation participants, and strengthen their collective knowledge and skills as proximity advisors.

The COP is not an administrative meeting, it is a learning space. Agenda items include: refresher sessions on Forward Courses for Graduation participants accessible through the MINALOC E-Learning platform, Sharing good practice from home visits; challenges in PGMIS data entry; household-level barriers to graduation; and feedback on training quality and service provider performance. COP discussions feed directly into the monthly COP report submitted by the Dean and inform programme adaptation at sector and district level.

Available materials for CoP meetings structure
Materials that details how CoP meetings are conducted including; members responsibilities, agenda setting, introduction, and other relevant parts, are accessible via the MINALOC E- learning platform, as part of the induction materials for PSWs, CoP for leaders materials, and other supporting materials from the forward Course!

8.10. COP reporting requirements

Community of Practice meetings generate a mandatory reporting chain from sector to LODA. This reporting is the primary mechanism through which field-level learning reaches programme management and informs continuous improvement.

Level	Frequency	Content and submission
Cell	Monthly	In special cases where in a cells, village PSW totals between 30 – 35 the CoP meeting is prepared by the Cell PSW Dean. Covers: number of COPs held, attendance, key themes discussed, Forward Course refresher session done, cases escalated, and follow-up actions agreed. Submitted to the Sector Social Affaires within 10 days of quarter end.
Sector	Monthly	In Sector where cell PSW totals 30 – 35 the COP meeting is held at the Sector level monthly and is prepared by the Sector PSW Dean. Covers: number of COPs held, attendance, key themes discussed, Forward Course refresher session done, cases escalated, and follow-up actions agreed. Submitted to the Sector Social Affaires within 10 days of quarter end. **Note:** In Sectors where Cell level COPs are functional due to the number of PSW, they will consolidate Cell COP reports covering; COP completion rates across Cells, common challenges, recommendations, and submit to District within 10 days of Quarter end.

8.11. Replacement of PSWs

A PSW shall be replaced under the following circumstances:

- Misconduct or undesirable behaviour
- Chronic disease or severe disability preventing them from fulfilling their duties
- Death
- Voluntary resignation
- Failure to deliver adequately on their roles and responsibilities
- Relocation from the village they serve

Removal and replacement shall be documented and submitted to the district through the Sector, and shall be conducted by the Cell Executive Secretary or SEDO/EHCDO under the coordination of the Sector. The replacement PSW shall be the next candidate on the waiting list. If the waiting list is exhausted, the full selection procedure is repeated.

8.12. Other meetings

PSWs are required to attend the following coordination meetings. Attendance is a performance requirement and is recorded.

Meeting	Frequency	Convened by	Purpose
Village-level coordination meeting	Monthly	Village Coordinator	PSW shares feedback and follows up on referrals made to other village-level service providers (CHWs, Farmer Field Facilitators, IZUs)
Cell-level PSW group meeting with SEDO/EHCDO	Monthly	SEDO/EHCDO	PSWs highlight unresolved household cases; follow up on referrals; SEDO/EHCDO provides feedback on appeals and complaints; agree on issues for consolidated report. The Cell Dean facilitates PSW input.
Sector PSW coordination meeting	Quarterly	Sector Social Affairs Officer	Review challenges and achievements across cells; agree on recommendations and actions. Cell Deans participate and represent PSW field realities. Sector submits a quarterly report on COP implementation across cells.
District Coordination meeting	Quartely	Director of Social Development Unit	District-level review of programme implementation. Sector Deans may be invited to represent the PSW body and relay field realities to district management. District submits a quarterly COP report to LODA.
Sector case management meeting	Bi-annual (every 6 months)	Sector Social Affairs Officer	Review complex cases unresolved at cell level; discuss broader programming issues. Participants include sector agronomist, veterinary, SEDO/EHCDO, Cell Deans, BDAs, and NGOs as relevant.

8.13. Performance management

PSW performance is evaluated every six months, not later than 15 December and 15 June, against the performance contract signed at the start of their assignment. The evaluation committee is composed of the Sector Social Affairs Officer (chair), the Sector DASSO (co-chair), SEDO/EHCDO (secretary), and a PSW representative at cell level (member).
The following indicators guide the evaluation:

- Level of understanding of household living conditions, social protection services, and the PSW's own duties and responsibilities (10%)
- Number of home visits conducted monthly. To atleast each HH under his/her duties (20%)
- Regularity and quality of reports submitted to Cell, including COP reports for Deans
- Regularity and quality of reports submitted to Cell (10%)
- Participation in coordination meetings and trainings (10%)
- Number of cases received, handled, and referred to other services (10%)
- Level of livelihood improvement of participants under the PSW's responsibility attributable to PSW contribution (30%)
- Support to participants in achieving their HGP targets and advocacy on their behalf where needed (10%).

Important: evaluation focuses on outcomes, not activity counts.
It is not sufficient to count the number of home visits made. Emphasis must be placed on the outcome of each visit, what changed for the household as a result of the PSW's support. The quantitative reporting will be based on the weight assigned to each indicator.

8.14. Conditions for effective case management

For PSWs to fulfil their role effectively, they must:

- Attend monthly supervision and coordination meetings at village and cell levels and produce timely reports
- Participate in all trainings required to build their capacity
- Visit each enrolled household at least once monthly
- Document key points from every household meeting
- Treat participants with respect, privacy, and confidentiality
- Provide accurate advice and information; ensure households understand their entitlements
- Follow up on participants' use of programme support and their receipt of entitlements
- Work collaboratively with other proximity volunteers, CHWs, IZUs, Farmer Field Facilitators, to increase household access to services
- Refrain from favouritism, discrimination, and corruption in all dealings with participants

8.15. Facilitation and incentives

PSWs are facilitated through the following package, provided by the district:

- Free CBHI coverage for the PSW and their household members, provided not later than 30 June each year. If the PSW has paid CBHI themselves, the district reimburses the

equivalent amount. PSWs selected after the start of the financial year receive CBHI from the following year. PSWs already receiving free CBHI through another programme are not entitled to this incentive.
- Means of communication provided promptly to ensure effective field work
- Quarterly incentive of RWF 20,000, paid not later than 10 October, 10 January, 10 April, and 30 June
- Field kit including raincoat, umbrella, register book, document bag, pens, and boots, subject to budget availability
- Capacity building and other in-kind incentives as needed

8.16. Training of PSWs

PSWs receive initial training before deployment and refresher training as required. Training covers:

- Overview of the case management system, the PSW role, personal code of conduct, and safeguarding
- VSLA formation and financial inclusion support
- Coordination and reporting: services available at village level, roles of other proximity advisors, collaboration with VCs and SEDO/EHCDO, and how to complete monthly report formats including the COP report
- Social protection programmes and household entitlements
- How to work with households during home visits: participatory approaches, communication and facilitation, coaching and mentoring, needs assessment, and pathway-specific support
- Referrals and linkages to socio-economic opportunities
- For Deans: facilitation of Community of Practice meetings, report writing, and representation skills.

Training uses a practical and interactive methodology suited to PSWs' frontline role and education levels. Groups are capped at approximately 30 participants. A total of five days is required for initial core training. SEDO/EHCDOs and Sector Social Affairs Officers are included in PSW training and receive additional training on coaching, supervision, and PGMIS record-keeping. An additional half-day module on COP facilitation and report writing is delivered to all newly elected Deans.

8.17. Fund request requirements

Districts request funds for PSW activities from LODA in one instalment. The following documents must be submitted:

- Letter of request addressed to the Director General of LODA
- Copy of the fund request submitted through MEIS, aligned with the district budget for PSW activities

The following supporting documents must be uploaded in MEIS:

- List of PSWs arranged by sector, with location, amount required per PSW, National ID, and telephone number
- Summary table showing how funds will be used according to sectors

8.18. Coordination mechanism

PSW coordination operates at all levels of the decentralised system. The table below shows the coordination responsibilities at each level.

Level	Coordination responsibilities
MINALOC / LODA	• To ensure overall coordination of para social workers' structure; • To prepare and disseminate guidelines; • Capacity building of local Government staff; • Funds Mobilization and providing para social workers with facilitation fees to District; • Preparation of para social worker's capacity building module – manual and training materials; • Organisation of training of trainers to build cadres of district trainers well-equipped to train para social workers; • Ensure para social workers mechanism is mainstreamed within district plan and budget; • To carry out field monitoring exercise to monitor implementation progress; • To ensure proper reporting mechanism.
District	• Coordinate the selection of para social workers in the district; • Monitor para social worker's evaluation; • Organise para social worker training; • Provision of para social worker facilitation and incentives; • Establish and keep Para-Social Workers database; • Prepare and submit para social worker quarterly report to MINALOC and LODA.
Sector	• Coordinate para social worker's activities in the sector; • Supervise para social worker selection process; • Ensure proper compliance with para social worker's implementation guidelines; • Coordinate para social worker performance evaluation; • Consolidation of para social worker's report from cell and submit the consolidated report to District; Organize and conduct quarterly coordination meeting with para social workers. Also monitors PSWs COP.
Cell	• Coordinate the para social worker's activities in the cell; • Coordination of the para social worker's selection process; • Manage para social worker's files; • Participate in the evaluation of para social workers; • Organise and coordinate the monthly coordination meeting with para social workers; • Conduct a regular field visit to sampled participants; • Supervise para social worker's activities at village level and support and mentor them, so that they further build their skills; Conduct a regular follow up of referred cases. Also monitors PSWs COP at cell level
Village	• Facilitate selections of para social workers as well as their replacement if deemed necessary; • Coordination of para social worker's activities at village level;

Level	Coordination responsibilities
	• To carry out home visit together with para social workers on households with complex cases/ relevant issues; • To collaborate with para social workers in the follow up of outcomes on referred cases, complaints and appeals on behalf of participants; To provide a list of households/ participants each para social workers to monitor.

9. STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT AND COORDINATION

The Graduation programme is a multi-sectoral effort coordinated at national, district, sector, and community levels. This section defines the roles of each actor, how partnerships are formalised, and the coordination platforms through which implementation is managed and reviewed. It is the reference for all partners on who does what and how they account for it.

9.1. Principle of engagement

Stakeholder engagement is guided by five principles:

- complementarity of roles, where each actor contributes based on their comparative advantage;
- decentralised implementation with centralised oversight;
- partnership and co-delivery between government, civil society, and the private sector;
- accountability and performance-based engagement through clear deliverables and reporting; and
- a participant-centred approach, where all stakeholders orient their contributions toward improving household-level outcomes.

9.2. Institutional coordination framework

The table below defines the primary responsibilities of each actor in the coordination framework. Detailed responsibilities within specific programme components are described in the relevant sections of this manual.

Level / Institution	Primary Responsibilities
MINALOC	National policy direction; overall NSSG oversight; inter-ministerial coordination
LODA	Programme oversight and strategy; guidelines and tools; resource mobilisation; M&E; capacity building of local governments; Social Protection Working Group facilitation; field monitoring
Sector Ministries (MINAGRI, RAB, MININFRA, MOE, and others)	Technical guidance in respective sectors; extension services; sector policy alignment

Level / Institution	Primary Responsibilities
District	Planning, budgeting, and coordination; participant and CTSC selection approval; fund management and disbursement; MoU management with CSOs and service providers; monitoring and reporting to LODA
Sector	Participant validation; IGA application review; supervision of implementation; basic technical support; sector-level coordination meetings
Cell / Village	Community mobilisation and validation; household identification; day-to-day monitoring; first-level issue resolution
Para-Social Workers (PSWs)	Household assessment and pathway allocation; HGP development and monitoring; training facilitation; CTSC follow-up; linking households to services; PGMIS data entry
CSOs / NGOs	Community mobilisation and behaviour change; participant and PSW training; coaching and mentorship; advocacy; monitoring and feedback to districts
Private Sector / Financial Institutions	Training delivery and apprenticeships; job placement; input supply and market access; CTSC disbursement via SACCOs/MFIs; credit and financial inclusion
Development Partners	Financing; technical assistance; systems strengthening (MIS, targeting, evaluation); piloting and scaling of innovations

9.3. Roles of civil society organisations and NGOs

Civil society organisations play a critical role in complementing government capacity and strengthening service delivery. Their key contributions include: community mobilisation and behaviour change; awareness-raising on social protection, livelihoods, and resilience; training of households and PSWs; technical support in livelihoods and IGA development; coaching and mentorship; ongoing proximity advisory services to participants; tracking programme implementation and providing feedback to districts; and supporting vulnerable households to raise grievances and promoting accountability.

CSOs and NGOs are selected based on the following criteria:

- Registered and legally operating in Rwanda
- Demonstrated technical expertise in social protection and/or livelihoods
- Operational presence and capacity at district level
- Willingness to enter into a formal partnership with the district

9.4. Formalization of partnerships

All partnerships with CSOs, NGOs, and private sector actors are formalized through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed between the district and the partner. The MoU must include a Joint Action Plan with defined activities, timelines, budget (stakeholders planned budget) and deliverables; reporting requirements; and performance indicators. Districts submit a copy of all partnership MoUs to LODA.

CSOs and NGOs report to the district periodically using the standard reporting format through PGMIS and other available tools.

Report element	Content required
CSO/NGO and district identification	Names of organisation and district; reporting period
Activities delivered	Description, location, and number of participants reached
Progress against Joint Action Plan	Targets versus achievements
Challenges and recommendations	Key issues identified and proposed actions

9.5. Roles of the private sector and financial institutions

The private sector plays a central and strategic role in ensuring the programme is market-oriented, demand-driven, and economically sustainable. Private sector actors contribute across multiple stages of the graduation pathway, including: delivery of training and upskilling programmes aligned with industry needs; provision of apprenticeships, internships, and on-the-job training; facilitation of job placement; participation in value chains as input suppliers, buyers, and aggregators; and support for market access and commercialisation of participants' products and services.

Financial institutions, including SACCOs and MFIs, support financial inclusion and business growth by providing access to savings and credit that support business expansion and investment. SACCOs are the primary channel for CTSC disbursement.

9.5.1. Private Sector Partnership Management

Active partnership management with private sector actors and financial institutions is a district responsibility throughout the programme, not a one-off engagement at cohort launch. Districts shall apply the following standards:

- Annual private sector mapping update: at the start of each cohort, districts refresh the employer and investor database as part of the labor and market analysis update. Any new major employer, infrastructure investor, or financial institution operating in the district is added to the service providers/market actors list within 30 days of identification.
- MoU management and review: all active private sector and financial institution MoUs are reviewed at the quarterly District Graduation Committee meeting. Reviews assess: delivery against agreed obligations (training provided, placements made, products offered); any changes in the partner's capacity or willingness; and whether the partnership terms need updating. Non-performing MoUs are escalated.
- Sustainability beyond project financing: by Year 2 of each cohort, districts should have established at least two private sector partnerships that operate on a commercial or self-sustaining basis, such as fee-for-service training, offtake agreements for participants' products, or apprenticeship stipends paid by employers, without dependence on government funding. These partnerships form the basis for programme sustainability.

- Financial institution engagement: at least one SACCO or commercial bank should be formally engaged per district before each cohort launches, specifying graduation-linked savings products, CTSC disbursement arrangements, and loan-readiness support for graduating households.
- Private sector representation at coordination platforms: districts are encouraged to invite at least one private sector representative to the quarterly District Graduation Committee meeting as an observer, ensuring that employer perspectives inform programme adaptation and that employers remain engaged with recruitment pipelines from the graduation cohort.

9.6. Roles of development partners

Development partners support the programme through financing and resource mobilisation; technical assistance and innovation; support to systems strengthening covering MIS, targeting, and evaluation; and piloting and scaling of new approaches. Their involvement contributes to continuous improvement and the long-term sustainability of the programme.

9.7. Coordination platforms

The following platforms coordinate programme implementation across levels. Attendance by the relevant actors is required. Minutes are produced for all meetings and submitted to the level above within five working days.

Platform	Frequency	Led by	Purpose
National Social Protection Sector Working Group (SP-SWG)	Semi-annual	MINALOC / LODA	Strategic oversight; policy issues; cross-sector alignment
District Coordination Meeting / Graduation Committee / JADF	Quarterly	District	Review of implementation progress; resolution of cross-sector issues; approval of key programme decisions
Sector Implementation Meeting	Monthly	Sector Social Affairs Officer	Operational supervision; participant progress review; issue escalation
PSW Coordination Meeting (Community of Practice)	Monthly	Cell PSW Dean	Share feedback across villages; follow up on referrals; agree on common actions
PSW Cell Group Meeting with SEDO/EHCDO	Monthly	SEDO/EHCDO	Review unresolved cases; discuss reports; agree on issues for consolidated report to Sector

10. REPORTING, MONITORING, EVALUATION AND LEARNING (RMEL)

10.1. Purpose and systems overview

The RMEL system tracks how the Graduation programme is being implemented, whether it is reaching the right households, and whether participants are progressing toward sustainable graduation. It operates through three integrated systems: PGMIS for household-level tracking; MEIS for district-level planning and financial reporting; and the Social Registry Information System (SRIS)for targeting and beneficiary identification. Districts, sectors, and PSWs all have defined data entry and reporting responsibilities. Accurate, timely data is the foundation of programme management at every level. No programme decision, on CTSC disbursement, pathway changes, cohort performance, or resource allocation, should be made without reference to PGMIS and MEIS data.

10.2. Graduation indicators

Graduation measurement is aligned with Rwanda's national definition of sustainable graduation, which emphasizes long-term improvements in household welfare and resilience. Key indicators are tracked through PGMIS at baseline, mid-term, and endline for every enrolled household. These indicators are:

- **Income levels** improvements in household earnings and economic stability
- **Employment status** outcomes in both wage employment and self-employment
- **Business sustainability** viability and continuity of income-generating activities
- **Savings behavior** financial inclusion and the capacity to manage risks and shocks

Together these indicators provide a holistic picture of whether households are transitioning toward sustainable livelihoods and maintaining progress above the poverty line. Refer to PGMIS for the full indicator framework and data entry requirements.

In addition to the four core indicators above, the following resilience indicators are tracked at endline and year-three follow-up. A household is confirmed as having graduated sustainably only if it meets the income threshold (consumption at or above the resilience line of RWF 2,305/AE/day) and at least two of the four resilience indicators below:

Resilience indicator	Definition	Measurement method
Employment quality	Household has at least one member in stable wage employment (contract duration ≥ 3 months) or a self-employment IGA that has been operating continuously for at least 12 months with positive net revenue.	PSW records in PGMIS; IGA monitoring data; employer verification where applicable.
Enterprise sustainability	IGA established with CTSC is still operating at the endline assessment (Month 24), with documented sales and positive net revenue in the preceding three months.	PSW home visit records; IGA financial tracking data in PGMIS; BDA assessment.
Financial inclusion	Household holds an active savings account (SACCO or bank) with at least three months of regular deposits in the 12 months preceding assessment.	SACCO membership records; PSW financial inclusion tracking in PGMIS.
Food security	All household members report at least three meals per day in the month preceding the endline assessment, with dietary diversity meeting minimum acceptable thresholds.	PSW-administered food security questionnaire at endline and year-three follow-up.

10.3. Reporting responsibilities

The table below defines reporting requirements by level. All reports must be submitted on time. Late or incomplete reporting will be flagged in LODA's quarterly review and considered in the district's cohort approval assessment.

Level	Report	Frequency	Submitted to	Deadline
PSW	Household visit and training report	Monthly	Cell	Within 5 days of month end
Cell	Consolidated cell report	Monthly	Sector	Within 7 days of month end
Sector	Consolidated sector report	Quarterly	District	Within 10 days of quarter end
District	Programme progress report	Quarterly	LODA (via MEIS)	Within 15 days of quarter end
CSOs / NGOs	Activity report	Monthly and quarterly	District	Within 5 days of following month
District	Annual narrative and financial report	Annually	LODA	Within 30 days of financial year end

10.4. Cohort assessments

Each cohort undergoes four structured assessments over the programme period. Assessments are coordinated by LODA and may involve external evaluation firms. Districts are responsible for facilitating evaluator access to participants and records, and for ensuring all required data has been entered in PGMIS and MEIS before evaluation visits.

Assessment	Timing	Purpose
Baseline	Month 1–2 of cohort	Establish initial household conditions; confirm pathway allocation; set HGP targets
Mid-term	Month 12	Assess progress against HGP targets; identify households at risk; inform second CTSC tranche decision
Endline	Month 24	Measure final outcomes and graduation status; determine which households have graduated; document lessons learned
Year-three follow-up	12 months after endline	Verify durability of graduation; identify any households that have fallen back; activate shock-responsive support if needed

In addition to the formal assessment points, cohort supervision is conducted through ongoing monitoring, including quarterly district reviews and annual programme assessments. These processes ensure that progress is continuously tracked and challenges are addressed in a timely manner.

10.5. Learning and adaptation

Learning and adaptation are built into every cycle of the programme. At the end of each annual cohort, districts, sectors, and LODA review implementation experience to identify what worked, what did not, and what adjustments are needed before the next cohort begins.

District-level learning is captured through quarterly coordination meeting minutes, field monitoring visit reports, and PSW community of practice meetings. Districts must include a brief lessons-learned section in their quarterly progress report. LODA consolidates these findings nationally and uses them to update guidelines and training materials.

The Social Protection Sector Working Group (SP-SWG) serves as the primary platform for validation, coordination, and dissemination of learning across sectors and stakeholders. Before a district is approved for the next cohort, LODA and MINALOC assess: completion rates of prior cohort training and CTSC disbursement; graduation assessment outcomes; PGMIS data quality; and GRM resolution rates. Districts that have not met minimum performance thresholds receive targeted support before the next cohort begins. Systems-Level Learning.

10.6. Systems and adaptation

The RMEL system also captures systems-level outcomes beyond individual household progress, including job creation and labour absorption, IGA growth and value chain participation, and financial inclusion and business scaling. These findings are used to inform programme adaptation, strengthen alignment with economic systems, and improve coordination across stakeholders, ensuring that learning supports continuous system-wide improvement and not only programme delivery.

11. GRIEVANCE REDRESS MECHANISM

11.1. System Overview

The Grievance Redress Mechanism (GRM) provides a structured and accessible system for receiving, managing, and resolving complaints related to the Graduation programme. It is designed to enhance transparency, accountability, and responsiveness in programme implementation.
The GRM is supported by established national systems, including the MBAZA system and toll-free communication lines, which enable participants and stakeholders to submit complaints easily and confidentially. These systems are complemented by local structures at village, cell, sector, and district levels, ensuring that grievances can be addressed at the appropriate level.
This structured approach promotes transparency, builds trust among participants, and ensures that grievances are addressed consistently and fairly.

Economic Inclusion and Service Delivery Complaints
The GRM system will also address grievances related to economic inclusion services, including:

- Access to training and apprenticeships
- CTSC allocation and use
- Market linkage and employment opportunities
- Performance of service providers and private sector partners

This ensures accountability across the full Graduation ecosystem, not only safety nets.

11.2. Types of complaints

The GRM covers a broad range of complaints that may arise during programme implementation. These include:

- Inclusion and exclusion errors related to both foundational safety nets and Graduation programme targeting
- Issues related to the quality and relevance of training provided
- Disputes concerning seed funding (CTSC), including eligibility, disbursement, and utilization
- Concerns related to service providers, including performance and conduct
- Cases of sexual exploitation and abuse and sexual harassment (SEA/SH), which are treated with strict confidentiality and urgency
- Delays or irregularities in payments

By addressing these issues systematically, the GRM ensures that programme delivery remains fair, inclusive, and accountable.

11.3. Appeal and complaints procedure

The grievance redress process follows a clear and structured sequence to ensure timely and effective resolution of complaints. The process begins with the submission of a complaint through one of the available channels. This is followed by a review stage, where the complaint is assessed and categorized. An appropriate resolution is then determined and implemented by the responsible authority.

Finally, feedback is provided to the complainant, ensuring that they are informed of the outcome.

12. COMMENCEMENT AND REPEALING PROVISIONS

This manual and its operational guidelines come into force on the date of signing by the Director General of LODA. All previous VUP Operational Manual provisions, implementation guidelines, and instructions that are contrary to this manual are hereby repealed, except for the Kinyarwanda summary version of the guidelines issued by LODA. LODA retains discretion to take any additional measures consistent with its mandate.

July, 2026

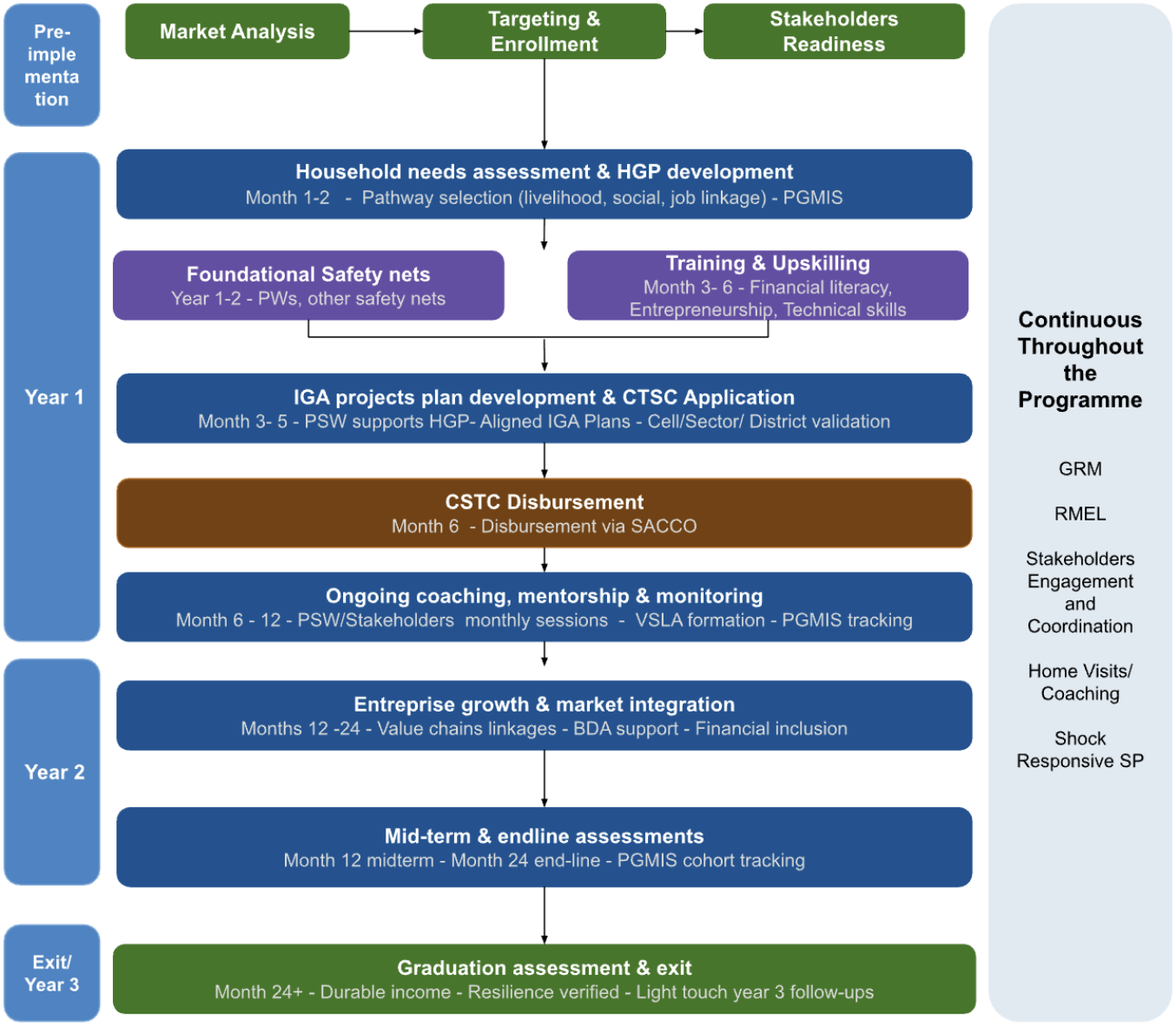


Digitally signed by LODA(Director General)1

Nyinawagaga Claudine
Director General/LODA

Annexes

Annex 1. GRADUATION FLOW DIAGRAM



Annex 2. HOUSEHOLD GRADUATION PLAN (HGP)

Household Graduation Plan (HGP)

Completed by the PSW with the household in Months 1–2. All sections mandatory. Upload to PGMIS and obtain SEDO/EHCDO *countersignature within 5 working days. Household keeps the paper copy.*

Section A: Household Identification	
Head of household name	
HH code	
Sector	
Cell	
Village	
Number of household members	
Cohort number	
Date of enrolment	
PSW name	
SEDO/EHCDO name	
Section B: Assessment Summary	
Human capital and labour capacity (skills, education, labour availability, health)	
Assets and economic conditions (livelihood activities, assets, savings, financial access)	
Constraints and barriers (skills/capital gaps, market access, geographic limitations)	
Social risks and vulnerabilities (GBV, Family conflicts, exclusion, other)	
Section C: Pathway and Economic Inclusion Track	
Pathway allocation	☐ Livelihood pathway (Trade, livestock, Agriculture) ☐ Social pathway
Graduation route (livelihood pathway only)	☐ Enterprise/IGA Route ☐ Job Linkage Route
Specific IGA or employment activity	
Individual or group	☐ Individual ☐ Group — number of members: _____
Section D: Support Schedule	
Safety nets confirmed	☐ Public Works ☐ CBHI ☐ Smart Start
Training selection	
Training start date (expected)	

First CTSC tranche / expected month	
Second CTSC tranche / expected month	
PSW visit frequency	Minimum monthly — agreed schedule: _____

Section E: Agreed Targets				
Milestone	**Target**	**Status at Month 6**	**Status at Month 12**	**Status at Month 24**

Section F: Referrals			
Service	**Organisation**	**Date referred**	**Follow-up date**

Section G: Review record *Review points: Month 6 · Month 12 (mid-term) · Month 24 (endline) · Unscheduled (state reason)*			
Review point	**Date**	**Key changes**	**SEDO notified**

Section H: Signatures

Head of household
Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Para-Social Worker
Name:
_____
Signature:
_____
Date:
_____

Cell Executive Secretary (countersignature)
Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

SEDO/EHCDO—PGMIS approval
Date approved: _____
PGMIS reference: _____

Annex 3. IGA PROJECT PLAN

IGA Project Plan

Completed by the PSW with the household after training. Validated at Cell → Sector → District before LODA authorises CTSC disbursement. For group enterprises, one plan covers the whole group.

Section A: Applicant Details			
Head of household name			
HH code			
Sector / Cell / Village			
Livelihood Pathway	☐ Job linkage ☐ Trade ☐ Livestock ☐ Agriculture		
Individual or group IGA	☐ Individual ☐ Group — number of members: _____		
Group members (if applicable)	List names and HH codes		
Training completed			
Service Provider / Date training completed			
Section B: IGA Description			
Name of proposed IGA			
Sector	☐ *Agriculture* ☐ *Livestock* ☐ *Agro-processing* ☐ *Trade/services* ☐ *Crafts* ☐ *Other:* _____		
Describe the activity (what will be produced or sold, how, and where)			
Why this IGA was chosen (link to household skills and HGP)			
Market for the product or service (who are the buyers and where is the market?)			
Link to labour and market analysis findings (which market opportunity does this IGA respond to?)			
Section C: Budget *List all items to be purchased with CTSC funds. Total must not exceed RWF 500,000 per household (or scaled group amount).*			
Items description	**Quantity**	**Unit cost (RWF)**	**Total cost (RWF)**
TOTAL budget (RWF)			
CTSC amount requested (RWF)			
Household contribution - own resources (RWF)			
Section D: Projected Income and Risks			
Expected monthly income at Month 6 (RWF)			
Expected monthly income at Month 12 (RWF)			
Expected monthly income at Month 24 (RWF)			

Main risks to the IGA and how they will be managed	
Climate risks (if agriculture/livestock) and mitigation measures	
How savings will be managed	☐Section F: Validation Record *VSLA ☐ SACCO ☐ Other: _____*

Levels: Cell SEDO/ SEDO/EHCDO · Sector management team · District			
Level	**Decision (☐ Approved / ☐ Returned for revision)**	**Comment**	**Date/ Signature**

Section F: Household Declaration

I / We confirm that the information above is accurate, that I / we have completed relevant training, and that I / we understand that CTSC funds must be invested in the approved IGA within one week of receipt.

Head of household
Name: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

Para-Social Worker
Name:_____
Signature: _____
Date submitted to Cell: _____

Annex 4. DISTRICTS LABOUR AND MARKET ANALYSIS REPORT TEMPLATE

District Labour and market analysis Report

Completed by the district and submitted to LODA before any training service provider selection or CTSC planning begins for the cohort. Both context analysis and market linkages mapping must be completed.

Section A: Report Cover

District	
Prepared by (name and title)	
Date of completion	
Cohort this report covers	
Date submitted to LODA	

Section B: Context Analysis

B.1 Dominant and Emerging Sectors

Sector / commodity	Current scale	Growth potential	Key constraints for graduation participants Participation

Scale: large / medium / small. Growth potential: high / medium / low.

B.2 Labour Market: Available Jobs and Enterprises

Employer / project name	Employment type / sector	Estimated openings	Seasonal or permanent?	Notes

B.3 Training / Upskilling: Available training and upskill opportunities

Service provider	Training/ Upskill type / sector	Training capacity (Available seats)	Duration	Notes

B.4 Infrastructure and Enabling Environment

Road and transport access to key markets	
Utilities (water, electricity, digital connectivity)	
Land availability and tenure security	
Key infrastructure gaps affecting livelihoods	

Section C: Market Linkages Mapping

C.1 Priority Value Chains

Value chain	Key buyers / aggregators	Entry point for participants	Support or extension services available

C.2 Proposed Training

List all trades proposed for this cohort. Each trade must have a documented market justification.

Proposed training	Market justification	Estimated no. of participants	Proposed service provider

C.3 Service providers /market actors list

Shared with all sectors and PSWs at cohort launch. Updated before the next cohort.

Actor name / organisation	Sector / trade	Engagement offered	Contact details

Section D: Gender and Climate

Livelihood opportunities accessible to women and female-headed households; barriers identified

Climate risks affecting proposed livelihood sectors and recommended mitigation measures

Section E: District Certification

The district certifies that this labour and market analysis was conducted through: (i) consultations with local private sector actors, cooperatives, and employers; (ii) review of the District Development Plan and relevant sector reports; and (iii) field observation.

Name: _____
Title: _____
Signature: _____
Date: _____

District: _____
Date submitted to LODA: _____
LODA acknowledgement date: ___