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DEVELOPMENT SERVICES & TRAINING (DST) (USET -DST)

+

BUSINESS NOVELTY & RESILIENCE



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Draft Business Plan, 2025-2027 Planning period - JANUARY, 2025



1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This plan has been formulated to guide USET-DST competitive activities for the period 2025-2027/ The plan identifies metal fabrications and manufacturing, construction and building services, research and consultancy, business advisory, services and training and development as the main areas of the company's competitive activity. Drawing on a detailed analysis of trends and projections in each of the strategic business units (SBUs), the company pivots towards positioning itself as an innovative and aspirational brand in the engineering and professional and allied services industry. Thus, USET-DST seeks to differentiate itself from the competition by projecting the distinct image of a full service provider with a primary focus on the non-premium market segments, especially in the construction, automotive, manufacturing, and electronics industries. Against this backdrop, the company, seeks to pursue 50% brand awareness, 5% market share and a cumulative average growth (CAGR) of 10% between 2025 and 2027. To achieve these objectives, USET-DST is seeking a start-up funding of \$161,633 (GMD 11.3 million). This differs from a calculated asset base of over GMD 97 million. Based on an initial portfolio of 21 products and services, the company projects an annual revenue growth of 5% with a break-even point that is situated between the end of 2026 and beginning of 2027.

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2.1 Company Overview

USET-DST was incorporated as a company limited by guarantee under the Gambia Company Act of 2013. The implication of the limited by guaranteed status of USET- DST is that the company is incorporated as the business and commercial unit of USET. This approach is in conformance with the strategic objectives of USET including its position as an entrepreneurial university. Having been established with the Science Technology, Engineering, and Entrepreneurship (STEE) philosophy, USET's statutory mandate includes the provision of world-class engineering and entrepreneurship education through cutting edge research, development and innovation (RD&I). This enterprise mandate culminated in the formation of USET–DST as a business subsidiary that is limited by a fixed equity that is guaranteed by its Board of Trustees (BOT). Our mission is to support clients and their affiliates with a portfolio of engineering and business services that are bespoke and responsive to changing industry trends and the strategic goals of its clients. USET-DST vision is to emerge as a leading provider of engineering and business solutions in the West Africa sub- region.

2.1.2 Our Mission

USET- DST aims to support its clients and their affiliates with a portfolio of engineering and business services that are bespoke and responsive to changing industry trends and the strategic goals of its clients.

2.1.3 Our Vision

USET-DST seeks to emerge as a leading provider of engineering and business solutions in the West Africa sub- region.

2.1.4 Overview of Core Values & Philosophies

USET-DST business activities are guided by its **RENTOP** philosophy as follows:

Resourcefulness

In pursuing its mission and vision, USET-DST is guided by the overarching goal of supporting its clients with well-resourced inputs and value chain innovation .

Enterprise

USET-DST demonstration of resourcefulness is supported by an organizational enterprise practice (Enterprise) that is anchored on ingenuity and resilience.

Novelty

Drawing on its research and development clusters, our company brings (Novelty) and originality in designing bespoke solutions using top of the range technologies.

Transcendence

USET-DST' manifests in our capacity to articulate original responses to the business challenges of our clients and mainstreaming such responses into their business and commercial routines.

Ownership

Taking ownership of our customers’ needs and being accountable for delivering friendly and professional service.

Partnership

All these precedent values culminate in our foundational value of building a strong bond of Partnership with all clients.

2.1.5 Company Goals & Objectives

1. Become a leading supplier of innovative solutions to clients in the market segments of USET-DST’s strategic interest.
2. To develop a sustainable business model that will incentivise measured and rapid revenue growth while supporting the strategic vision of the company.
3. To achieve at least 10% growth in sales every year
4. To achieve a growth in market share through client satisfaction and loyalty so that at least 50% of our clients become loyal within 12 months of making an initial purchase.
5. To achieve a minimum cumulative annual growth rate (CAGR) of at least 10% between 2025 and 2027.

2.1.6 Location, Size & History

USET-DST is a new company that has its corporate headquarters in Banjul, The Gambia. However, the company is striving to build an active digital presence which gives it a global reach while adapting its portfolio of digital, manufacturing, training, and engineering services solutions to the changing market and industry needs in all strategic business units (SBUs).

2.1.7 Markets & Products

USET-DST is a company that is committed to bringing innovative solutions to the west African market. After conducting a pre-launch market research, the company identified and developed the portfolio of digital, manufacturing, training, and engineering services solutions that are indicated in Table 1.

Table 1: Overview of market segments and products and services

Who are they?	What are their needs?
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Government institutions 2. State owed enterprises. 3. Private sector 4. Third sector <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Charities ➤ NGOs ➤ Social Enterprises, Development Partner organization 5. Knowledge workers 6. Entities that use technical and Professional Skills 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Bespoke training services in business development and engineering ➤ Modelling & prototyping services ➤ Components fabrication and manufacturing services ➤ Building services ➤ Construction services ➤ Research and consultancy services ➤ Professional development services <p>What are their emotional needs and sought after benefits? Recognition, distinctiveness, achievement, superior capabilities, professional growth, brand equity consolidation, brand association, market leadership position</p>

In what format would they need these services? (3)	Which sectors? (4)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 3D Printing: Advanced additive manufacturing solutions for prototyping and production ➤ Access to a large suite of modelling and design software and allied services at EHIL ➤ Welding: Expertise in various welding techniques for metal fabrication ➤ Turning and Milling: Precision machining services for custom parts ➤ Production of Plastic Parts: ➤ Moulding: High-quality plastic moulding services ➤ Blowing: Efficient production of blown plastic components ➤ Production of Spare Parts: Custom fabrication of spare parts for various machinery ➤ CNC Milling (Industrial Standard): High-precision CNC milling services ➤ CNC Turning (Industrial Standard): Advanced CNC turning capabilities for complex geometries ➤ 3D CAD Services: Comprehensive design services using the latest CAD software ➤ Laser Cutting: Precision laser cutting for various materials ➤ 3D Scanning: Accurate 3D scanning services for reverse engineering and quality control 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Education & training ➤ Energy ➤ Agriculture ➤ Transport and Aviation ➤ Financial Services ➤ Hospitality ➤ Health ➤ Security sector

2.1.8 Overview of USET-DST Core Competencies

1. 3D Technology: Advanced additive manufacturing solutions for prototyping and production
2. Business incubation & acceleration
3. Purpose-led relationship and partnership with clients
4. Key Accounts and value optimization management
5. Data-based design of consultancy in engineering and entrepreneurship training.

2.1.9 Legal Status

USET-DST is a private entity that is registered as a company that is limited by guarantee. While providing the company with favorable fiscal environment, The Gambian government Companies Act of 2013 appoints a Board of Trustees (BOT) as the body that has oversight responsibility over the company's activities.

3.1 Existing Market Gaps

As the Gambia continues its stride towards national repositioning through policy innovations and incentives, the drive towards a transitional industrial and efficiency-based economic models has become apparent. The industrial economy ambitions of the Government of The Gambia (GOTG) appears to be premised on the understanding that the industrial sector which is dominated by small scale manufacturing accounts for only 11.8% of GDP¹. The relatively low contribution of the industrial sector to Gambia's GDP would therefore imply that The Gambia is import-dependent in a wide variety of household and industrial consumables. This import dependency situation triggers a wide range of economic disadvantages which make the country vulnerable to such external shocks as shifting hegemonic priorities, volatile global energy prices, global terrorism, regional and global pandemics, and emerging trends in the global data economy².

This situation of historic dependency on import and the realization that it is unsustainable in economic development terms, is paving the way for import substitution in a broad range of areas in the manufacturing sub-sector. Therefore, USET-DST seeks to leverage its technological advantages to play a pioneering role in the areas of precision manufacturing, building services, and research, development and innovation.

4.1 The Solution

The solution to the gaps highlighted in section 3.1 above is to set up a company that harnesses the advantages of deep understanding of local markets and industry, availability of in-house engineering capacity, and availability of in-house market research and business development expertise to offer a value proposition which targets the existing gaps in the market. Thus, USET-DST will leverage technological innovation to customize products and services that would meet the unique requirements of clients in the identified markets.

4.1.1 USET-DST's Business Model

Key Customers

USET-DST business model is based on prior and clear understanding of market segments and distinct customer/ client categories in each of the strategic business units (SBUs) in which the company seeks to compete. Thus, key customers will be identified, targeted and acquired based on the following principles:

- Market segmentation based on industry usage and geo-demographic characteristics
- Development of the profiles of the resulting segments
- Market targeting -developing measures of segment attractiveness and selecting target segments
- Market positioning-developing a positioning for each segment and developing marketing mix for each segment.

Based on this approach, the following client categories will be targeted by the company:

¹ Statista (2024) The Gambia: Share of economic sectors in the gross domestic product (GDP) from 2012 to 2022. Available from :<https://www.statista.com/statistics/525670/share-of-economic-sectors-in-the-gdp-in-gambia/>

² GTTI Tracer Study Report (2015-2016), 2018.

Segment A: Public sector firms/entities (Agriculture, Health, Higher and tertiary education, Youth development, Hospitality, Transport and aviation)

Segment B: Private sector companies (Financial Institution, Tourism and Hospitality Companies, Building and Construction, Specialist services companies, Retailers)

Segment C: Third sector organizations (Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Charities)

5.1 Value Proposition

The feedback received during the pre-launch, clients' consultation indicates that the core products that will be offered by USET-DST in all SBUs, need to be built around the expected core benefits of branded products and services. This means that new product development(NPD) processes at USET-DST will ensure that no gap exists between client expectations and perceptions post service encounters, including ensuring that the value proposition converges strictly with clients' rational, emotional, and aesthetic needs. Therefore, the configuration of value offers will ensure that moment of truth (MOT) arrives at all points (digital or physical) of client contact; from the first visit(web or physical) to actual service/purchase encounters and post purchase engagement of clients.

6.1 Market Analysis and competitive landscape

With Gambia's GDP projected to grow at an average rate of 5.4% in 2024-2025³ which represents an increase of 0.6% from 2023, government aims to pursue its commitment to stimulating growth and transforming the economy, by building an economy that is efficient and responsive, and creating a modern information society⁴. The direct implication of these knowledge-intensive goals is that their delivery by various agencies of government and related private sector organizations will rely heavily on professional engineering and research and development services especially in the manufacturing and professional services sub-sector. Table 2 highlights USET-DST the main areas of competitive activity:

Table 2: USET-DST's Strategic Business Units & Market segments

Metal Fabrication & manufacturing (metal welding, metal machining, metal cutting, metal folding, metal rolling, metal punching, Laser cutting services Additive manufacturing (Prototyping & production 3D card services/3D scanning Subtractive Manufacturing Metal casting (Foundry product line)	Construction & Building Services & consultancy (energy distribution, facade engineering, fire safety and detection, heating, ventilation, air conditioning and refrigeration (HVAC); lighting, security & alarm systems, water drainage and plumbing, road maintenance; civil works
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³ World Bank (2024)

⁴ . GOTG (2018)

<p>Research & Consultancy services: Market research services; R&DI in Civil Engineering and Construction Management; Mechanical Engineering & Mechatronics; Electronics & Electromobility solutions; Energy systems and solutions; Agricultural Technology and Agribusiness processes.</p> <p>Business Advisory & professional Services ; Business incubation & Acceleration services; Health and safety training; Entrepreneurship Education; Manufacturing services; Market research services</p>	<p>Training & Development (Short Courses)</p> <p>Design Research for Innovation & Change.</p> <p>Foundations of Entrepreneurial Management.</p> <p>Introduction to Lean Start-Ups.</p> <p>Regional Entrepreneurship Ecosystems & Markets.</p> <p>Strategic Communication for Entrepreneurs.</p> <p>Fundamentals of Health & Safety.</p> <p>Monitoring, Evaluation Accountability & Learning (MEAL).</p> <p>Project Management.</p> <p>Motor Vehicles Electronics, Diagnosis & Trouble Shooting.</p> <p>Smart Access Control & Digital Installation in Buildings</p> <p>Industrial Safety Engineering</p>
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6.1.1 Metal Fabrication Market

The metal and fabrications market is one of USET-DST primary markets and one of its areas of core competence. The company will seek to leverage many years of expertise and state of art equipment to pursue market dominance in the welding, machining, metal forming, shearing, metal cutting, folding, rolling, and metal lunching sub-segments. The West Africa fabrication market is projected to grow by 4.01% between 2024 and 2029⁵. This represents about 10% share of Africa’s market which is projected to grow at an CAGR of 5.5% between 2025 and 2033⁶. Therefore, USET-DST will focus on the Gambian market and seek a significant competitive presence in the construction, automotive, aerospace, electronics, manufacturing, and the energy sub-segments of the fabrications market. Growth is expected to be driven by growing infrastructure development in the Sahel, especially The Gambia and Senegal.

Metal Fabrications Market Segments

As USET-DST primary market, an in-depth analysis of the composite sub-segments and their variations is presented in Table 3:

⁵ Cognitive Market Research (2025) Metal Fabrications Market Report 2025.Avialbale at https://www.cognitivemarketresearch.com/metal-fabrication-market-report?srsId=AfmBOoq-1RpaxVjh22mJTpGOSfxV02gX2WMXaG1in7FWf_ShGPSA2TjE

⁶ Ibid

Table 3: Metal Fabrication market segments by industry application

Segment by industry application	Dominant fabrication services	USET-DST categorisation
Construction	Cutting, CNC machining, welding, bending	Primary category (A)
Manufacturing	Bending, casting, welding, forging, rolling, CNC machining, punching, stamping	Primary category (B)
Automotive	Cutting, CNC machining, welding, bending	Secondary category (A)
Energy & Power	Bending, casting, welding, forging, rolling, CNC machining, punching, stamping	Secondary category (B)

As shown in Table 3, USET-DST primary segments of competitive activity in the metal fabrication market are the construction and manufacturing sub-segments.

The global metal fabrication market is projected to grow at a Cumulative Average Growth rate (CAGR) of 4.6% between 2024 and 2028 which will translate into growth in market size from \$21.7billion in 2024 to \$25.99 billion in 2028. Please see Figure 1. Within this period, the West Africa market to which The Gambia is intricately linked is **projected to grow at CAGR of 4.01%**, thereby accumulating a market volume of about \$52million.

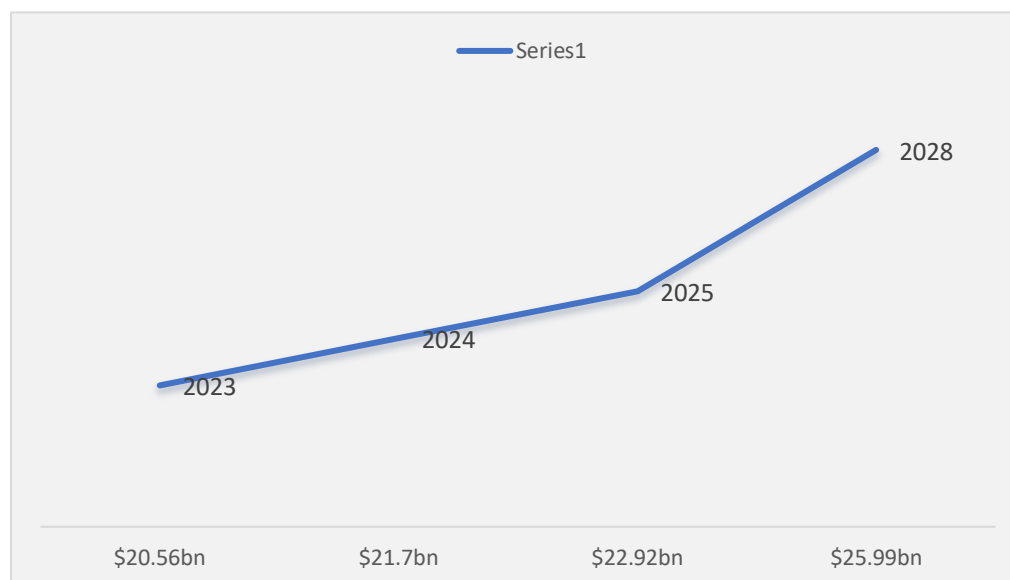


Figure 1: Metal Fabrications market growth trend (2023-2028)

Drawing on this evidence, USET-DST will position its metal fabrication portfolio especially in the construction and manufacturing sectors where the company will seek to establish strong competitive market presence in the steel and aluminum materials fabrications sectors in The Gambia over the next 12 to 36 months.

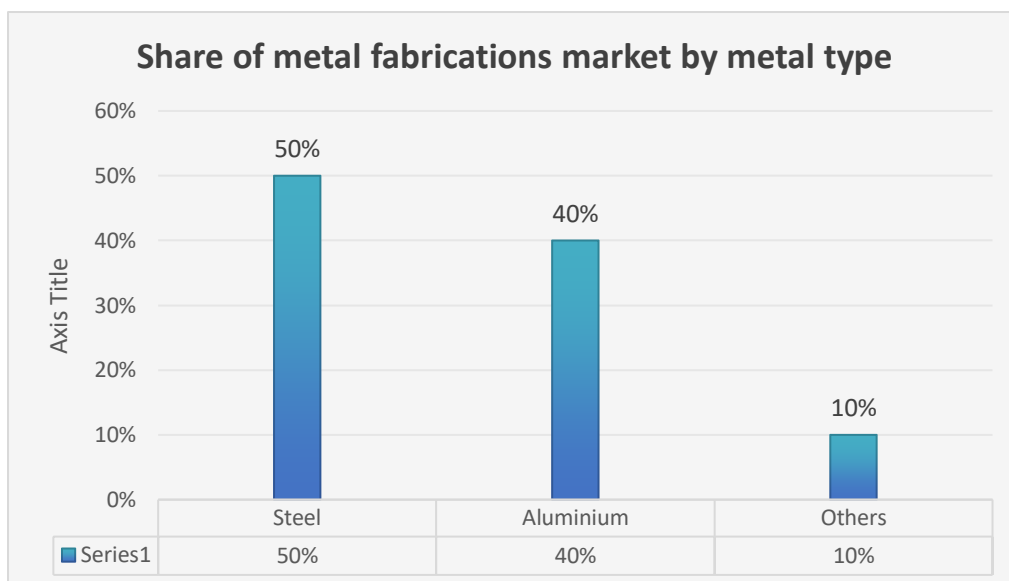


Figure 2:Share of metal fabrications market by metal type

Thus, USET-DST will leverage its expertise in the construction sector to pursue a leading position in all steel and aluminum related fabrication works in The Gambia. The pursuit of this goal will be driven primarily through aggressive market prospecting activities in the construction and the manufacturing sectors over the next 12 to 36 months.

6.1.2 Building and construction consultancy services

The building and consultancy services portfolio is another area in which USET-DST has a core competence. As shown in Table 2, the company will leverage its resident expertise in related construction industry consulting services as well as a broad array of products and accessories in the building maintenance, building construction, heavy & civil engineering, and the land planning and development sub-segments. Table 4 illustrates a summary of market segments in which USET-DST will seek to establish a strong competitive presence.

Table 4:Building & construction consultancy services market segments

Segment by industry application	Target customers	USET-DST services
Industrial construction (building construction, heavy & civil engineering, building maintenance, land planning & development, architecture & feasibility studies, and other technical studies)	Government & development agencies; real estate developers, building contractors	Primary category (A)
Commercial construction (building construction, heavy & civil engineering, building maintenance, land planning & development, architecture & feasibility studies, and other technical studies)	Real estate developers, building contractors, commercial entities, state-owned enterprises (SOEs)	Primary category (B)

Infrastructure construction (building construction, heavy & civil engineering, building maintenance, land planning & development, architecture & feasibility studies and other technical studies)	Government & development agencies; real estate developers, building contractors	Secondary category (A)
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It is estimated that the construction sector accounts for an average of 6.1% of Gambia's GDP. The opportunities in this sector are presented mostly by infrastructure projects and other industrial projects which are undertaken by state-owned enterprises and multilateral development agencies. A steady growth in spending in the sector supports the forecast of growth opportunities in the sector. Figure 3 illustrates spending growth pattern in the sector over the past three years.

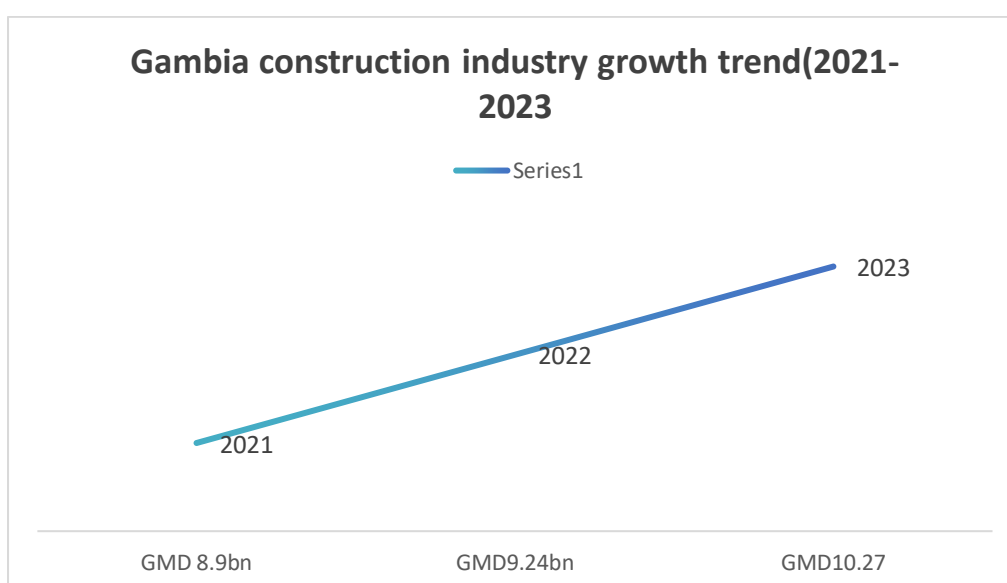


Figure 3 Gambia construction market growth trend

The sector recorded an 11% growth rate between 2022 and 2023. This was due to huge infrastructure development commitment by government. Ongoing infrastructure projects and commitment of support by development agencies such as the World Bank and the African Development Bank (AfDB) in the areas of road infrastructure, agricultural support infrastructure, and energy and other industrial infrastructure projects, indicate a trend of increasing spending pattern for 2024 and 2025. Therefore, USET-DST will position itself aggressively to submit successful bids for all subsequent calls for expression of interest (EOI).

6.1.3 Training, Research and Consultancy services

USET-DST training, research and consultancy portfolio is designed to target opportunities in the Gambian corporate training market, especially those short raining opportunities which align with the portfolio breadth that is indicated in Table 2. USET-DST through the Science, Technology, Engineering for Entrepreneurship (STEE) Centre has successfully piloted all the listed short courses. The identified research streams are additional areas of core competence where USET-DST holds sustainable competitive advantage (SCA). Table 5 outlines the market sub-segments in which USET-DST will maintain active competitive presence.

Table 5: Training, research and consultancy services market segments

Market segments	Portfolio of services	Segments by other considerations
Retail, professional services, financial services, public enterprises, IT sector, education sector,	Technical skills training, soft skills, compliance, capacity building, health and safety, quality assurance, skills advancement, specialist skills, short courses, market research services, applied research services	Delivery methods (online, blended) training topics and subjects, company size, industry verticals, training provider categories

Source⁷

7.1 USET-DST stakeholders in The Gambia

USET-DST draws on evidence-based understanding of the powers and influences of its stakeholders to formulate its competitive engagement strategies. Table 6 highlights stakeholder categories and their descriptions as the basis for the development of its engagement strategies across all strategic business units (SBUs)

Table 6: USET-DST stakeholders

Stakeholder category	Stakeholder allocation
Core stakeholders (clients & prospective clients)	government ministries in The Gambia, state owned enterprises (SEOs) in The Gambia, financial institutions in The Gambia, development partners /agencies (EU agencies, UN agencies, bilateral agencies)
Direct stakeholders	Regulators. Accredited trainers
Indirect stakeholders	Competitors, University Business schools, opinion leaders, industry experts

The core stakeholders are the clients' categories that are shown in Table 1. These client categories form the core of the sources of USET-DST projected revenue for this planning period

8.1 Current & Emerging trends in the Gambia business environment

The analysis of the current situation in this section is guided by the broad nature of the company's portfolio of products services. While the analysis remains sensitive to sector and industry specific differences, it however draws on the identified similarities to assess the nature of emerging trends and their potential impact on the operations of the company across its SBUs.

Table 7: Current & Emerging trends in the Gambia business environment

What	How	Why
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reforms and gradual shift towards emphasis on vocational/applied competences across all sectors 	This is emerging as the government takes steps to implement the national development plan which focus on moving the Gambia to a manufacturing and digital economy status	The shifting development priorities of The Gambia and the west Africa sub-region
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emerging trend of rising government 	This is part of government's plan to enhance Gambia's	Government's goal to invest in the physical

⁷ Allied Market Research (2024) and Credence Research (2024)

investment in infrastructure projects	Energy, Infrastructure and ICT Connectivity	and digital infrastructure of country in order to boost connectivity, promote growth and render Gambia more competitive, especially in the context of the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA).
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Influx of development partners like GIZ, ITC, MCC, KOICA, UNESCO, World Bank, AfDB and other international development partners and their focus on national capacity development, including infrastructure, trade & finance, education & training 	These organizations have strong bilateral and multilateral relations with The Gambia. They prefer to provide development support in the form loan interest loans, grants, and short-term capacity development programmes in support The Gambia National Development plan (2024-2027)	To support the Gambia to pursue its development goals
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enactment of public sector reforms and the adoption of the New Public Management (NPM) as the core philosophy in the public sector. 	Government's goal to vigorously pursue macroeconomic reforms to ensure stability and inclusive growth. Prioritize Human Capital Development for economic and social transformation; Strengthen integration and linkages within the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) sector for enhanced economic growth and productivity with more job creation with increased incomes, accompanied by climate action	To support government's drive towards a knowledge-based economy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvements in the areas of ease of doing business bottlenecks by government 	The bottlenecks that existed in the new business registration and certification processes are now being removed through reforms by the Justice Ministry and Department of Trade. The Single Business registration window facilitates registration of and renewal of	To encourage entrepreneurship and improve on the country's ease of doing business index

	business licenses within 24hours.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deepening trend of hiring overseas-based experts in construction, engineering, manufacturing, and professional services tr 	Most of the training opportunities that arise as result of ongoing refocusing of the economy and national infrastructure upgrade, are taken by foreign firms at very exorbitant costs. This has resulted in an unabated trend of capital repatriation at the expense of the growth and stability of The Gambian economy.	There are very few local firms in nearly all the sectors in which USET-DST seeks to compete. The Gambia is very new in most knowledge-based sectors. The first University in The Gambia was set up in 1999. There were no knowledge structures to incentive high-skills acquisition and business sophistication
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Very few local and well-established vendors 	As above	As above

The insight that emerged from the GPEST analysis in Table 7 provides the rationale for the articulation of the company's strategic objectives and competitive behaviour.

9.1 Analysis of USET-DST internal environment

The analysis of USET-DST internal environment is guided by three strategic considerations. These include: Current levels of organisational resources and the depth of its core and distinctive capabilities. Organisational resources refer to USET-DST capacity to undertake specific value chain related activities relative to the competition. Core and distinctive competences on the other hand, refer to USET-DST capacities that are fundamental to the drive of its competitive strategy and performance. Table 8 highlights an assessment of the company's current capabilities.

Table 8: USET-DST internal resources and capabilities

Resources	Importance	Relative strength	Capabilities	Importance	Relative strength
R1: Finance	6	3	C1: Product Development	9	5
R2: Technology	8	5	C2: Professional procurement capacity	7	5
R3: Machinery	8	8	C3: Engineering capacity	9	7
R4: Brand recognition	9	6	C4: Manufacturing capacity	8	5

R5:Distribution channels	8	5	C5:Financial Management	6	3
R6:Proprietary innovation	7	4	C6:R&D	6	4
			C7:Marketing & sales	9	4
			C8:Government relations	8	5

Table 8 shows that USET-DST main areas of greatest strength are machinery and engineering capacity. However, its areas of relative weakness include access to finance, financial management capability, marketing and sales, research and development, and the number of proprietary technologies it currently possesses. This analysis depicts USET-DST as a moderately competitive company. This is an outlook which dilutes the positioning of *“the aspirational innovator”* which the company is seeking to establish across its markets. Hence, this conclusion provides an incentive for the formulation of strategies which will seek to move the company from a moderately competitive outlook to a resolutely competitive company over the next 12 to 36 months.

10.1 Analysis of gaps between current and projected performance

Figures 4 and 5 depict the gaps between USET-DST current performance in the specific areas of client acquisition and market share, brand awareness and revenue growth. Figure 4 highlights the company’s competitive disadvantages which arise, in part due to its relative newness in the market. This insight draws on the evidence on Table 8 to indicate that the company would need to mainstream innovation in its positioning in order to overcome its liability of newness and sustain a drive towards its organizational and marketing objectives.

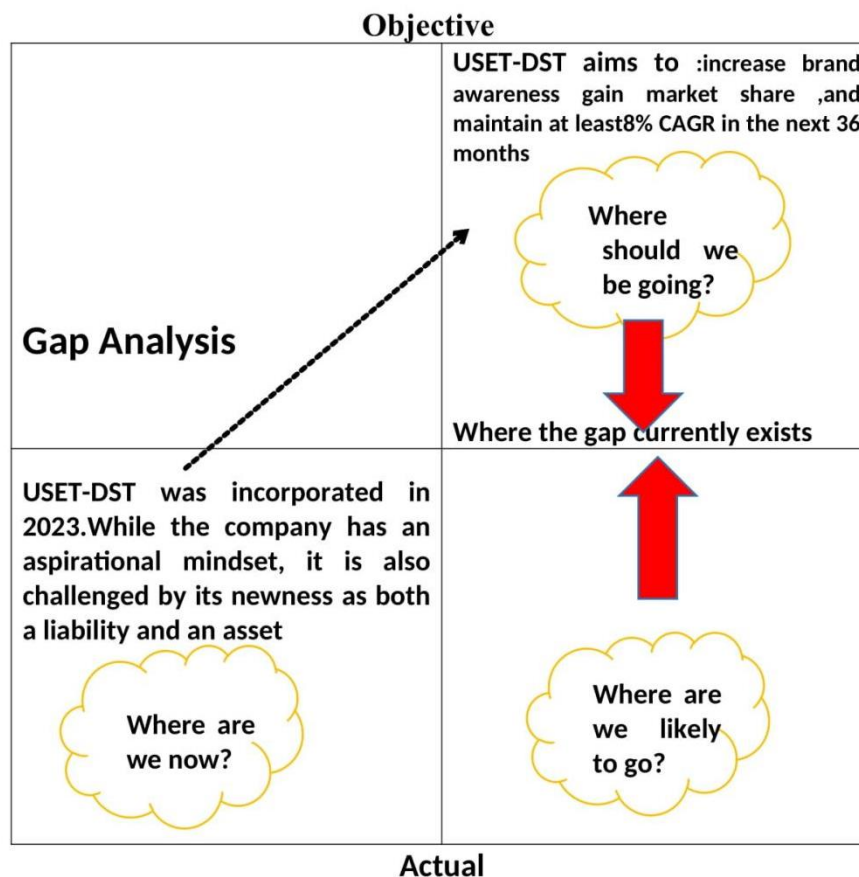


Figure 4:Analysis of gaps between current & projected performance

Figure 5 depicts a planning period of 36 months as well as its market share and brand awareness goals since its incorporation and inception of business in April 2024.The graph depicts a projected performance of 50% increase in brand sereneness within 24 months and a 5% share of markets in all SBUs within the next 12 months.With evidence of the company’s relative capabilities in marketing and sales, finance and proprietary technology, an overarching strategic goal would be to bridge these gaps and engineer revenue growth in all portfolio areas.

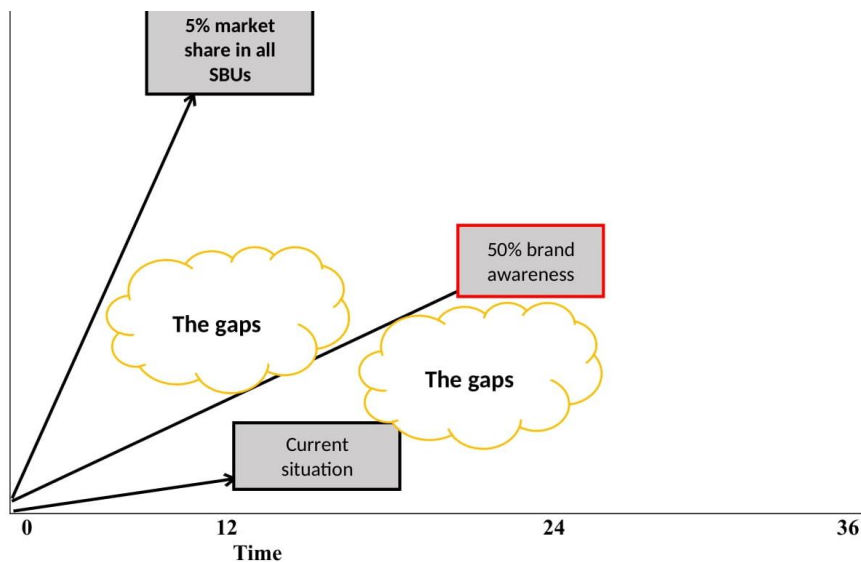


Figure 5: Gaps between projected marketing objectives and current performance

The attainment of the projected 5% market share will be driven by the development of innovative products and services, the use of aggressive marketing and sales and the extensive distribution in the metal fabrications, construction services, business advisory services, research and consultancy and the training and development portfolios.

11.1 Barriers to entry

The analysis of barriers to entry is conducted against the backdrop of the need to conduct industry attractiveness assessment for each of the SBUs. Thus, this assessment remains sensitive to sector and industry specific differences while identifying their inherent commonalities and trends which facilitate insight into the degree for attractiveness of each industry.

Infrastructure requirements

USET-DST's business model is heavily dependent of both physical and digital infrastructure which ranges from the requirement for state of the art technologies in construction, manufacturing, , and engineering design to educational technology platforms such as Learning Management systems(LMS) and the spectrum of software platforms such as those offered by Autodesk for modelling, training and development services. Access to these platforms is not only financially intensive, in some cases prohibitively intensive, they are also technically intensive.

Skills requirements

USET-DST market is being positioned as an innovative and aspirational company. This positioning is influenced by the technical nature of its portfolios which require high order skills such as market research skills, engineering skills, training design and development skills, technology development skills, and business relationship management skills. These are skills and competencies that are acquired from academic and professional training and certification. Given the global scope of the competition in the industries in which USET-DST will be competing, competitive advantages are constructed from proprietary technologies and other innovation capabilities. Given the newness of higher education in The Gambia, the national stock of these skills is very low. This is why the dominant players in the sectors in The Gambia are foreign based firms.

Investment requirements

Behind entrepreneurship skills, access to investment credit is the second major obstacle to start-up development and survival in The Gambia. Where they exist, they are usually beyond the reach of start-ups due to requirements for collateral. This situation reinforces the case for the need to close the \$245billion⁸ SME funding gap in Sub-Saharan Africa. This situation hinders the formation and take-off of local firms in various sectors that are targeted by USET-DST . Further to this is the intensity of investment capital that is required in nearly all USET-DST portfolio areas. Accessing this level of investment funds in a credit environment which is not favorable to SMEs is a challenge.

Competitive behaviour of existing players

The brand recognition of direct competitors and indirect competitors some of which are well known in each strategic business unit is another barrier to entry. Given that new firms like USET-DST, suffer the liability of newness, the setting up new brands and sub-brands and working to dilute the disadvantage of being new in an industry that requires innovation is always a challenge.

To overcome all these barriers, USET-DST plans to use innovative and alternative financing models to access start-up capital. The skills requirement will not be a barrier as the company already has highly skilled experts that are experienced in each market.

12.1 Industry overview

The evidence that emerged from iterations during the ideation stage of the development of USET-DST portfolio of products and services, indicates that the core products of metal fabrication and manufacturing, construction and building services, research and consultancy services, and business advisory services, need to be built around their core benefits and value offers. Such benefits include the perception of the clientele of the rational (functional) benefits that are promised and delivered by the company. This means that portfolio commercialization will ensure that no gap exist between client expectations and perceptions post service encounters. The company's value proposition ensures that the moment of truth (MOT) arrives at all appoints of client contact, from the first visit to actual product or service purchase and all relevant post purchase client engagement.

12.1.1 Competitors and potential partners

The following competitors and categories have been identified as potential competitors and partners to USET-DST

Table 9: USET-DST competitors and partners

Metal Fabrication works & Manufacturing	Construction & Building services
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Cham's Aluminium Stainless steel and metal workshop ➤ Timber Co Ltd ➤ Metalum Ltd. ➤ Q-Group ➤ Gambia Ports Authority ➤ NAWEC ➤ Sanneh Kunda Workshop ➤ Baba Galleh Welding workshop ➤ Trusted Construction (TCC) Ltd ➤ Gambia Ports Authority ➤ GAMTEL ➤ Gambia Transport Services Company 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ B.B. Electrical & Construction Co. Ltd ➤ Swami India (G) Ltd ➤ Mahfouz Engineering Services ➤ Better Solutions Company Limited ➤ General Engineering Gambia Limited ➤ GS-Construction Enterprise ➤ MOJO Construction ➤ Dream Homes Real Estates and Construction Ltd ➤ Shapoorji Pallonji L.L.C. ➤ Sub-Regional Contractors Ltd ➤ Heritage Construction ➤ Timber Co Ltd

⁸ Feeder, M. (2024) Fintech for SME Lending in Africa, Making Finance Work for Africa

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Colley welding workshop ➤ Applied Research Innovation & Manufacturing ➤ Other International contractors ➤ Financial Institutions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Gambia Association of Construction Contractors ➤ National Roads Authority (NRA) ➤ City Space Associates ➤ Sphinx Associates ➤ Sinco-SPA ➤ SARH Attaqnia Co.(SAC) ➤ Saudi Tech.Geology Engineering Consultants ➤ Other International contractors ➤ Protech-Gambia Ltd
<p>Business Advisory & Professional Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ GFS Business Development Services; Head office ➤ HAM CONSULTING ➤ BJM Management Consultancy Ltd ➤ AA & Co. Chartered Certified Accountants ➤ Nexia Payce Consulting ➤ NIABS EXPERTS ➤ Quality+ Printing ➤ DBS Printing Services ➤ Approved Services LTD ➤ Gambia Investment and Export Promotion Agency (GIEPA) ➤ Crest Consulting ➤ J.S Morlu Gambia ➤ DT Associates ➤ ProGam IT Services ➤ Meridien Consulting ➤ SMART Associates, Gambia Ltd ➤ CEPRASS Gambia ➤ SMD Consulting 	<p>Training, Research & Consultancy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ International consultants ➤ Private consultants ➤ University of the Gambia ➤ American University in Gambia ➤ Euclid University ➤ International Open University ➤ Online Training provides (offshore) ➤ Syndicate training providers (offshore) ➤ Financial institutions

13.1 Factors driving dynamics in USET-DST sectors of Competitive interest

USET-DST has developed competencies in four strategic business units(SBUs) .This section presents an analysis of the factors driving dynamics in each of the SBUs. This provides additional insight for strategy development.Thus, factors driving competitive dynamics in the metal fabrications & manufacturing, construction & building services, business advisory, and training & development sectors are analysed as follows:

Metal Fabrication works & Manufacturing

Technological advancements	Automation, robotics, and advanced cutting techniques like laser cutting and waterjet cutting are improving precision, efficiency, and production speed, enabling complex designs and faster turnaround times.
Material selection	The availability and cost of different metals, including steel, aluminium, and stainless steel, influence design choices and overall project viability.
Skilled labour Challenges	Skilled labour shortages in the metal fabrication industry, especially in The Gambia can limit production capacity and increase costs.
Environmental considerations	Growing pressure to adopt sustainable practices, including recycling and using eco-friendly materials, is driving innovation in the industry.
Quality assurance and compliance	Stringent quality standards and regulatory compliance requirements across different industries impact the design and manufacturing processes in metal fabrication. The absence of these in The Gambia, will require a rigorous internal quality assurance system for USET-DST.
Market trends	Emerging industries like renewable energy, automotive, and above-ground storage tanks (ASTs) are driving demand for specific metal fabrication capabilities and innovations.
Digitalization	Implementing advanced manufacturing software and data analytic which optimize production planning, inventory management, and quality control.

Construction & Building services

Sustainability	There is a growing trend of demand for environmentally responsible projects, pushing for sustainable design and building materials throughout the construction process.
Technological Advancements Labor Shortages	Adoption of business information modeling (BIM) and other digital tools to improve design collaboration, project management, and overall efficiency. This technology allows for detailed 3D models of buildings, enabling better planning, coordination, and cost estimations. Difficulty in finding skilled workers, leading to increased focus on training programs and workforce development strategies. This factor is major driver in The Gambia's construction industry, leading to recruitment of majority skilled and semi-skilled labour that is required in specific projects from neighbouring countries.
Safety Measures	Emphasis on improving safety standards on construction sites to reduce accidents and injuries.

Quality of Building Materials	Ensuring high-quality materials to maintain project integrity and avoid rework.
Risk Management	Identifying and mitigating potential risks throughout the construction process, including financial, environmental, and safety risks.
Economic Factors	The state of the of the economy in terms of price volatility, interest rates, and overall economic conditions impacting construction project demand.

Business Advisory & Professional Services

Digitalization	The shift towards digital processes and tools like cloud computing, AI, and data analytic is transforming how advisory services are delivered, enabling greater efficiency and new service offerings.
Global Competition	The business advisory and professional services market has become globalized by recent and emerging technological trends. This means that companies like USET-DST face intense competition from international players, requiring them to constantly improve quality and adapt to diverse client needs.
Specialized Expertise	Clients increasingly demand niche expertise in areas like the application of AI to business process re-engineering , cybersecurity, sustainability, and complex regulatory compliance, driving the need for specialized advisory services.
Client Focus	Understanding client needs and delivering tailored solutions is crucial for building strong relationships and retaining business.
Technological Advancements	Emerging technologies like blockchain, automation, and machine learning are creating new opportunities for innovative advisory services.
Collaborations and Partnerships	Forming strategic alliances with other firms can expand reach, access new markets, and provide complementary expertise. This is particularly important for companies which have cross-border ambitions
Data-Driven Insights	Leveraging data analytics to gain deep insights into client businesses enables more informed strategic advice.
Talent Acquisition and Retention	Attracting and retaining highly skilled professionals is critical for maintaining service quality.

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Research & Consultancy

R&D Strategy	Companies need a clear R&D strategy aligned with their business goals to ensure effective allocation of resources. This includes strategy for talent recruitment and retention (Skilled researchers and analysts)
Innovation Ecosystem	A robust ecosystem with strong research institutions, venture capital funding, and supportive government policies can foster R&D activity.
Funding Sources	Access to adequate funding is a major driver of R&D outcomes and sustainability
Academia-Industry Collaborations	Partnerships between universities and companies can facilitate knowledge transfer and accelerate R&D processes.
Technological Advancements	Emerging technologies like artificial intelligence, big data, robotics, and biotechnology create new opportunities for innovation and drive R&D investment in related fields.
Market Competition	Companies need to continuously develop new products and services to stay ahead of competitors, pushing them to invest in R&D to maintain market share.
Government Policies	Government funding, tax incentives, and regulations can significantly influence the direction and intensity of R&D activities within a country or industry.
Consumer Demands	Changing consumer preferences and needs can drive R&D efforts towards developing products with specific features or functionalities.

Training and Development

Qualified trainers	Qualified trainers bring in their expertise and inexperience to create moment of delight during training service encounters remotely or face-to-face.
Tailor-made curricula	Bespoke programmes cater for the specific need of the training cohort or individuals. The is propagating the practice of co-creation of training materials by the training service providers and the trainees.

Coaches with appropriate professional experience	This is critical as most of the training focus on ability enhancement on the job rather than generic-academic –focused approach to transmission of knowledge
Coaches with extensive knowledge of the field	This factor complements the professional experience of trainers and coaches as they work to deliver training that are in most cases context specific.
Trainee/learner support systems	This factor highlights the importance of trainee engagement on the impact of using behavioural, emotional and cognitive engagement strategies to optimize the service experience of trainees.
High informational and promotional activity	This utilizes high level of product and service information , prior , during , and even post training
Effective monitoring and evaluation	This quality assurance system draws on a robust feedback loop to provide inputs for the continuous improvement of training approaches and contents.

14.1 USET-DST corporate brand positioning

USET-DST corporate brand positioning as illustrated in Figure 6 indicates that the company is a full service provider in the engineering and professional and allied services industry..The location of USET-DST in the full service-hightec/ non premium high-tech axis positions the company as an entity with a full service portfolio in construction, engineering and related professional services industry.Its innovative portfolios are developed to target non-premium segments as its primary markets.What this implies is that USET-DST its clients superior value at relatively lower costs.

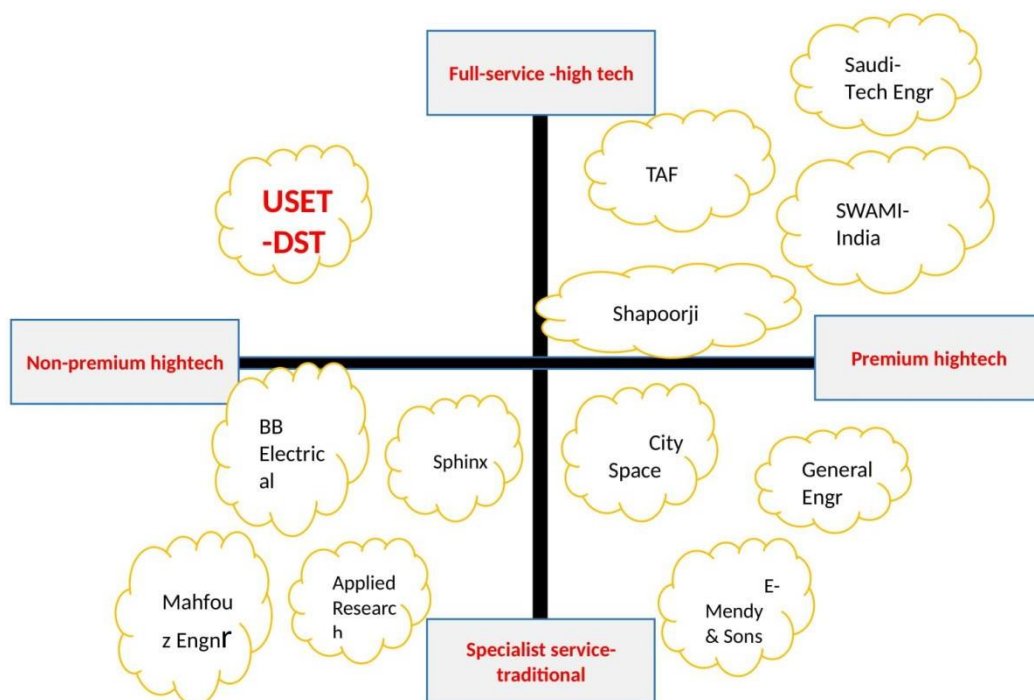


Figure 6: A Perceptual map showing USET-DST Corporate brand positioning

The perceptual map in Figure 6 is supported by the SBUs and competitor categories that are shown Table 9. Thus, the full service -non-premium high tech positioning projects a corporate brand image of innovation with broad portfolio of cutting-edge products and services that make superior value offers at competitive and affordable prices for all customer categories.

15.1 Marketing strategies

USET-DST marketing strategy would be based on three fundamental pillars. These are **data analytic, AI powered tools, and consumer generated content**. This approach will be used to continually generate superior client knowledge through market segmentation studies, optimization of corporate brand awareness and provision of superior value proposition to clients. Hence, USET-DST marketing communications (Marcomms) strategy will use the integrated approach that would be dominated by the use of digital channels to communicate the company's brand positioning and thus differentiate it from the competition. This approach will be used to establish the company's point of difference while serving as a source of competitive advantage while ensuring that the company gain a superior of share of target customers; share of mind (SOM) and share of wallet (SOW)..

15.1.1 Key Resources

- Technical expertise in metal fabrication and manufacturing, construction and building services, business advisory and professional services, training, research and consultancy)
- State of -the-art manufacturing and fabrication equipment
- Digital infrastructure like website, unrestricted access to a large pool of design and modelling software
- Configured work stations and 3-D printers
- Brand recognition
- Broad portfolio of products and services
- Sales and marketing expertise

15.1.2 Distribution Channels

Physical presence on all USET campuses

- Reception (Front office)
- Training / Presentation rooms
- Parking Space
- Entrepreneurship Hub and Innovation laboratory (EHIL)
- Machine shops, design studios, automation labs

Branded digital Presence.

- Interactive website
- Social Media & other digital channels (Linked In, Facebook, SEO, email contacts)

15.1.3 Revenue streams

The projected revenue targets will be driven from professional fees, contracts, sale of products and services, research and development contracts, and commercial and syndicated research services, which are used to project value propositions in all the SBUs that are indicated in Table 9.

Table 10: USET-DST revenue streams

Metal Fabrication works & Manufacturing Professional fees Contract fees Sale of products and services Research & development contracts Equipment lease	Construction & Building services Professional fees Contract fees Sale of products and services Research & consultancy & supervision contracts Equipment lease
Business Advisory & Professional Services Professional fees Contract fees Bespoke services Research & development	Training, Research & Consultancy Professional fees Contract fees Bespoke services Research & development Syndicated reserch services

These revenue streams have been used to construct the production and sales forecast that is shown in Table 11.

16.1 Marketing objectives

1. To achieve at least 50% brand awareness levels among target customers within 36 months
2. To acquire at least 5% of total market share in each SBU within 24 months.
3. To achieve and maintain 10% CAGR in revenue in 36 months

17.1 Sales forecasts

Drawing on USET-DST corporate goals and the marketing strategies, the company will pursue its revenue cum cash flow objectives through the production and sales plan that is outlined in Table 11. While this plan indicates projections for 2025-2027 operational period, the indicated production targets have been realized through a careful analysis of demand patterns, pricing dynamics, and other competitive trends that may emerge in the market segments in which the company will be competing. These forecasts do not represent production and sales forecast for individual products and services for the indicated period. Instead, they represent aggregate production and sales forecast for the indicated time period. For planning purposes, the indicated prices and variations are derived as averages that are calculated from the pricing trends in each SBU here, in The Gambia and the West Africa sub-region. Thus, prevalent inflationary patterns and their impact on the geographic jurisdictions of interest have been taken into consideration. The full sales and production analysis is attached in the appendix.

Table 11: Cash flow projection summary 2025-2027

Product code	Producti on Yr 1	Sales Year 1 (GMD)	production yr 2	Sales yr 2(GMD)	Production Yr 3	Sales Yr 3(GMD)
001	600	6,600,000	600	6,600,000	660	7,260,000
002	480	1,200,000	480	1,200,000	480	1,200,000

003	355	710,000	355	710,000	355	710,000
004	360	4,320,000	360	4,320,000	360	4,320,000
005	48	2,400,000	48	2,400,000	48	2,400,000
006	40	4,000,000	40	4,000,000	48	4,000,000
007	258	129,000	258	129,000	258	129,000
008	21	1,680,000	25	2,000,000	29	2,320,000
009	190	1,900,000	190	1,900,000	190	1,900,000
010	90	900,000	90	900,000	90	900,000
011	40,000	800,000	40400	808,000	56000	1,120,000
012	12	6,000,000	12	6,000,000	12	6,000,000
013	12	2,400,000	12	2,400,000	12	2,400,000
014	12	600,000	12	600,000	12	600,000
015	16	160,000	24	200,000	24	200,000
016	18	45,000	30	60,000	30	60,000
017	60	300,000	60	300,000	60	300,000
018	21	10,500,000	25	12,500,000	26	13,000,000
019	140	2,800,000	145	2,900,000	145	2,900,000
020	140	2,100,000	145	2,175,000	145	2,175,000
021	80	800,000	84	840,000	84	840,000
	42,882	50,344,000	43,395	52,942,000	59068	55,534,000

USET-DST will be competing with a revenue stream that is composed of 21 products and services. Following the company's projected revenue objective of (CAGR) at 10% in the next 36 months, USET-DST annual revenue for the period covering 2025 to 2027 is projected to be **D158,820,000**.

18.1 USET-DST Breakeven Point

Figure 7 illustrates the company's break-even point. The break-even analysis covers projections and activities which began in January 2025. As shown in Table 13, the company has a total start-up cost of nearly one hundred and nine million dalasis (GMD 109,000,000). Hence, revenue is projected to grow at a CAGR of 10% within 36 months. This growth will be driven by a concerted effort to meet the projected market share goals. Thus, the break-even point as shown in Figure 7, is expected to be realized with a cumulative production volume of nearly eighty seven thousand units of production (87000) between the end of year 2 and the beginning of year 3.

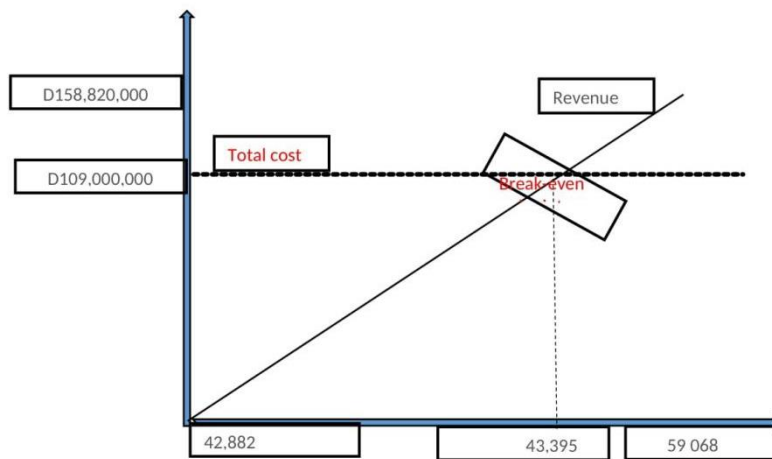


Figure 7: USET-DST Breakeven Point

19.1 Partnerships (horizontal and vertical alliances)

- Licensing and franchise arrangements with international partners, especially in highly specialized areas of USET-DST value chain.
- Partnership with local partners with whom USET-DST submits joint bids for contracts especially in the construction and civil engineering services.
- Long term partnership with government departments.
- Lending institutions
- Professional bodies for membership subscriptions and CPD

20.1 Management and personnel

In keeping with its lean approach to organizational design, USET-DST will have 4 employees with full-time permanent contract. The will include the CEO, the deputy CEO, accounts officer, and a client engagement /relationship officer. The company expects to employ temporary employees on needs basis. The skills required for the full time staff include :

- **Individual A:** The CEO, Full Time [Skills required: Strategic planning, information management, leadership, decision-making, effective communication]
- **Individual B:** Deputy CEO, Full Time [Skills required: multi-tasking, decision-making, effective communication, leadership, & motivation]
- **Individual C:** Relationship Officer [Skills required: interpersonal, flexibility, listening, time-management]
- **Individual D:** Accounts Officer [Skills required: same as individual B]

Contract Personnel

All contract staff will be trained to execute specific contracts on pro-rata basis. This approach will reduce labour cost and generate cost savings from compulsory social security and pensions contributions which employers are obligated to make on behalf of their employees. Table 12 presents a summary of the budgetary implications of the company's work force strategy.

Table 12:Summary of staff cost

	Year 1(2025)	Year 2(2026)	Year 3(2027)
CEO	GMD 500,000	GMD550,000.00	GMD550,000.00
Deputy CEO	GMD360,000	GMD 396,000.00	GMD 396,000.00
Relationship Officer	GMD300,000.00	GMD 330,000	GMD 330,000
Accounts officer	GMD300,000.00	GMD 330,000	GMD 330,000
Temporary staff	GMD 700,000	GMD 770,000	GMD 770,000
BOT Members (9)	GMD1,080,000	GMD1,296,000	GMD1,296,000
Total payroll	GMD3,240.000	GMD3,672,000	GMD3,672,000

21.1 Financial Summary

Funding Requirements & Uses

USET-DST is seeking to raise of **\$114,286(GMD8million)** for the purpose of financing operational infrastructure, equipment purchase, and operating expenses. An extra \$47,347(**GMD 3.3million**) will be invested in the company by USET, which is USET-DST parent organization. The funding summary is presented in Table 13.

Table 13:Finanacial Summary

Breakdown of assets and use of funds	Cost/Value in GMD
Machinery & Equipment - Foundry	\$500,000.00(GMD 35,000,000)
Machinery & Equipment - VTC	\$200,000.00(GMD 14,000,000)
Machinery & Equipment -EHIL	\$200,000.00(GMD 14,000,000)
Machinery & Equipment -Auto services workshop	\$190,000.00(GMD 13,300,000)

Equipment for manufacturing services	\$50,000.00(GMD 3,500,000.00)
Buildings & workshop space	\$250,000.00(GMD17,500,000)
Sub Total	\$1,390,000(GMD 97,300,000)
Start-up Assets to fund	
Office renovation & furnishing	\$20,000(GMD1.4million)
Equipment and systems repair & purchase (Foundry & VTC)	\$50,000(GMD3.5million)
Sub-Total	\$70,000.00(GMD4.9million)
Operating Expenses (Start-up Expenses to fund)	
Salaries	\$45,633(GMD 3,240,000.00)
Marketing and and sales	\$25,000(GMD1.75million)
Other operating expenses	\$21,000(GMD 1.47million)
Sub-total	\$91,633(GMD 6.4million)
Total start-up funding (including assets)	\$1,551,633(GMD108,614,310 million)
Total funding Required(Total assets to fund + Start-up expenses to fund)	\$161,633,000(GMD 11.3million)

As shown in Table 12, USET-DST start-up funding , including existing assets is calculated at the sum of **\$1, 551, 633**. However, the total funding required to fund operating expenses and equipment is **\$161,633,000**).

22.1 Risk Reduction Measures

Risk reduction measure will be focused on the areas of business strategy formulation and implementation. Liquidity and strategic risks abound in the prevailing engineering and professional and allied services industry in The Gambia. The other risks are those that are associated with implementation. These include, the risk of not achieving targets, the risk of not stimulating and keeping employees motivated, and the risk of missing implementation schedules. The risk reduction measures are as follows:

Table 14: Risk reduction measures

Potential Risks	Proposed. Built-in reduction measure
Strategy formulation & implementation risk	The company knowledge management approach to programmes and project implementation will support a continuous cycle of data access analysis while ensuring that strategy formulation and-implementation is data driven.

Market volatility & environmental emergency risk	The reduction and management of this risk is based on lots of flexibility around the structure and a culture of self-motivation and initiative. This will ensure that environmental trends are timely tracked and supported with the requisite impact analysis
Liquidity risk	As in Strategy formulation & implementation risk above

Appendix 1: USET-DST Product & Service codes

001	MANHOLE COVERS
002	SHAFTS
003	PULLEYS
004	ECO SEEDER
005	MILLING MACHINES
006	RICE THRESHER 1
007	SHOVELS & SPADES
008	RICE THRESHING MACHINES 2
009	METAL CUTTING & MACHING WITH CNC
010	OTHER FABRICATION CONTRACTS
011	COMPRESSED STABILIZER EARTH BLOCKS

012	BUILDING & CIVIL ENGINEERING SERVICES
013	CIVIL WORKS CONSULTANCY SERVICES
014	OTHER CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTS(FURNITURE)
015	PRODUCT DESIGN & MODELING SERVICES
016	PRINTING SERVICES
017	PROTOTYPING WITH 3-D MACHINES
018	SYNDICATED RESEARCH SERVICES
019	SHORT COURSES & BESPOKE TRAINING
020	BUSINESS INCUBATION SERVICES
021	Automotive manitenance services

Appendix 2:USET-DST Start-up implementation Plan (2025-2027)

	Jan24	24-Feb	24-Mar	24-Apr	24-May	24-Jun	24-Jul	Aug24
Development of Business concept	x	x	x					
Validation of business concept				x	x			
Portfolio development						x		
Business Registration							x	
STG website development								
Head office rental & renovation								
Development of digital traing platforms								
Training content development								
Fund mobiilisation								
Staff Recruitment								
Training and induction of staff								

Marketing & client recruitment

Business launch