

By Martin Kitubi

**T**he education ministry is set to send 183 lecturers abroad to enrol as instructors and lecturers for the new oil and gas curriculum and its support courses, a source in the ministry has revealed.

Of the 183, 35 will specialise as tutors in the oil and gas courses, whereas the 148 others will be trained as instructors for support courses.

Thirty five lecturers will be trained with funding from the Albertine Region Sustainable Development Project (ARSDP) and the 148 will benefit from the Uganda Skills Development Project (USDP).

ARSDP and USDP are World Bank-funded projects under the education ministry.

The lecturers will be trained on how to deliver a competence based training of oil and gas courses.

The lecturers will also enrol for offshore training abroad and locally before they can take over training Ugandan students.

The source said the move to train lecturers abroad was reached after the Government realised that there were no instructors in the country with skills to implement the new curriculum.

"The process to select lecturers is on," the source said.

The new oil and gas curriculum covers courses, such as upstream operations, down stream operations, electrical maintenance and instrumentation maintenance.

The source said the institute's top managers, who include registrars, accountants and principals will also be retooled.

Last month, the oil and gas curriculum was approved by stakeholders and is expected to be rolled out this September at the Uganda Petroleum Institute-Kigumba (UPIK) and later at the Uganda Technical College (UTC) - Kichwamba.

Lecturers at UTC - Kichwamba will be trained at Coventry University in the UK, whereas those at UPIK will be trained at IFP School in France.

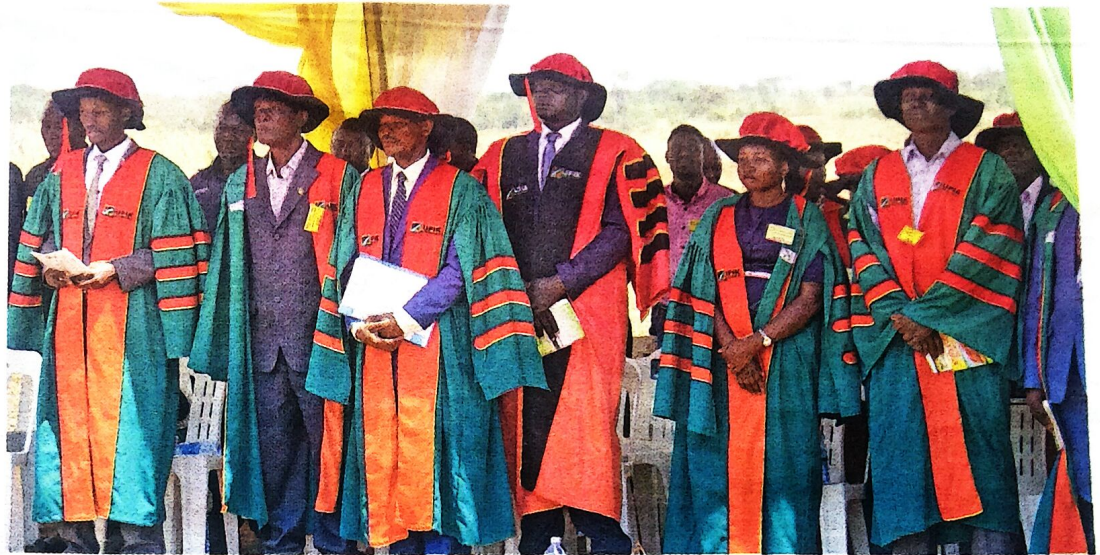
Recently, the education ministry entered an agreement with IFP School to partner with UPIK to conduct accreditation, curriculum adaption and improving of faculties for UPIK.

The French Institute of Petroleum (IFP) School provides public and in-house oil and gas courses in exploration, production, refining, chemicals, economics, management, internal combustion engines and lubricants.

The institute also has a graduate engineering school and it is part of French Institute of Petroleum.

With the IFP on board, this means that UPIK will offer training with five internationally recognised certifications from different institutions.

Judith Auma, the communication specialist for ARSDP/USDP at the education ministry confirmed the development. She said, many training institutions have submitted the names of lectures who will be sent for training.



Some of the UPIK administrators and lecturers during their first graduation ceremony held in December last year in Kiryandongo district. The managers and lecturers will undergo fresh training abroad. Photo by Martin Kitubi

# Oil and gas lecturers to be trained abroad

"The selection process is about to be concluded. We expect the education ministry to communicate the final lists before the end of this financial year," she said in a telephone interview.

However, Auma said other details including funds will be communicated later.

## Support courses

The education ministry is also developing another curriculum for oil and gas support sectors such as agriculture, construction and manufacturing.

The source, the above sectors are expected to create a scalable model for high quality vocational and technical training geared towards the lucrative oil and gas sector.

The new curriculum will enable training institutions link skills training to labour market needs for priority sectors of the economy.

The development of the curriculum is done under USDP.

The new curriculum will run at four technical and vocational institutions: Bukalasa Agricultural College, Uganda Technical Colleges (UTC) in Lira, Elgon and Bushenyi.

The four colleges were selected to support UPIK and UTC-Kichwamba, which will focus on oil and gas courses.

Lecturers from UTC Elgon and Lira at the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology (NAIT) Canada. NAIT is one of the leading training institutions in both technical and applied education.

According to the source, lecturers from Bukalasa will be trained at Dalhousie University, whereas those from UTC-

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Bushenyi will be enrolled at SFERE institute both in Canada.

## New Equipment

The source also said, the ministry is set to acquire new teaching equipment for oil and gas training at both UPIK and UTC-Kichwamba.

The above training institutions will have new training workshops to match with the recently approved oil and gas curriculum.

UPIK will also get a drilling simulator. The equipment is estimated to cost \$2m (about sh7b) and that it will be used in training drilling operations, as opposed to going to the field.

This was a recent a pledge by the President Yoweri Museveni during the last Presidential Investors Round Table (PIRT) at State House, Entebbe.

Bernard Ongodia, the principal of UPIK, said the simulator will expose learners to activities that happen in the oil and gas fields, welding of gas pipeline, and construction of other key infrastructure.

In addition, he said, to transform UPIK into a centre of excellence in the oil and gas training and also implementing

the new curriculum, they needed proper equipment and the right lecturers.

"We thank the Government for responding to our needs. The oil and gas sector is new in the country and we did not have lecturers here, I am happy that they will be trained abroad," he said.

## First students

The first students to be enrolled under the new oil and gas curriculum at UPIK, are expected in September this year.

Since the Ugandan lecturers will be undergoing training abroad, the source revealed that the first batch of students will be trained by experts from abroad.

"Senior lecturers in the oil and gas courses from IFP School in France will be flown into the country to train students at UPIK," the source said.

Oil and gas companies will participate in the students' enrolment, a move intended to ensure quality.

To enrol at UPIK, eligible students must have a Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education.

However, they must have obtained two principal passes

at the same sitting, in physics and mathematics plus any other principal pass in other science disciplines.

The other science disciplines included chemistry, technical drawing, metal work, biology and fine art which are fundamental in engineering related courses.

The source said candidates with national certificates in engineering fields from recognised institutions also qualify for admissions emphasising that currently, admissions are done only through the Joint Admissions Board.

## Funding

In 2012, the Government, through the education ministry, launched a 10-year strategy for skilling Ugandans. The strategy aims at transforming business, technical, and vocational education training in a comprehensive system of skills development for employment, enhanced productivity and growth.

The strategy was intended to have a paradigm shift in skills development with emphasis on creating employable skills and competencies relevant to labour market rather than, just certificates.

In 2016, the World Bank, through USDP, offered funding worth \$100m (about sh360b) to support reforms that would transform skills development.

The Government also received a \$25m funding (about sh94.2b) from the World Bank through the ARSDP, to finance accreditation, certification of training institutions, train lecturers and tutors, among others.