

# THE NATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN (NSDP) 2030: THE IMPACT ON PRIVATE PROVIDERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Capacity building Guideline book for private higher education, further education  
and training and skills development providers.

NSF-APPETD-DLL Partnership project on the NSDP 2030: The impact on private  
providers in South Africa

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**This project is prepared to facilitate the dialogue and build capacity for private providers of education, training, and skills development on the NSDS 2030.**

**The dialogue and capacity building will take place over the period of November 2020 to November 2021, at Capacity Building Forums (CBF) on the Impact of NSDP 2030 on Private Providers.**

**The project will also deliver a research report based on the empirical evidence, data and learning derived from implementation of NSDP 2030 by private providers over the period of 12 months. This means that there will be ongoing interaction with stakeholders over the period to ensure that at the initial stages of NSDP 2030 implementation, successes and potential challenges will be identified.**

**Discussions and inputs emerging from the CBFs will be considered in the refinement of the final research report.**

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## Contents

1. INTRODUCTION.....	5
SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTUALISATION.....	7
Section 1: Pre-workshop background reading and projects.....	8
2. CONCEPTUALISATION AND BACKGROUND.....	8
2.1 The emergence of Skills Development Planning.....	8
2.2 The NQF and bodies responsible for NQF implementation.....	13
2.2.1 Initial Conceptualisation .....	14
2.2.2 ANC approach to a NQF in their Policy document.....	14
2.2.3 Three phases of development of the NQF .....	15
2.2.4 The concept of integration in the South African NQF.....	15
2.2.5 Quality Education and Training.....	17
2.2.6 Building blocks of the NQF as per the SAQA Act.....	18
2.2.7 Two qualification types .....	19
2.2.8 Learning Outcomes .....	20
2.2.9 Requirements for registration of qualifications.....	20
2.2.10 Developments leading to the NQF Act, 67 of 2008 .....	21
2.2.11 Three Quality Councils .....	26
2.2.12 Challenges .....	30
2.2.13 Successes.....	32
2.3 National Skills Development Strategies and final report on NSDS 111 .....	35
SECTION 2: THE CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP .....	40
Section 2: Capacity Building Workshop .....	41
3. SITUATING THE NATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN .....	41
3.1 The Minister’s vision and intention .....	41
3.2 The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training .....	41
3.3 The National Plan for Post-School Education and Training (NP-PSET) .....	43
3.3.1 Impact on Private Providers.....	45
3.4 The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030.....	46
3.4.1 Sequencing and willingness to prioritise .....	47
3.4.2 A capable and Developmental state .....	47
3.4.3 People with disabilities .....	48
3.4.4 Improving the quality of education .....	48

3.4.5	Technological change.....	48
3.4.6	Building a future for South Africa’s youth .....	49
4.	THE NATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN .....	50
4.1	The vision of the NSDP .....	51
4.1.1	The Critical Cross Field outcomes (CCFOs).....	51
4.2	The mission of the NSDP .....	52
4.3	Outcomes of the NSDP.....	53
4.3.1	Identify and increase production of occupations in high demand .....	53
	Impact on Private Providers (PPs).....	56
4.3.2	Linking Education and the workplace .....	57
4.3.3	NSDS 3 Improving the level of skills in the South African workforce.....	60
4.3.4	Increase access to occupationally directed programmes .....	61
4.3.5	Support the growth of the public college institutional type as a key provider of skills required for socio-economic development .....	63
4.3.6	Skills development support for entrepreneurship and cooperative development .....	66
4.3.7	Encourage and support worker initiated training.....	68
4.3.8	Support career development services .....	69
4.3.9	PESTEL Analysis of Private Provision.....	71
5.	THEORY OF CHANGE .....	73
5.1	Definition of Theory of Change (ToC) .....	73
5.2	Uses of a ToC:.....	74
5.2.1	ToC for planning new work .....	74
5.2.2	ToC for strategy.....	75
5.2.3	Process to do a Theory of Change.....	75
6.	REFERENCES .....	82

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030 was developed and published by the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr. Naledi Pandor on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2019. The NSDP 2030 emerged from three National Skills Development Strategies (NSDS) 1, 11 and 111, which had underpinned the work the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) did to fulfill their purpose and mission, their roles and functions for which they had been established in 2000, through the South African Qualifications Framework (SAQA) Act, No. 58 of 1995, and the Skills Development Act, No 97 of 1998.

This is a capacity building book and has been developed in partnership between the National Skills Fund and the Association of Private Providers of Education, Training and Development (APPETD) especially for private providers of education, training and skills development. This book references numbers of other pieces of legislation, policy documents, and guiding documents which framed the development of the NSDP, the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the Skills Development Act, the three NSDS documents, as the NSDP does not stand alone and separate from philosophical imperatives and activist agendas of the past. These documents are provided in soft copy in a USB flash drive and on the APPETD website for reading to grow understanding. This book supports the nine (9) provincial capacity building workshops which will take place over the course of a year.

This book comprises **three sections**. **Section 1** comprises the background, historical development of skills development, the NQF and other policy documents. This section will be dealt with as pre-workshop work and there are reflective questions which each workshop participant should work through. **Section 2** is the NSDP and comprises the work of the capacity building workshop day. It will also comprise post-workshop reflective and evaluation work, and will support the content and empirical evidence-building for the research report. **Section 3** comprises a theory of change (ToC) description and process. It will be covered in the workshop, to develop private provider sector goals, outputs, and outcomes. It will also be covered in individual institutions as they plan to implement NSDP 2030. Their reports at the end of 12 months will provide information for the research report on the alignment of private providers with the NSDP and progress made. The influence of policy documents will also be evaluated by the participants and will build content of the research report.

The significant difference between the NSD Strategies 1, 11 and 111 and the NSDP is that the NSDP has been “crafted in a policy context of the National Development Plan (NDP) and the White Paper on Post School Education and Training (2013)”, whereas the NSD strategies were underpinned by considerations of reconstruction and development (RDP), the Joint Initiative for Priority Skills Development (JIPSA) and the Millennium Development Goals. A summary of NSDS 1, 11 and 111 is taken from jt&a (2018) as follows:

*“The National Skills Development Strategy in 2001 was a holistic strategy for skills development and provided direction to sector skills planning, and implementation in the SETAs. It provided a framework for the skills development levy paying organizations’, and provided guidelines on the resource utilization of these institutions as well the National Skills Fund (NSF), and set out the parameters of other education and training stakeholders. NSDS 1 started with an emphasis on equality and the need to cultivate lifelong learning in a workplace environment. Learning was aimed to be driven by demand and on the needs of public and private sectors. The key deliverables were critical to ensure that the desired outcomes were achieved. This led to the beginning of the SETA landscape.*

*The emphasis in NSDS 2 was placed again on equity, quality training and skills development in the workplace. The need for the promotion of employability was identified. NSDS 2 also identified the need for assisting designated groups to gain knowledge and experience in a workplace environment in order to gain critical skills. The quality of the provision was identified as a problem area needing improvement.*

*In NSDS 3, the emphasis leaned toward that of institutional learning linked to occupationally directed programmes. It promoted the growth of FET Colleges in order to address national skills needs. Better use of workplace skills programmes had been encouraged. Improved service delivery within the public sector was identified as an imperative”.*

The NSDP, 2019 departs from being a strategy and is presented as a plan, which is deeply embedded in the vision of the NDP, which calls for an educated, skilled and capable workforce. This Plan is also not policy per se, as “policy documents often omit two important items: how their proposals are going to be implemented (and by whom), and under what conditions they can be implemented successfully. In their absence, policy statements may seem to be no more than hopes and dreams” (ANC, 1994). The NSDP sets out a vision accompanied by measurable and achievable goals and outcomes in the form of a plan. This is more than a policy statement, therefore, and private providers can incorporate the plan into their own annual and/or strategic plan with clear deliverables, target dates for achievement and opportunities to monitor and evaluate progress towards implementation of their plan. This Book and the capacity building workshops will equip private providers to become partners with other role players in implementing the vision, mission and eight (8) outcomes of the NSDP. Along the way private providers will understand the history of skills development, the important philosophical and empirical underpinning of various pieces of legislation and policies which frame the NSDP, and emerge as credible and excellent facilitators of and partners in the implementation of the NSDP.

## **SECTION 1: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXTUALISATION**

This section will be done by participants **pre-workshop** to provide them with understanding of the philosophies underpinning skills development in South Africa, and the development of legislation and policies which underpin skills development.

The thought box reflections and work will be provided as part of the evidence collection for the research report.

## Section 1: Pre-workshop background reading and projects

### 2. CONCEPTUALISATION AND BACKGROUND

The South African story about the conceptualisation of an education and training system, which would radically reverse the system embedded through *colonialism* and *apartheid* has been told often, and still renders listeners and readers determined to change forever the scarred and ugly past of a “legalised and institutionalised system of racism and discrimination in terms of gender, race, class and religion against 80% of its population” (Walters, 2012:159). Using the mechanism of education and training policies, the curricula stated in overarching national policy documents derived from the qualifications delivered through the 17 different departments of education and training before 1994, were instruments to entrench and drive the inequities embedded in Bantu Education and in the wider *Apartheid* doctrine.

It was recognised that a differentiated and unequal racially based system could be strengthened through creating differentiation in the access to bodies of knowledge and education and training opportunities by differentiating between the curricula for white learners, and those developed for black African, Coloured and Indian learners. A report from the Bologna follow-up group (2015) highlights the point that widening access to quality education and training is viewed as a precondition for societal progress and economic development. *Access and equity* are critical to lifelong learning, and lifelong learning itself is critical to advancing the social dimension of education and training. The *colonial* and *apartheid* education and training systems refused the right to quality and equal education and training to millions of South Africans.

#### 2.1 The emergence of Skills Development Planning

As early as 1948, the Nationalist Party (NP) government intensified the *apartheid* system ‘to an unendurable degree at the very time when racialist and colonialist theories and practices were discredited and condemned throughout the world’ (Turok, 2012:52). Isaacs and Nkomo (2012: 101) remind us that “This has become the loadstone that weighs South Africa down and undermines its potential in profound ways”.

In order to understand why the South African NQF represented a ‘fulcrum’ which brought together the transformation and redress agenda for the education and training system post 1994, it is important for the reader to confront the ugliness and dehumanisation of the colonialist and *apartheid* education and training policies which rendered the majority of South Africans economically and educationally unequal.

The South African education system, both in relation to basic and further education, has a unique history characterised by exclusion of black Africans, Indians and Coloured people under the



system of *apartheid* and colonialism. In 1935 a Departmental Committee on Native Education declared that, “The education of the White child prepares him for life in a dominant society and the education of the Black child for subordinate society; the limits of Native education form part of the social and economic structure of the society” (Rakometsi, 2008: 61).

The Welsh Commission in 1936 stated that “From the evidence before the Committee, it seems clear that there still exists opposition to the education of the Native on the grounds that it makes him lazy and unfit for manual work. It makes him cheeky and less docile as a servant. It estranges him from his own people and often leads him to despise his own culture” (Morrow, 2007:147–138).

The NP came to power in 1948; and soon thereafter, in 1949, the government established the Eiselen Commission. The Eiselen Commission report was published in 1951, and set the tone for an *apartheid* education and training system in South Africa under the NP government. According to the NP, the education of the Natives was not to be academic, as this would make them potential Europeans. Their education had to be manual type to ensure subservience. Kross (1996:326) is of the opinion that “the report was concerned with the re-ordering of Black people and making an attempt to keep them in a servile status and on the marginal side of white society”. Soudien (2006:42) argues that “the Eiselen Commission essentially laid out the philosophical and organisational foundations for much of the affronting 1953 Bantu Education Act”.

The introduction of Bantu education in 1954 was aimed at providing separate and unequal education for different race groups in South Africa (Nkabinde, 1997), and intended to produce a semi-skilled black labour force to minister to the needs of a capitalist economy at the lowest possible cost (Nkomo, 1990).

The Freedom Charter was officially adopted by the Congress of the People in Kliptown on 26 June 1955, and called for a total restructuring of all aspects of South African society. These events were followed by the Sharpeville massacres on 21 March 1960 which many see as the turning point for the anti-*apartheid* movement as it created a crisis for the SA Government both inside the country and internationally. This was followed by many protests across the country, of which *one of the most reported* was the Soweto uprisings of 1976 which were a series of demonstrations and protests led by black school children that began the morning of 16 June 1976 and were underpinned by the extreme measures taken by the NP to introduce Afrikaans in schools and the Bantu Education Act, 1953 (Act No. 47 of 1953).

From the early 1970s, black trade unions started demanding a living wage; these demands were repeatedly rejected by employers, on the grounds that workers were unskilled and therefore their demands were unjustified. This in turn led to black workers seeing training as a means to achieving their demands for better wages. By the 1980s the entire education system had been discredited and rejected. In 1989 the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa

(NUMSA), established a research group comprising workers and union officials, to formulate recommendations on training. The proposal stressed the need not only for basic education, without which workers would not be able to access the proposed system, but also for portability and national recognition of training so that workers would not be at the mercy of a single employer. The proposal was formally adopted by the Congress of South African Trade Unions (COSATU) in July 1991. The National Education Policy Initiative (NEPI) was eventually established which set about developing proposals for the restructuring of the formal education system. The NEPI reports and framework, published in 1992, were premised upon the principles of non-racism, non-sexism, democracy and redress, and the need for a non-racial unitary system of education and training.

After one failed attempt, due to non-representation of key role players, in 1992 the Department of Manpower and the trade union federations met again, and this resulted in the formation of a representative Task Team, which established eight working groups charged with developing a new national training strategy. The working groups had representation from trade unions, employers, the State, providers of education and training, the African National Congress (ANC) Education Department, and the Democratic Alliance. Working Group 2 reached agreement on a new integrated framework. 1994 saw the publication of three documents which laid the foundation for the SAQA Act (58/1995): the ANC Policy Framework for Education and Training (1994); the Discussion Document on a National Training Strategy Initiative (NTSI) (1994); and the Centre for Education Policy Development (CEPD) Implementation Plan for Education and Training (1994), referred to as the IPET document. White papers on Reconstruction and Development (1994) and Education and Training (1995) followed; both underscored the need for the development and implementation of the NQF.

The fragmented, unequal and undemocratic nature of the education and training system had profound effects on the development of the economy and society. It resulted in the destruction, distortion or neglect of the human potential of South Africa, with devastating consequences for social and economic development. In the *Policy Framework for Education and Training* (1994) the ANC stated that:

“The latter is evident in the lack of skilled and trained labour and the adverse effects of this on productivity and the international competitiveness of the economy. And more importantly, apartheid education and its aftermath of resistance has destroyed the culture of learning within large sections of our communities, leading in the worst-affected areas to a virtual breakdown of schooling and conditions of anarchy in relations between students, teachers, principals, and the education authorities. The challenge that we face at the dawning of a democratic society is to create an education and training system that will ensure that the human resources and potential in our society are developed to the full. It is the challenge posed by the vision of the Freedom Charter: 'to open the doors of learning and culture to all'.

South Africa's transition to democracy in its first-ever free national and provincial elections in 1994 energised the newly elected government to institute reforms in its education and training system, characterised by equal access to education and training for all South Africans. Walters (2012: 159) describes this process as a "commitment to equity and redress in a Reconstruction and Development Programme"; and Khan (2005: 39) writes that "The whole process of transformation was fundamentally to increase access, eliminate inequalities and abolish all educational discriminatory practices".

Three key programmes or documents underpinned the design of a new non-racial, non-sexist education and training system. The first of these is the Freedom Charter (Congress of The People, 1955),<sup>1</sup> through which it was asserted that, "Education shall be free, compulsory, universal and equal for all children". The second was the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP) (1994), which was a progressive and radical policy instrument published as a Policy Framework in November 1994, and emphasised the development of human resource capacity of South Africa through a non-racial and equal education and training system. The third is the South African Constitution (1996)<sup>2</sup> which is the supreme piece of legislation from which others are developed and to which all legislation needs to answer. It is founded on the values of equality, human dignity, non-racialism, non-sexism, human rights and freedoms as embedded in the Bill of Rights, which comprises Chapter two (2) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.

These three core documents underpin the initiation and development of the South African National Qualifications Framework (NQF) and the Skills Development Act. Later on, the National Development Plan 2030 and the eight Millennium Development Goals (MGDs), which ranged from halving extreme poverty to halting the spread of HIV/AIDS and providing universal primary education, all by 2015. Later on the South African National Development Plan (NDP) and the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) were developed and published and are also strong underpinnings guiding documents in the development of the National Skills Development Plan.

Isaacs and Nkomo (2012: 103) state that "Three *outcomes* were envisaged by both the NTSI and the IPET documents: the integration of education and training; the NQF; and a structural integration of education and training in a single Ministry of Education and Training". An Inter-Ministerial Working Group was established to draft the NQF Bill which was passed into law in the Republic of South Africa as the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995) on 4 October 1995. The appointments to the first Authority were made in May 1996 and the first meeting of the Authority, under the chairpersonship of Mr. Samuel Isaacs, was held in August 1996.

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<sup>1</sup> The Freedom Charter adopted by the Congress of the People at Kliptown, Johannesburg on June 25 and 26, 1955.

<sup>2</sup> The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Adopted on 8 May 1996 and amended on 11 October 1996 by the Constitutional Assembly.

The education and training system under apartheid had been characterised by three key features. First, the system was fragmented along racial and ethnic lines, and was saturated with the racial ideology and educational doctrines of apartheid. Second, there was a lack of access or unequal access to education and training at all levels of the system. Vast disparities existed between black and white provision and large numbers of people, in particular, adults, out-of-school youth and children of pre-school age, had little or no access to education and training. Third, there was a lack of democratic control within the education and training system. Students, teachers, parents, and workers had been excluded from decision-making processes.<sup>3</sup>

The fragmented, unequal and undemocratic nature of the education and training system had profound effects on the development of the economy and society. It resulted in the destruction, distortion or neglect of the human potential of South Africa, with devastating consequences for social and economic development. The latter is evident in the lack of skilled and trained labour and the adverse effects of this on productivity and the international competitiveness of the economy. And more importantly, apartheid education and its aftermath of resistance had destroyed the culture of learning within large sections of our communities, leading in the worst-affected areas to a virtual breakdown of schooling and conditions of anarchy in relations between students, teachers, principals, and the education authorities.<sup>4</sup>

“The challenge that we face at the dawning of a democratic society is to create an education and training system that will ensure that the human resources and potential in our society are developed to the full. It is the challenge posed by the vision of the Freedom Charter: 'to open the doors of learning and culture to all. The journey we are embarking on is long and hard. The educational problems of our country run deep and there are no easy or quick-fix solutions. But this framework maps a way toward the transformation and reconstruction of the education and training system and the opening of access to lifelong learning for all South Africans. We need to walk this path together in confidence and hope.’” (ANC, 1994).

The 1994 democratic government inherited a population with low educational and skills levels and an education and training system that was fragmented, dysfunctional and unequal. The first task of the new government was to repeal apartheid legislation and institute legislation that enabled access for all as well as redress measures for inequalities from the apartheid period. The first few years of the new government has been described as the ‘evolution of ideas’ and articulating a vision through the ‘integrative’ National Qualifications Framework.

The ANC’s policy framework for education and training of 1994 intended the integration of education and training, the widening of opportunities for learning, and the recognition of prior

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<sup>3</sup> ANC Policy Document on Education and Training (1994)

<sup>4</sup> ANC Policy Document on Education and Training (1994)

learning as a means to address the legacy of under-education, under-skilling and under-preparedness of workers for the world of work, and facilitate the official recognition of prior learning (ANC, 1995). Early policy documents of the democratic government rarely focused explicitly on skills development or workplace-based learning, but rather on the education and training system and its subsystems, i.e. General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET) and Higher Education and Training (HET) (as well as Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)), and the need for Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) (ANC, 1995: 11, 19). Only occasionally was reference made to “industry-based education and training” and “programmes within industries”, which would need to become consistent with the NQF, and the problems identified in relation to technical colleges and the training of apprentices under the Industry Training Boards (ANC, 1994: 61; ANC, 1995: 120-121). The Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998) was conceived to replace the Manpower Training Act of 1981, the Guidance and Placement Act of 1981, the Local Government Training Act of 1981, and Sections of the Telecommunications Act of 1996. Thus, the National Skills Authority (NSA) became the successor to the National Training Board established by the Manpower Training Act, the National Skills Fund (NSF) the successor to the Manpower Development Fund, the Industry Training Boards were wound up and a system of SETA was put in place, and training centers and apprenticeships abolished (SD Act 1998, Section 37(2)).

## **2.2 The NQF and bodies responsible for NQF implementation**

By the time the 1994 democratic elections had taken place, the Reconstruction and Development (RDP) programme had been initiated; and the concept of what the South African NQF should encompass included “...a universal system of quality assured standards and qualifications embracing all education, training and skills development at all levels, both in the workplace and in learning institutions” (Department of Education and Department of Labour Joint Policy Statement, 2007: 2) (hereafter referred to as the JPS) had been envisaged.

The ANC proposed that:

- In the process of ensuring education and training for all, there shall be special emphasis on the redress of educational inequalities among historically disadvantaged groups such as youth, the disabled, adults, and women, the unemployed and rural communities.
- There shall be mechanisms to ensure horizontal and vertical mobility and flexibility of access between general formative, technical, industrial and adult education and training in the formal and non-formal sectors.
- There shall be nationally determined standards for accreditation and certification for formal and non-formal education and training, with due recognition of prior learning and experience.

### **2.2.1 Initial Conceptualisation**

Against this background, the initial conceptualisation of a South African NQF by the labour movement and the ANC proposed a NQF which could deal with “The legacies of job reservation and retrogressive and discriminatory training practices by creating ladders of opportunity for learning and career pathways. Initially, improving equity, and achieving greater labour market efficiency and higher levels of productivity were assumed to be outcomes of a NQF” (JPS, 2007:1). The underlying narrow focus of a NQF envisaged at that stage would have been competency-based, with knowledge and values outcomes being less prominent. This approach would not have served the purpose for which the NQF was envisioned. By the time the 1994 democratic elections had taken place, and the RDP programme had been initiated, the concept of what the NQF should encompass had extended to “Embrace a universal system of quality assured standards and qualifications embracing all education, training and skills development at all levels, both in the workplace and in learning institutions” (JPS, 2007: 2).

Isaacs & Nkomo (2012: 102) highlight the fact that “The adoption of the NQF was a response to two fundamental imperatives: The first was the need to democratise education and training opportunities across race, gender, class etc.; and secondly, a response to the existential reality of the late twentieth and early twenty-first centuries - that is globalisation”.

### **2.2.2 ANC approach to a NQF in their Policy document**

The following two paragraphs present the thoughts of the ANC in their Policy document on education and training (1994). “The separation of education and training contributed significantly to the situation where most South Africans are under-educated, under- skilled, and under-prepared for full participation in social, economic and civic life. Most of the unemployed lack the basic education on which to build, and many of those in work are locked into low skilled and low paying jobs. A vast proportion of students leaving the school system, either before or after completing the final year, do so largely unprepared for the rest of their lives. In order to begin addressing this legacy, urgent attention will be given to the development of a national qualifications framework through which a much closer integration of education and training can be achieved.

A nationally integrated system will link one level of learning to another and enable learners to progress to higher levels from any starting point in the education and training system. Learning and skills which people have acquired through experience and informal training will be formally assessed and credited towards qualifications. The establishment of a national South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) will be a priority to underpin and develop the progressive integration and qualitative improvement of the education and training systems”.

What eventually emerged in 1994, after the NTSI and IPET proposals, instead of a structural integration of education and training in a single Ministry of Education and Training, two separate Ministers were appointed, being the Minister of Education and the Minister of Labour. The

envisaged single Ministry of Education and Training would eventually only be established in 2009. There was also “a shift from the integration of education and training to an *integrated approach* to education and training” (Isaacs, 1998:20). Isaacs prophetically wrote about this shift: “I believe this is going to come back to haunt us”. (Isaacs & Nkomo, 2012:103).

### Pre-workshop work Project 1

Share your ideas about the difference between the integration of education and training and an integrated approach to education and training.

Was Samuel Isaacs correct in his prediction that the separation of education and training in the design of the skills development system would come back to haunt us?

### **2.2.3 Three phases of development of the NQF**

Samuels & Nkomo (2012: 104-105) describe three phases in the development of the South African NQF; “The *first phase* (1990 to 1995) was the broad stroke conceptualisation and establishment of a legally-enabling environment for the restructuring and transformation of education and training through the NQF. During this phase the concept of an integrated approach was mooted and the SAQA Act was developed and negotiated between stakeholders”. The only ‘nod’ however, to the integration of education and training was provided in the SAQA Act, No. 58 of 1995, (SAQA Act). This enabled SAQA to be the overarching coordinating body tasked to make and implement policy and to oversee the development and implementation of the NQF.

The *second phase* of SAQA’s role (1996 to 1999), was characterised by “the fleshing out of these ideas into functions” and included “the development of the structure of the NQF itself; the conceptualisation of policies, processes and structures that would carry out these functions; the modus operandi of the Authority and its structures; and the nature of the relationships between the various role players in the system” (ibid: 105)

The *third phase* was the establishment of structures and infrastructural deliverables: “a national standards-setting system; a national quality assurance system; put into practice the policy and procedure document; and the NLRD, the electronic information system which supports the NQF” (ibid: 106). This stage started in 1999 and proceeded until the SAQA Act was replaced by the NQF Act, No. 67 of 2008 (NQF Act)..

### **2.2.4 The concept of integration in the South African NQF**

South Africa's NQF was unique in the world as it was the first of the early NQFs to be designed as a **totally integrated NQF**, encompassing all of education, training and skills development in one framework, of the 8-level NQF prescribed by the SAQA Act. "The SAQA Act (RSA 1995) ushered in a centralised outcomes-based system as the driver for integration, which would later become a contested policy issue" (Impact Study, 2014). From the outset, the NQF was a learning outcomes based framework comprising levels and level descriptors. According to Bjornavöld (2011: 3) "The 'learning outcomes' approach shifts the emphasis from the duration of learning and the institution where it takes place to the actual learning and the knowledge, skills and competences that have been or should be acquired through the learning process. Despite the fact that it is considered to be relatively new; the 'learning outcomes' approach has been applied in various countries, in various sectors and for various purposes".

In the South African NQF, **learning outcomes and the level descriptors** aided transparency and allowed for comparison and equivalence mapping of qualifications in the South African system, and further afield. The levels and their descriptors did not differentiate between a skills development or vocational education or higher education domain; they were used generically in academic, vocational, technical and skills-development education and training environments.

The NQF was seen as a **key transformation and redress mechanism** in South Africa to address the history of the colonial and apartheid systems. In conceptualising and developing the NQF, the designers ensured that the objectives reflected the redress agenda, which in turn influenced how learning outcomes were written and used. The description of the integrated approach from the White Paper (1995) provides clear signals that the learning outcomes written into the standards and qualifications must comprise theory and practice; knowledge and applied learning. The objectives were strong enablers for articulation and recognition of prior learning (RPL) to take place and the way learning outcomes were written had to enhance the opportunities for articulation and RPL. The objectives are to:

- Create an integrated national framework for learning achievements
- Facilitate access to, and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths
- Enhance the quality of education, training and skills development
- Accelerate redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities; and thereby
- Contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the nation at large.

What was crucial in the development of the NQF was to ensure that "At the heart of the construction of the NQF was the desire to **take an integrated approach** to education, training and skills development in a variety of settings, including formal education, training and skills development institutions and the workplace" (Joint Statement, 2007: 3). **Integration** suggests a holistic view of learning, in which conceptual and applied knowledge each has value and esteem. It indicates the importance of bridges between the workplace and the classroom, so that learners and workers can cross to either side as they advance their education and careers.



Without actually calling it ‘relational agency’ at the time, the NQF standards-setting and quality assurance processes in the SAQA Act ‘period’ embraced ‘new partnerships’ in the creation of knowledge. The principle of democratic participation in describing and writing learning outcomes through a participatory process was significantly important. This was important because for the first time the range of knowledge, competences and skills that would exist between holders of the same qualifications would be non-discriminatory, non-racial and non-sexist. The National Standards Bodies (NSBs) and the Standards Generating Bodies (SGBs) comprised partnerships between varied groups in society, from academics and researchers to business, workers, professional experts, government, community organisations, learners and professors. Knowledge creation, relevant for the current world was one of two central tenets of learning outcomes development in qualifications and standards, and was no longer the preserve of narrowly-defined groups of ‘experts’; relevant knowledge creation is brought about through discussion on a broader front” (Isaacs & Nkomo: 2012 p108).

### 2.2.5 Quality Education and Training

The second tenet described by Samuels & Nkomo (2012: 109) was the need for “quality education for all its citizens; the need for flexibility to cater for the wide-ranging circumstances that face learners; and the wide-ranging options in what constitutes relevant education and qualifications that is a balance between society’s needs and the needs of the individual”. Learning outcomes therefore had to reflect knowledge, and be flexible enough to reflect the needs of society (socio-economic elements) and the needs of the individual (employability, critical cross-field outcomes). For the first time the learning outcomes, standards and qualifications “must be clear so that there is no doubt as to what is expected of qualifying learners” (ibid: 109).

It was (and remains) important that “learners who are awarded a registered NQF-qualification or standard are able to demonstrate the learning outcomes of the qualification or standard in accordance with the described criteria and requirements”. The explicit-making in the South African qualifications and standards development is described by Isaacs (2012: 93) as follows: “The design of the NQF asserts that the social uses of qualifications require a social construct that legitimises the standards and qualifications and their **quality assurance** through democratic participation by stakeholders, intellectual scrutiny and resourcing considerations”.

In the Joint Policy Statement (2007), the two Ministers of Education and Labour respectively, state that “The scope of South Africa’s NQF is fully comprehensive, and its objectives are universally accepted by all role players. It has assisted in reinforcing the importance of a learning outcomes-based approach and **quality assurance** throughout the education, training and skills development system”.

South Africa’s NQF was designed from the start to be fully inclusive of all learning in General, Further and Higher Education and in both institutional and workplace contexts, with a single set of level descriptors for institutional and workplace-based qualifications at all levels of the framework.

## 2.2.6 Building blocks of the NQF as per the SAQA Act

The South African NQF was finally established through *Regulation 452 of 1998*, published under the SAQA Act, on 28 March 1998. The NQF in 1998 was an **8 level NQF comprising 12 organising fields** each with a unique field description and sub-fields each with a unique sub-field description.

**Level descriptors** were statements that described a particular level of the NQF. Exit level outcomes were defined as the outcomes to be achieved by a qualifying learner at the point at which he/she leaves the programmes leading to a qualification. **Level descriptors** were essential to assign levels to standards, other components of qualifications and qualifications. The Authority *prescribed* level descriptors in order to ensure coherence across fields and to facilitate the assessment of the international comparability of standards and qualifications. In the Level Descriptor Policy published in 2012, level descriptors for the 10-level NQF are described as follows: “Each level descriptor speaks to a set of learning achievements or outcomes, and competences, which increase in complexity as they progress upwards from one level to the next” (SAQA 2012a).

It was always the intention of the designers of the NQF that learning outcomes - reflective of the requirements of NQF levels in ascending order, and each carrying credits for achievements, - would be at the heart of qualifications and standards, thereby furthering the ideal of an integrated system. The learning outcomes of the various qualifications were determined by the purpose, scope and range, and type of the qualification.

Bjornavöld (2011:4) states that “Learning outcomes need to be written so that they are fit for purpose – for setting occupational and educational standards, for describing single qualifications and curricula, for outlining assessment criteria and for orienting learning and teaching processes”. This is similar to the process followed by the developers of standard and qualifications for the South African NQF.

**Generic critical cross field outcomes** which were to be embedded in each qualification were developed by the designers of the South African NQF, in addition to specific learning outcomes and NQF levels. These were meant to ensure that learners would develop holistically and have other types of knowledge and skills beyond the knowledge, skills and competence related to a specific field or sub-field. The **critical cross field outcomes** support the envisioned aim of the South African NQF, which was transformative. They are a mechanism through which “coherence is achieved in the framework; they describe the qualities that the NQF identifies for development in students regardless of the specific area or content of learning” (Isaacs, & Nkomo, 2012: 110). These are listed below, not only because they were seen as outcomes to support the achievement of the NQF objectives during the SAQA Act implementation, but also because of their current and future application. The critical cross field outcomes must include but are not limited to:

- Identifying and solving problems in which responses display that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made
- Working effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, community

- Organising and managing oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively
- Collecting, analysing, organising and critically evaluating information
- Communicating effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written persuasion
- Using science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others
- Demonstrating an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation
- Contributing to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the society at large, by making it the underlying intention of any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:
  - Reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively
  - Participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities
  - Being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts
  - Exploring education and career opportunities; and
  - Developing entrepreneurial opportunities.

The **description of a qualification** provides further information about how learning outcomes were conceptualised and used in the South African NQF. *Regulation 452 of 1998* stated that a qualification shall:

- Represent a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, and which is intended to *provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning*
- Add value to the qualifying learner in terms of *enrichment of the person* through the: provision of status, recognition, credentials and licensing; enhancement of marketability and employability; and opening up of access routes to additional education and training;
- *Provide benefits to society and the economy* through enhancing citizenship, increasing social and economic productivity, providing specifically skilled/professional people and transforming and redressing legacies of inequity
- Have both specific and critical cross-field outcomes which *promote life-long learning*
- Be *internationally comparable*.

### 2.2.7 Two qualification types

*Regulation 452 of 1998* describes the two qualification types with specific design features; these being **Unit Standard based qualifications** and qualifications not based on unit standards. The *Regulation* describes how learning outcomes are dealt with in each type of qualification. The proposers of the unit–standard based qualifications had to construct qualifications with exit level outcomes and appropriate rules of combination of selected unit standards which were specific to the purpose of the qualification. The proposers of qualifications which were not based on unit standards had to construct combinations of learning outcomes which had exit level outcomes. Both types of qualifications had to be pitched at a specific NQF level and had to include

knowledge, skills and competencies appropriate to the NQF level and include critical cross field outcomes.

### 2.2.8 Learning Outcomes

A clear indication that, under the SAQA Act, the South African NQF was a learning outcomes based framework is contained in the requirements stated in the policy for the registration of qualifications and unit standards. In order to be registered on the NQF, unit standards and standards were formulated to consist of, *inter alia*, the title, credit value, field and sub-field, the purpose, learning assumed to be in place before the unit standard is commenced, *specific outcomes to be assessed*, assessment criteria, including *essential embedded knowledge*, the range statements as a general guide for the scope, context and level being used, and a notes category which must include the critical outcomes supported by the unit standard; and if these are not addressed under assessment criteria, critical outcomes should be embedded in a US, or be embedded in the qualification.

### 2.2.9 Requirements for registration of qualifications

The **requirements for the registration of qualifications** included that a qualification shall represent a planned combination of learning outcomes which has a defined purpose or purposes, and which is able to provide qualifying learners with applied competence and a basis for further learning; have both specific and critical cross field outcomes which promote lifelong learning.

The SAQA Act, 1995 did not present South Africa with a NQF. The SAQA Act was the enabling Act which made the NQF possible. In the case of the South African NQF, the function of establishing the NQF was given to the SAQA Board, and they were allowed to publish regulations in performing their work of developing the South African NQF. The NQF was established through *Regulation 452 of 1998*.

The SAQA Board established **12 representative national standards bodies** - one per field, and numbers of **standards generating bodies** – per sub field, to develop and recommend qualifications to SAQA for registration on the NQF. The quality assurance system, overseen by SAQA, comprised three types of quality assurance body, or education training quality assurance authority (ETQA). These were band ETQAs (The Council on Higher Education (CHE), and Umalusi (for schooling and FET); the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and Professional Bodies ETQAs. Altogether there were eventually more than 33 ETQAs. These structures/bodies were constituted on the principle of *representivity*, and ensured that organised labour, organised business, community structures, education and training institutions and their associations were represented in each of these bodies.

20 years on, we are facing some similar challenges, in the implementation of the NQF project in South Africa. These issues will be dealt with later on in the paper.

At the end of the SAQA Act ‘period’ Isaacs and Nkomo (2012: 116) provide a stark reminder that “Adequate resourcing is a key performance indicator of the success of national qualifications frameworks on three levels. Firstly, it enables comprehensive and realistic implementation. ,

Secondly, it is a measure of the power underpinning it. Thirdly, it is a measure of how the society has been able to align all its resources, financial, physical infrastructure, organisational, and people behind it”.

## **2.2.10 Developments leading to the NQF Act, 67 of 2008**

Sadly, at the end of the SAQA Act period the robust pre-1994 debates involving key stakeholders had “faltered in this regard principally due to the bifurcation of ‘education and training’ and the perception of diminished authority resulting in a determined effort to reassert such lost authority; all this at the expense of an essentially well-intentioned vision” (ibid: 116).

### **2.2.10.1 The Review of the NQF and the Joint Statement in 2007**

**In 2001**, the Ministers of Education and Labour initiated a review of the NQF which was to assess how the implementation of the NQF could be improved. Walters (2015: 110) acknowledges that “Qualifications frameworks are undoubtedly contestable artifacts of modern society”.

A key component of the terms of reference for the Task Team was to consider “The match between policy objectives and outcomes and the experience and attitudes of education, training and skills development providers and learners with the implementation of the NQF” (Joint Statement, 2007: 5).

**In 2007** the Ministers published their **Joint Statement** titled, *‘Enhancing the efficacy and efficiency of the National Qualifications Framework*. In it they acknowledged that the comprehensive approach embodied in the SAQA Act, 1995, was unique in the world when it was conceived and remains unique in its architecture; and that the NQF has become an essential instrument in the construction of a highly responsive South African education, training and skills development system which serves our democracy and social and economic development.

However, the report had highlighted that the organisational ‘form’ had come in for much critique. There were three ‘dominant entities’ in the ‘single system’ operating under the SAQA Act: the Department of Labour (DoL), SAQA and the Department of Education (DoE). As stated in the SAQA Impact Study (2014), “It is a well-known fact that ‘turf wars’ raged around standards, and quality assurance, between these role players”. These turf wars were driven by understandings of the NQF implementing organisations at the time. The DoE viewed SAQA as ‘subverting public education through the proliferation of standards in specific job-related competencies and lack of progress in general formative (knowledge driven) education. The DoL saw the CHE as “subverting the NQF through its refusal to accept SETAs as part of the institutional landscape within the higher education sector” (Lugg, 2009:33).

Stakeholders expressed the following concerns which were reflected in the report:

- The proliferation of bodies, procedures and fragmentation of roles and responsibilities in areas such as quality assurance and national standards development;
- lack of synergy between some Government priorities and the direction of NQF implementation; failure to give experts in qualifications design and quality assurance their due; and
- lack of recognition of the diversity of approaches and practices within the education, training and skills development systems resulting in the design of an NQF architecture with a ‘one size fits all’ approach’ (Joint Statement, 2007: 5).

### **2.2.10.2      *Key recommendations emerging from the Review report***

It appeared that the ‘form’ which had been established to implement the NQF was too complex and efficacy and efficiency was a challenge. The Ministers also pointed to the need for ‘change in the organisational structures to address the allocation of responsibility for NQF implementation - which had been the SAQA Board’s responsibility as per the SAQA Act – resolve tensions among important role players, and simplify the NQF apparatus, in order to speed up the achievement of NQF objectives’ (ibid. 1).

A key point made in the **Joint Statement** was that:

“An integrated approach to education and training should not blur the important distinctions between different forms of learning and their specific contributions to the entire spectrum of education, training and skills development. The complexity of implementing a comprehensive framework which was designed from the start to be fully inclusive of all learning in General, Further and Higher Education in both institutional and workplace contexts, with one set of qualification types and level descriptors at all levels for institutional and workplace-based qualifications at all levels of the framework in part led to the initiation of the review” (Joint Statement, 4).

There were key **recommendations made in the Joint Statement** which bear noting: “Simplicity, clarity, flexibility, and trust should be the hallmarks of successful NQF implementation that will be coherent, clear, and unambiguous as to the roles of the government, the respective statutory bodies (the three new Quality Councils) responsible for advice or implementation” (Joint Statement, 2007: 8).

The establishment of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) is seen as the “achievement of a long-held goal of the integration of education and training” (White Paper, 2013: p2). This is interesting, as the organisational structure established in 1994, at the cusp of the development and promulgation of the SAQA Act, was two Ministries - one for Education and one for Labour; but the structure of the NQF was a fully integrated linear framework with ‘common’ names of qualification types which would be registered by the NQF; and SAQA was responsible for standard setting through NSBs and SGBs, quality assurance through education, training quality assurance bodies (ETQAs) and for the national Management Information System, the NLRD.

The NQF which emerged *after* the promulgation of the NQF Act, No. 67 of 2008, is described in the NQF Act as “a comprehensive system for the classification, registration, publication and articulation of quality assured national qualifications” (section 4) The objectives of the NQF are to “create a single integrated framework for learning achievements”.

The authors of the SAQA Impact Study (2014) highlight the fact that “One of the most significant changes in the move from the SAQA to the NQF Act was the shift from a centralised approach to standards setting and quality assurance, to a more devolved and differentiated approach for the General and Further Education and Training (GENFET), Higher Education and Training (HET) and Trades and Occupations (TO) sectors respectively”. Under the NQF Act, the already-existing Quality Councils for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi) and Higher Education and Training (CHE) continued their quality assurance work , but with integrated standards development and quality assurance functions. The third Quality Council, the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) was established in 2010, to develop, implement and manage the standard setting and quality assurance of qualifications in the Trades and Occupations sector. SAQA and the three QCs are *mandated to work together* towards systemic integration and transparency, quality, and international comparability, as well as redress and learner access, success and progression, in the education and training system. While each of these entities stands alone, they are obliged to work together as parts of a single system. There is acknowledgment that for the system to work implicit and explicit collaboration, communication and cooperation between NQF role-players is essential.

#### Pre-workshop work project 2

Provide some of your own insights and thoughts about whether the shift from the SAQA Act constructs (NSBs, SGBs, ETQAs) to SAQA and the three QCs has achieved the envisaged “Simplicity, clarity, flexibility, and trust should be the hallmarks of successful NQF implementation that will be coherent, clear, and unambiguous as to the roles of the government, the respective statutory bodies (the three new Quality Councils) responsible for advice or implementation” of the Ministers’ Joint Statement (2007).

<b>Changes between SAQA Act and NQF Act</b>	<b>SAQA Act</b>	<b>NQF Act</b>
A new role for the Minister of Higher Education and Training	The Minister of Education presented the budget for SAQA and the NQF in Parliament, after consultation with the Minister of Labour	The Minister of Higher Education and Training has overall executive responsibility for the NQF, SAQA and the three QCs
The Minister to have the ability to determine policy for the NQF	SAQA Board determined policy after wide consultation with all stakeholders	The Minister must determine policy on NQF matters in terms of the NQF Act, and publish the policy in the Gazette.
The Minister determines the sub-frameworks	SAQA established the NSBs, SGBs and the ETQAs through regulations published for that purpose	The Minister must, after considering advice from SAQA, determine the sub-frameworks contemplated in section 7 of the NQF Act, and publish them in the Gazette.
The Minister to publish strategic guidelines and priorities for the NQF	The SAQA Board published policies, guidelines and regulations	The Minister must publish guidelines which set out the government's strategy and priorities for the NQF, and these may be updated annually.
Changed roles for SAQA, which became the so-called 'apex body'	SAQA was responsible for Standard setting, and Quality Assurance and for the development and establishment of the NLRD	SAQA is the Apex body responsible to oversee the implementation of the NQF and ensure the achievement of its objectives.
A shift from a centralised approach to standards setting to a more devolved and differentiated approach.	<p>SAQA was responsible to oversee the <b>development of the National Qualifications Framework</b>; and formulate and publish policies and criteria for the registration of bodies responsible for establishing education and training standards or qualifications; and oversee the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework.</p> <p>SAQA established NSBs per field of learning, and SGBs per sub-field of learning, which functioned according to SAQA policies published for that</p>	Three QCs are established namely the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi), the Quality Council for Higher Education and Training (CHE) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO). They are responsible to develop and manage their sub-frameworks, and to develop, register and publish their qualifications on their respective sub-frameworks.



	purpose	
A shift from a centralised approach to quality assurance to a more devolved and differentiated approach.	SAQA was responsible to oversee the accreditation of bodies responsible for monitoring and auditing achievements in terms of such standards or qualifications. These bodies were called ETQAs and there were 33 of these. They comprised established in one of the following sectors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Social Sector (for example, Professional bodies)</li> <li>▪ An economic sector (SETA ETQAs)</li> <li>▪ An education and training sub-system sector (Umalusi and CHE)</li> </ul>	Three QCs are established namely the Quality Council for General and Further Education and Training (Umalusi), the Quality Council for Higher Education and Training (CHE) and the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) to develop and implement policy for quality assurance (QA); ensure the integrity and credibility of QA; and ensure that the QA that is necessary within their respective sub-frameworks is undertaken.
A change in the number of levels and types of qualifications per level	SAQA adopted an eight (8) level NQF	SAQA and the QCs adopt a 10-level NQF
A change in the construct of the SAQA Board,	Under the SAQA Act, the Board was a representative board of 36 people representing 6 constituencies;	The board is a drastically pared-down SAQA board comprising 12 members appointed in their personal capacities
A new mandate for SAQA to recognise professional bodies and register professional designations;	Professional Bodies could be accredited by SAQA as ETQAs	SAQA recognises professional bodies and registers professional designations in a register
A renewed mandate to provide an evaluation and advisory service with respect to foreign qualifications.	SAQA provides a service to verify the authenticity of a foreign qualification	SAQA provides an evaluation and advisory service with respect to foreign qualifications

### Pre-workshop work 3

Reflect on your journey with the NQF implementation, in terms of simplicity and ease of processes during the SAQA Act period and the NQF Act period. Express some thoughts about what worked well and what now needs to be “tweaked”, if anything at all.

## 2.2.11 Three Quality Councils

At this point it is useful to consider the quality councils and their current mandate and approach to qualification design and quality assurance.

### 2.2.11.1 *The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)*

The QCTO is occupied by teaching and learning which is focused on lifelong, life-wide and life-deep occupational and professional learning (Lloyd, Gqili, Peters, 2013: 17). The QCTO promotes the right of citizens to education, including an occupational education. The purpose of the trade and occupational qualifications on the sub-framework is to fulfil the state's constitutional responsibility to enable this right.

The OQSF is designed to:

- Facilitate the workplace based education of post school learners to contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of South Africa;
- Provide occupational qualifications that can be credibly benchmarked against similar international occupational qualifications; and
- Facilitate as far as possible the articulation between occupational qualifications within the sub-framework, and across the NQF to qualifications developed and managed by other Quality Councils.

The awarding of an occupational qualification indicates that a learner has successfully completed a coherent and purposeful programme of learning at a particular level on the NQF and that the learner has been assessed as qualified. Standards are developed as benchmarks in order to guide the design, implementation and quality assurance of learning programmes that lead to occupational qualifications.

The OQSF sets out the range of occupational qualification types in occupational education that may be awarded to mark the achievement of learning outcomes that have been appropriately assessed. Standards provide benchmarks to guide the development, implementation and quality assurance of all components, i.e. knowledge, practical skills and work experience which comprise an occupational qualification.

The design of knowledge, practical skills and work experience modules in a qualification determines the volume of learning that is necessary to achieve that qualification. In the past, this measure of volume may have been expressed in terms of academic study time such as the number of academic years of study required.

The OQSF recognises credits as a measure of the volume of learning required for an occupational qualification. Occupational qualifications are designed to integrate knowledge, practical skills and workplace learning into the curriculum, through incorporation of Work Integrated Learning (WIL). WIL is an umbrella term that covers the Work Experience component of occupational qualifications. It takes various forms, including simulated learning, work-directed theoretical learning, problem-based learning, project-based learning and work experience (work based learning).

The OQSF is designed to facilitate the training of post school adults who will contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of South Africa and participate successfully in the global economy and skilled society; and facilitate vertical, horizontal and diagonal progression within the sub-framework, and across the NQF through articulation with the other sub-frameworks.

Level descriptors are broad qualitative statements against which more specific learning outcomes can be compared and allocated. The positioning of many occupational qualifications on the same NQF level means only that the occupational qualifications are broadly comparable in terms of the general level of learning achievements. It does not mean that they have the same purpose, content, or outcomes, nor does it necessarily demonstrate equivalence between occupational qualifications or credits.

The development of curricula will be integral to the qualification design process. The curriculum must cover three components, namely theory/knowledge; practical skills; and work experience. The curriculum will include guidelines for teaching and learning provision.

#### **2.2.11.2 Umalusi**

A qualification on the General and Further Education and Training Qualifications Sub-framework (GENFETQSF) sub-framework is defined as the broad specifications and combinations of subjects which must be achieved by learners, but which can also reflect individual learners' preferred learning needs, as expressed within those specifications. The word 'qualification' also denotes the formal recognition, through certification, of learning achievement, and is awarded by an appropriate quality assurance body.

The qualifications on the GENFETQSF are organised in two streams which cater for two distinct learner groups: a) children and adolescents, involved in the acquisition of a basic education in the schooling system; and b) adolescents and adults that are out of school. The latter group has diverse needs that range from adult basic education and training (ABET) to achieving a certificate that will give them access to higher education or to employment. The groups overlap substantially and yet have distinct needs. The qualifications on the framework consequently may be academic or vocational in nature, that is, they prepare learners in a broad, general way for further learning and for becoming educated South African citizens with some readiness to enter

the world of work. To this end, all the qualifications are *discipline-based* and include *foundational learning*, so providing opportunities for proficiency in one or more languages as well as in some form of mathematics or mathematical literacy.

The sub-framework caters for adults' basic literacy needs as well as their general academic and general vocational requirements. The sub-framework provides the basis for integrating existing disciplinary based qualifications offered at institutions-schools, FET colleges and adult education and training centers-both public and private into the National Qualifications Framework.

Certificates are issued for qualifications that have at least a 50% component of suitably quality-assured external assessments, based on approved *syllabuses or curriculum statements*: the monitoring of provision (and the accreditation) of educational institutions is based on quality assurance of the enacted curriculum and internal assessment, as well as their participation in properly conducted assessments.

In summary, the GENFETQSF is designed to facilitate the education of learners, whether they are of school-going age or beyond, so that they will ultimately contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of South Africa; provide qualifications that can be benchmarked credibly against similar qualifications internationally; and facilitate as far as possible the articulation between qualifications within the framework and across the NQF to qualifications developed and managed by the other Quality Councils. Part-qualifications generally refer to the achievement and acknowledgement of some part of a qualification on the sub-framework without having fulfilled the complete requirements for the full qualification.

The award of a qualification marks the achievement of the necessary learning stipulated in the qualification and its associated curriculum. Certification is thus the formal recognition of a learner having successfully completed a qualification or part-qualification.

### **2.2.11.3 Higher education qualifications sub-framework**

The Higher Education Qualifications Sub-framework Framework (HEQSF) provides for the establishment a single qualifications framework for higher education to facilitate the development of a single national co-ordinated higher education system. Its key objective was to enable the articulation of programmes and the transfer of students between programmes and higher education institutions, which the then separate and parallel qualifications structures for universities and the erstwhile technikons (now Universities of Technology) were perceived to preclude. A qualification is the formal recognition and certification of learning achievement awarded by an accredited institution. The HEQSF recognises three broad qualification progression routes with permeable boundaries, namely, vocational, professional and general routes and provides greater clarity on the articulation possibilities between these qualification routes.

The HEQSF establishes common parameters and criteria for qualifications design and facilitates the comparability of qualifications across the system. Within such common parameters programme diversity and innovation are encouraged. The HEQSF thus operates within the

context of a single but diverse and differentiated higher education system. It applies to all higher education programmes and qualifications offered in South Africa by public and private institutions.

The HEQSF sets out the range of qualification types in higher education that may be awarded to mark the achievement of learning outcomes that have been appropriately assessed. A higher education *qualification* must conform to one of the qualification types or its variants described in the HEQSF. A *programme* is a purposeful and structured set of learning experiences which leads to a qualification. Programmes may be discipline-based, professional, career-focused, trans-, inter- or multi-disciplinary in nature. A programme has recognised entry and exit points. All higher education programmes and qualifications must have a core component and may have a fundamental and/or elective component depending on the purpose of the programme or the qualification.

The HEQSF incorporates a *nested approach* to qualifications design. Within a nested approach to standards development, qualification specification requires a movement from generic to specific outcomes. The most generic standards are found in the level descriptors. The most specific standards are found in the programmes that lead to qualifications. The NQF level and its level descriptor form the outer and most generic layer in terms of the knowledge and skills that learners are required to acquire, integrate and demonstrate (applied competence) at each level of cognitive complexity on the HEQSF.

Implicit in the HEQSF are three broad qualification routes, namely the vocational, professional and general. Though qualifications within each route contain some proportion of contextual and conceptual knowledge, the routes differ in terms of the extent to which they are orientated towards specific contexts of application or towards conceptual understanding in terms of general theoretical principles. The appropriate route (or routes) for each qualification should be derived from the purpose and outcomes of the qualification, and not be imposed on the basis of any other criterion.

The qualification types within the HEQSF cut across the progression routes, though certain qualification types are more characteristic of certain routes. More specifically, undergraduate certificates and diplomas are typically found within the *vocational route*, while professional Bachelor and Master's degrees epitomise the professional route, which culminates in the professional doctorate. The *general route* has a strong orientation towards theoretical knowledge with a qualification trajectory culminating in the PhD, as the characteristic requirement for an academic and research career. Level descriptors and qualification descriptors are expressed in terms of learning outcomes. The design of programmes makes assumptions about the volume of learning that is likely to be necessary to achieve the intended outcomes. Some qualifications will be designed to integrate theory and practice through the incorporation of work-integrated learning (WIL) into the curriculum. WIL is characteristic of vocational and professionally-oriented qualifications, as described in the OQSF, and may be incorporated into programmes at all levels of the HEQSF.

Where WIL is a structured part of a qualification the volume of learning allocated to WIL should be appropriate to the purpose of the qualification and to the cognitive demands of the learning outcome and assessment criteria contained in the appropriate level descriptors.

#### Pre-workshop work project 4

Reflect on your interaction and relationship with any or all of the three QCs. What has stood out for you about their approaches to qualification design and their QA models?

Express thoughts about whether you would suggest any changes, and what these could be, to make your role as a private education and training provider more efficient, effective and/or dynamic.

### 2.2.12 Challenges

It appeared that the structural and organisational changes made in 2009, in the NQF Act, did not go far enough. Recalling Walter's statement that Qualifications frameworks are 'contestable artifacts' there were scholars who wrote robust critiques of the South African NQF and qualifications frameworks in general. Allais (2009:139), French (2009) and Lugg, (2007) state that the NQF in South Africa was indeed an ambitious project, a set of policies forming part of those designed to address the educational, social and economic problems caused by apartheid. French (2009: 44) recognised that integration was "complex and challenging". Lugg (2009: 48) proposed that there were also those who "supported integration, and who saw the separation of academic education and vocational training under apartheid as having detracted from each other and fuelled social class structuring".

I suggest that there are at least three overarching conceptual challenges which have persisted since the NQF project first started to gain traction. The first challenge was (and still is) the notion that **knowledge has been neglected** in the development, writing and implementation of learning outcomes in qualifications.

Closely linked is that the diverse aspirations of the NQF role players of **what the NQF was expected to deliver, did not fully materialise**.

The third relates more to the **locus of control and the governance** and management of the NQF and its structures, which speaks to the relational agency issue.

Chisholm and Leyendecker (2008: 1) found that "learner centeredness, outcomes- and competency-based education and national qualifications frameworks were favourably received at local level in Sub-Saharan Africa, but have not resulted in widespread change in classroom practice. They found local flavour because they were not entirely new ideas, and were ambiguous enough to be seen as vehicles for achieving not so much educational as economic, social and political goals. The failure of implementation could lie in expectations that education

would lead to transformation without paying necessary attention to implementation and capacity.”

Parker and Walters (2008) noted that:

“During the last thirty years qualifications frameworks have emerged as an attempt by the State to ‘manage’ relations between education, training and work. In South Africa, many NQF role players believed that business and government saw the Qualifications framework as a means to make education more ‘relevant’ to the work place and as a ‘steering mechanism’ by which the State could achieve social objectives”

This approach was rejected by, *inter alia*, Allais (2014) Muller (2009), Raffe (2009) and Young (2005), who viewed the motives of the state and business with mistrust, and believed they were undermining the **knowledge project**. Allais (2014) argued for “a disciplinary knowledge-based approach to curriculum and ‘disciplinary specialisation of consciousness”, and found difficulty to accept what she perceived to be a weakened stance in the ‘*acquisition* of bodies of knowledge’. Walters (2015) correctly picks up on the word ‘acquisition’ which leaves no room for the many different ways that knowledge is accessed, and neither for bodies of knowledge to include everyday experience and lifelong learning. In fact, Walters (ibid.) points out that Allais is rather conservative in her views about the ‘centrality of acquisition of bodies of knowledge’, with little concern for articulation and mobility and flexibility for students.

Allais (2009:148) wrote that these ideals did not go according to plan. Allais’s critique often centred on the what she termed the contradictory legislation promulgated by Departments; simultaneous dual ‘streams’ and centres of power which acted disruptively within and outside of the NQF system; and the development and implementation of the NQF as a series of disjointed events. Allais critique is not refuted out of hand, as she rightly points out that the hoped for relational agency was not there; but it could in fact be explained as the development of the NQF continually evolving as a result of the interaction of multiple actors, ideas, physical realities, and other factors.

The critique from Allais and others about the **knowledge project**, however, bears renewed consideration. Walters supports Allais (2014) who wrote about the “madness of historic use of unit standards to ‘salami slice’ a curriculum and these unit standards in turn being assessed by ‘assessors’ who themselves have little understanding of the curriculum or are poorly trained”. Criticism was leveled at the unit standard-based qualifications which led to the proliferation of numbers of unit standards and their credit values- some comprising only 1 or 2 credits - which became extremely onerous and cumbersome to implement and to quality assure. This design did not aid mobility or articulation and some of the assessment “tools” and requirements for assessment/examinations became onerous and expensive to implement credibly. Allais criticism is valid, and highlights some of the poorer design features of some of the unit standard based qualifications and even those now being developed by the QCTO.

The NQF Act does not ‘*prescribe*’ the design of qualifications through regulations. SAQA has an approved policy, though, which establishes criteria which informs the design and development of qualification and part qualifications which are registered on the NQF. Herein lays a further

challenge, in that the NQF Act has not been clear enough about the roles and responsibilities of the various NQF bodies, i.e. SAQA, the QCs, the professional bodies, the DHET and DBE, and other government departments which oversee statutory professional bodies. There is also confusion about what a qualification is and what comprises a curriculum and a learning programme, with these concepts being used inter-changeably in the development of qualifications.

#### Pre-workshop work project 5

Express thoughts about the design of the qualifications; and about the “knowledge” project that Allais and Walters write about.

### 2.2.13 Successes

Even though there were challenges, in the conceptualisation and implementation of the NQF and the use of learning outcomes, there have also been many significant successes.

A **first success** was that a SAQA Act, was promulgated which enabled the Authority to develop and implement a South African NQF. The sheer tenacity of all those involved in imagining, creating and implementing the NQF was in itself a success. The years between the establishment of the SAQA Board (1996) and the publication of the Regulations governing qualifications and standard setting (R452) and quality assurance bodies and functions (R1127) respectively were not void of deep and robust discourse, differences of opinion, and many deep conceptual debates about learning outcomes, levels, level descriptors, an integrated framework, and the knowledge project of an integrated NQF. The successful establishment of the NQF and the emergence and maturing of the standard setting and quality assurance system and the National Learners’ Records Database will stand out as beacons along the narrative of the South African NQF.

The White Paper on Post-school education and Training (White Paper (2013)) endorses the NQF as overarching the entire education and training system in South Africa; and reinforces the architecture of the NQF, which is organised as a series of levels of learning achievement, based on learning outcomes, arranged in ascending order from one (1) to ten. All qualifications and part- qualifications offered in South Africa are expected to be registered on the NQF. SAQA is the body with overall responsibility for the implementation of the NQF. The NQF Act establishes a process for the recognition of professional bodies and for the registration of professional designations. These elements are all successes in the implementation of the NQF.

The **second** of these is the significant impact that the NLRD is making in the NQF system. The NLRD currently records over 18 million learning records of South African learners. These comprise qualifications and part qualifications. The NLRD was viewed in the recent research



report titled *An Evaluation into the Implementation of the NQF Act, 2008 to 2016*, (2018) as being a key instrument to inform policy development in education, training and skills development in South Africa. The NLRD trends reports have provided us with impeccable data about qualifications achievements, articulation trends and RPL implementation and learning achievements. The data assists us to forecast future trends and to identify gaps where interventions are required.

The **third** of these is the design and implementation of the RPL project in South Africa. RPL implementation is mostly dependent on well-written, valid and relevant learning outcomes, and assessment criteria linked to these learning outcomes. There are currently records of over 65000 learners who have achieved qualifications through RPL, and over 1 million records of individual units of learning and modules achieved through RPL. Our RPL project has seen RPL being conducted for access, credit accumulation, transfer of credits, for promotion, and for professional designations within some professions such as sports coaching and teaching. To ensure credibility in the RPL process various forms of assessment are used; the design of the RPL assessment programmes are always based on learning outcomes, exit level outcomes, assessment criteria, and critical cross-field outcomes. RPL remains a contested space however, which harks back to the mistrust by some of the robustness of the assessment of learning outcomes and especially the knowledge components contained in learning outcomes. The Authors of the Bologna Follow-Up Group (BFUG) Report, (2015) put it differently: they highlight that:

“Higher education should exist within the whole continuum of lifelong learning, from basic education to advanced research as the needs of Europe’s populations develop over time and targeted actions are required aimed at widening the participation of mature students in higher education. For this purpose, formal and informal barriers to study for mature students should be eliminated through, inter alia, Recognition of Prior Learning and incentives for both students and higher education institutions to engage with one another throughout adult life. There is a need to develop a guidelines document to assist the European Higher Education Area (EHEA) countries in their efforts to integrate lifelong learning in higher education systems, institutions, and society for the upcoming 2015-2018 period”.

The BFUG Report reiterates our own views, stated eloquently by Walters (2012: 156) that:

“Provision of frequently updated, easily accessible information and counseling services to enable citizens to maximize their learning opportunities; a high value being placed on formal, non-formal, and informal learning throughout life, expressed in tangible improvements in learners’ employment and community situations; and learning for high levels of social cohesion”.

Quality education provision and lifelong learning are regarded as being central to enhancing employability and increasing competitiveness in addition to furthering personal and professional development and motivating social solidarity and civic engagement.

A **fourth** success story is the development and publication of a Minister's Articulation Policy, and the renewed focus on articulation and some successes emerging from SAQA's recent research project in partnership with the Durban University of Technology (DUT). Articulation as a process underpinned by policy derives most of its agency through the use of learning outcomes which inform its practices. Articulation principles, described by SAQA in a report to the Minister in 2014, invoke the comparability and equivalence mapping of qualifications through the use of learning outcomes. SAQA has recently been working in a research partnership with the Durban University of Technology (DUT) to identify best articulation praxis and the extent of articulation practices between universities and TVET Colleges.

Despite the important findings, and the accommodation of articulation across our education and training system in the Minister's Articulation Policy, the conceptualisation and implementation of articulation, also remains contested space. The importance of the empirical findings from the SAQA/DUT research and the recommendations will need deeper dialogue and engagement at all levels of discourse in the NQF role-player arena.

One of the challenges is that the articulation debate finds itself locked into a binary 'space' where many proponents of articulation view quality qualifications and the learning outcomes stipulated in these qualifications, as sufficiently the credible and trustworthy to support articulation within an institution, between institutions and within and between the Sub-frameworks; on the other side, the opponents to articulation do not view qualifications at the same NQF level as being comparable, and they have little trust in the comparability of learning outcomes across qualification types. It appears there are currently insufficient 'common knowledge' and too many diverse 'agendas' which are not yet understood, for the Articulation challenge to be resolved in the immediate short term.

**Two other areas** of significant success which also use learning outcomes as the basis for their agency are the verification project managed by SAQA, and the evaluation and advisory services provided by SAQA through its directorate for the evaluation of foreign qualifications. The verification project is important as a NQF Amendment Bill has recently been passed (March 2019) which seeks to deal with misrepresented qualifications, fraudulent qualifications, and the registration of professional designations. SAQA manages and will manage the verification of national qualifications, using learning outcomes and NLRD records. Annually about 12000 verifications are conducted.

The growth and development of sophisticated digital technologies to support the evaluation of **foreign qualifications**, and the numbers totaling over 25000 evaluations per month signify the

importance of this service delivered by SAQA. The directorate uses methodologies closely linked to learning outcomes to perform their work. Their work is supported by the development and implementation of Mutual Recognition of Qualifications (MRQ) bilateral agreements with other countries, regional conventions such as the SADC Regional Qualifications Framework, continental conventions such as the Addis Convention, and global conventions such as the Groningen Declaration Network and others. All of these conventions rely to a significant extent on learning outcomes described in registered qualifications on Qualifications frameworks around the world.

**The e-Certificate** developed by SAQA, as a secure statement of acceptance of a foreign qualification heralds and new dispensation to ensure credibility of a recognition certificate; and also soothes the way for the global trend of learner and worker mobility.

#### Pre-workshop work project 6

What are your thoughts and opinions about the challenges and successes of the NQF project thus far?

### 2.3 National Skills Development Strategies and final report on NSDS 111

The Skills Development Act, No. 97 of 1998 enabled the vision of skills development for all in South Africa to become visible through this legislation. The long title of the Skills Development Act was stated as follows in the Government Gazette No. 19420 of 2 November 1998:

“To provide an institutional framework to devise and implement national, sector and workplace strategies to develop and improve the skills of the South African work force; to integrate those strategies within the National Qualifications Framework contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995; to provide for learnerships that lead to recognised occupational qualifications; to provide for the ‘financing of skills development by means of a levy-grant scheme and ‘a National Skills Fund; to provide for and regulate employment services; and to provide for matters connected therewith”.

The purposes of the Act are stated as:

“(1) the purposes of this Act are—

(a) to develop the skills of the South African workforce— (i) to improve the quality of life of workers, their prospects of work and 10 labour mobility; (ii) to improve productivity in the workplace and the competitiveness of employers; (iii) to promote self-employment; and (iv) to improve the delivery~ of social services:

- (b) to increase the levels of investment in education and training in the labour market and to improve the return on that investment;
- (c) to encourage employers— (i) to use the workplace as an active learning environment; (ii) to provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills; 20 (iii) to provide opportunities for new entrants to the labour market to gain work experience; and (iv) to employ persons who find it difficult to be employed;
- (d) to encourage workers to participate in leadership and other training programmed;
- (e) to improve the employment prospects-of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education;
- (f) to ensure the quality of education and training in and for the workplace;
- (g) to assist— 30 (i) work-seekers to find work; (ii) retrenched workers to re-enter the labour market; (iii) employers to find qualified employees: and
- (h) to provide and regulate employment services.

Those purposes are to be achieved by— (a) establishing an institutional and financial framework comprising— (i) the National Skills Authority; (ii) the National Skills Fund; (iii) a skills development levy-grant scheme as contemplated in the Skills Development Levies Act; 40 (iv) SETAS; (v) labour centres; and (vi) the Skills Development Planning Unit; (b) encouraging partnerships between the public and private sectors of the economy to provide education and training in and for the workplace; and 45 (c) co-operating with the South African Qualifications Authority”.

From this Act, and from these purposes the National Skills Development Strategies emerged, which were intended to “radically transform education and training in South Africa by improving both the quality and quantity of training to support increased competitiveness of industry and improved quality of life for all South Africans. When launching National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) 1 the Minister of Labour stated that “This strategy outlines specific and measurable national targets to achieve the broader objectives of the legislation”.

Each of the NSD strategies, namely NSDS 1, 11 and 111 were guided further by a particular focus for the five years of implementation. NSDS 1 was guided by the need to establish a cost effective and high quality skills development system which supports economic growth, employment creation and social development and is responsive to national and individual needs. NSDS 11 was underpinned by the vision of “Skills for sustainable growth, development and equity; and NSD 111 was underpinned by a vision of “A skilled and capable workforce that shares in, and contributes to, the benefits and opportunities of economic expansion and an inclusive growth path.”

Each NSDS had objectives and targets which were translated into individual plans per SETA. SETAs ability and commitment to achieve these targets were measured, monitored and evaluated annually and a system of monitoring and evaluation was put in place and “driven” by the Department of Labour. Below is a table which sets out the objectives of each of the NSD Strategies, which were adopted and implemented with various degrees of success by SETAs. It has been argued that these NSD strategies were too elaborate, too “big” and the operationalization of these through SETAs relied too much on the assumption that all people and role players involved in skills development and its implementation were well-equipped in terms of their understanding, knowledge, skills and experience to actually implement such a huge vision. As has emerged in research reports, the implementation of the NSD strategies achieved a measure of success, but there were - and remain areas - in which these strategies and their good intentions were just too ambitious and insufficient planning of implementation became evident.

Table 1: objectives of each of the National Skills Development Strategies, 1, 11 and 111

NSDS	Objective 1	Objective 2	Objective 3	Objective 4	Objective 5	Objective 6	Objective 7	Objective 8
NSDS 1	Developing a Culture of high quality lifelong learning and fostering skills development for high quality jobs	Fostering Skills Development in the formal economy for productivity and employment growth	Stimulating and supporting skills development in SMMEs	Promoting skills development and access to jobs and sustainable livelihoods through social development initiatives	Assisting new entrants into the employment in the labour market			
NSDS 11	Prioritising and communicating critical Skills for Growth, Development and Equity	Promoting and accelerating quality training for all in the workplace	Promoting employability and sustainable livelihoods through skills development	Assisting new entrants into the labour market and self-employment	Improving the quality and relevance of provision			
NSDS 111	Establishing a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning	Increasing access to occupationally-directed programmes	Promoting the growth of a public FET College system that is responsive to sector, local, regional and national skills needs and priorities	Addressing the low level of youth and adult language and numeracy skills to enable additional training	Encouraging better use of workplace-based skills development	Encouraging and supporting cooperatives, small enterprises, worker-initiated, NGO and community training initiatives	Increasing public sector capacity for improved service delivery and supporting the building of a developmental state	Building career and vocational guidance

### Pre-workshop work project 7

Were you involved in any aspect of design or implementation of NSDS 1, 11 and/or 111?

Briefly share your thoughts about what worked very well, and where you experienced challenges.

Do you think that better integration of education and training has been achieved by moving the Skills Development apparatus from the Department of Labour to the Department of Higher Education and Training?

## **SECTION 2: THE CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP**

**This section will be the focus of the 9 provincial workshops. The participants will add to the impact on private providers after each session, and build their analysis which will be reflected in the PESTEL table.**



## **Section 2: Capacity Building Workshop**

### **3. SITUATING THE NATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

#### **3.1 The Minister's vision and intention**

Participants have been involved in doing pre-reading and pre-workshop projects which have provided all with a basic understanding of the background and context to the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP).

The NSDP is “key to enabling government and social partners to contribute towards economic growth, employment creation and social development. The entire post-school system has been the focus of a significant and radical improvement in the quality of education and training” (NSDP, 2019: 1).

The NSDP is informed by the vision of the NDP which calls for “such an improvement in the quality of education and training to enhance capabilities of our people so that they are active participants in developing the potential of the country. The NSDP proposes that an understanding and determination of the demands of the labour market and of national priorities must be interpreted into appropriate interventions from education and training institutions” (Ibid, p1).

The NSDP departs from the NSD Strategies, in that it is a plan rather than a strategy, and it is contextualised within “the policy context of the National Development Plan and the White Paper on Post-School education and Training (WP-PSET)” (Ibid, p1).

The NSDP is developed to take implementation of a multitude of strategies, and other directional national policy documents into the realm of real action, in terms of the NDP slogan “Our Future-Make it Work”. The WP-PSET, the NP-PSET and the NDP 2030 are briefly discussed below, as a pre-cursor to the NSDP, as they “frame” the NSDP. Understanding these three framing planning documents will aid providers to understand the requirements and impact of the eight (8) objectives of the NSDP.

#### **3.2 The White Paper on Post-School Education and Training**

In 2013 the Minister of Higher Education and Training published *The White Paper for Post-School Education and Training* (White Paper) which supports the need to establish credible mechanisms and/or instruments to continue to ensure that the objectives of the NQF are met

(mobility, access, transformation); and especially to support equivalence and parity of esteem as instruments to credit recognition and learner progression. The White Paper speaks to the desired directions for the post-school education and training *system* as a whole.

Cabinet approved the *White Paper for Post-School Education and Training: Building an Expanded, Effective and Integrated Post-School system* (WPPSET) in November 2013. The WPPSET is a **policy instrument**. It defines the priorities of the Department of Higher Education and Training (the Department) for building and strengthening the PSET system. The policy profiles a **vision** for growth.

The WPPSET directs the Department to ‘elaborate a concrete development plan for the period up to 2030’. The thrust of the White Paper is to:

- Build a single coordinated, coherent, highly articulated and yet diverse PSET system.
- Build a post-school system that can assist in building a fair, equitable, non-racial, non-sexist and democratic South Africa;
- Set skills development agenda that responds to key transformational imperatives to provide equal opportunities for education and training for all.
- Expand opportunities and access to education and training for people in previously disadvantaged areas and address youth unemployment
- Expand workplace training through partnerships with industry.
- The themes which therefore emerge from the White Paper are partnerships between public and private education, training and skills development providers; the emergence of a strong private education and training and skills development sector; workplace training and skills development; skills and knowledge to improve performance of the economy; skills and knowledge which will expand employability (employability skills) and equip people to achieve sustainable livelihoods (knowledge, skills, competence, and critical cross filed outcomes; developing effective and well-understood vocational and community learning and occupational pathways, and articulation. The White Paper (2013: xiv) refers to:

“An integrated post-school system, which is conceptualised as building *strong partnerships* with other post-school institutions, and expanding *workplace training*. The system will be integrated in such a way that the different components complement one another, and work together to improve the quality, quantity and diversity of PSET in South Africa. The White Paper sets out to expand the current provision of education and training in South Africa, to integrate the various strands of the post-school system, and to set out modalities for ways in which employers in both the private and public sectors can play an

important role in the creation of a skilled labour force.” (p1). Our main message is to create an expanded, effective and integrated post-school education and training system; to contribute to the creation of a single, coherent and integrated system of PSET. As we build our institutions, one of the most important measures of their success will be the extent to which they *articulate* with the rest of the PSET system.”

### 3.3 The National Plan for Post-School Education and Training (NP-PSET)

The Department of education and training developed a Post-school Education and Training plan (NP-PSET) which has been widely consulted and can be summarised as follows:

**The purpose of the NPPSET is to translate the policy directions outlined in the WPPSET into concrete actions.** In fact the NPPSET outlines the **overall guiding plan** for the Department for the next 10-year period. The NPPSET **operationalizes the vision and principles** of the WPPSET and provides a **blueprint** for growing an effective and integrated PSET system

What it is and does:

- The NP-PSET is a roadmap for the development and strengthening of post-school education and training (PSET) from 2019 – 2030.
- The Plan identifies the goals, objectives and outcomes for PSET.
- The Plan describes the implementation strategies, targets, and responsibilities for achieving the White Paper vision of an expanded, effective, and integrated PSET system
- The Plan formalises work already in progress towards the goals of the White Paper, including the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) which is fully integrated into the NP-PSET
- The overall goal is a PSET system that is socially just, responsive, and well-coordinated, providing access to a diversity of education and training opportunities.

6 Goals and Objectives of the NPPSET		
	Goal	Objective
1	An integrated and coordinated PSET system	To build a PSET system that is integrated and coordinated to achieve efficiencies and improve effectiveness
2	Expanded access to PSET opportunities	To provide diverse students with access to a comprehensive and multifaceted range of PSET opportunities
3	A responsive PSET system	To provide qualifications programmes and curricula that are responsive to the needs of the world of work, society and students
4	Improved interface between education and training institutions and the world of work	To nurture a stronger and more cooperative relationship between education and training institutions and the workplace
5	Improved quality of PSET provision	To build the capacity of PSET institutions to provide quality education and training
6	Improved efficiency and success of the PSET system	To improve efficiency and success of the PSET system

12

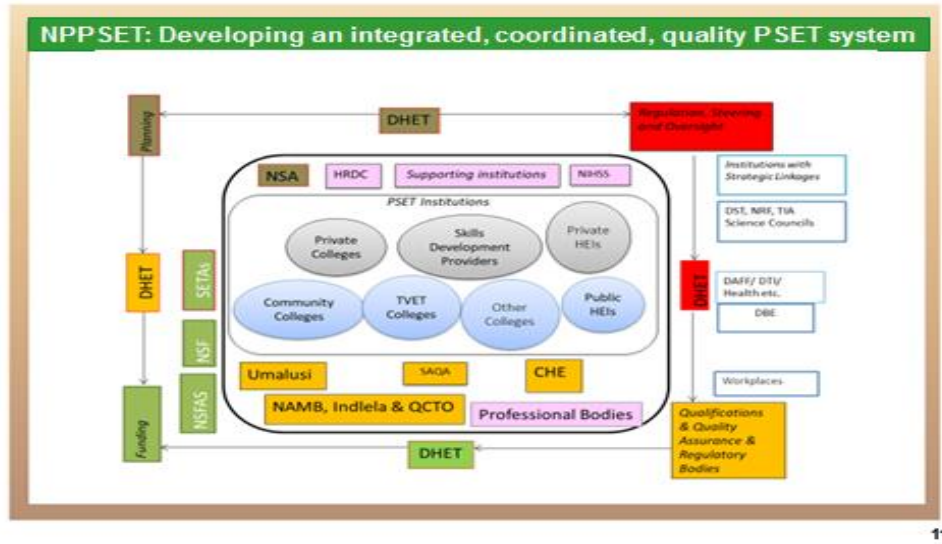
The WP-PSET and the NP-PSET are **instruments** that are central to the achievement of **outcome 5**: “A skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path”. It elaborates on the vision for PSET articulated in the *National Development Plan* (NDP). NP-PSET fulfils this directive.

- Limited provision of PSET.
- Insufficiently diverse and skewed provision.
- Quality is still weak in many parts of the system: high repetition and dropout rates.
- Weak linkages between educational institutions and the workplace; insufficient employer involvement in training.
- Weak and poorly integrated data systems.
- Weak quality assurance.

These challenges are intensified by the structural challenges of unemployment, poverty and inequality.

- The NP-PSET is a **roadmap** for the development and reinvigoration of post-school education and training (PSET) over the next 11 years, from 2019 – 2030. Elements of it are already being implemented.
- The Plan identifies the **goals, objectives and outcomes** for PSET.
- The Plan describes the **implementation strategies, targets, and responsibilities** for achieving the White Paper vision of an expanded, effective, and integrated PSET system
- The Plan formalises work already in progress towards the goals of the White Paper, including the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) which is fully integrated into the NP-PSET, and sets out an **implementation plan for 2019 to 2030**.
- The **overall goal** is that by 2030 the PSET system aims to be a socially just, responsive, and well-coordinated system, providing access to a diversity of quality education and

training opportunities, where students have a reasonable opportunity for achieving success, and with vastly improved links between education and the world of work.



### 3.3.1 Impact on Private Providers

#### Outcome 2.5: Strengthened institutional differentiation:

Private PSET institutions will be encouraged to directly provide, and/or work together with public institutions to provide, niche qualifications not in public institutions, to support institutional and programme differentiation.

Because private providers work so closely with **SETAs**, and have been instrumental in ensuring the skills development “machinery” was used and the strategies implemented, private providers must note the role envisaged for SETAs.

The role of **SETAs** will be to conduct research to understand demand and signal implications for supply to address skills needs of the economy; Support the Department in steering the system through managing the use of the levy to ensure efficiency and effectiveness of the system; Support the Department in developing capacity of public and private education and training providers to deliver programs; Facilitate workplace-based learning with a focus on occupations and professions that support economic growth; and Perform system support functions and manage implementation of plans and budgets.

Qualifications to be offered in Higher Education Colleges		
General academic	Purpose and qualifications	
	Professional (technical/vocational)	Occupational (vocational/technical)
	*Postgraduate Diploma	*Specialised Occupational Certificate
*General Formative Degree	*Advanced Diploma *Bachelor of Education *Bachelor of Technology	*Specialised Occupational Certificate
6	*Diploma	*Advanced Certificate (occupational/vocational)
5		*Higher Certificate (occupational/vocational/foundational)

**Note:** Most of these will be private institutions. However, the first public higher education colleges, which will be specialised nursing and agricultural colleges, will initially primarily offer the qualifications shown in **black**. Over time, they could also develop to offer relevant qualifications for the fields in which they specialise (shown in **red**).

12

Qualifications to be offered in Universities		
General academic	Purpose and qualifications	
	Professional (technical/vocational)	Occupational (vocational/technical)
10 *Doctor of Philosophy (PhD)	*Professional Doctorate	
9 *Masters	*Professional Masters	
8 *Honours	*Postgraduate Diploma *Professional Bachelor's Degree	*Specialised Occupational Diploma
7 *General/Formative Bachelor's Degree	*Advanced Diploma *Bachelor of Education *Bachelor of Technology *Diploma	*Specialised Occupational Certificate  *Advanced Certificate (occupational/vocational) *Higher Certificate (occupational/vocational/foundational)

**Note:** Universities will collectively offer the full range of qualifications shown above. However, those in **red** may slowly disappear from their offerings as the TVET colleges and higher education colleges start offering more of these qualifications. Within the university sector, different institution types (traditional universities, comprehensive universities and universities of technology) will offer different ranges of these qualifications, depending on their mandate and mission.

12

### 3.4 The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030

“The National Development Plan aims to eliminate poverty and reduce inequality by 2030. South Africa can realise these goals by drawing on the energies of its people, growing an inclusive economy, building capabilities, enhancing the capacity of the state, and promoting leadership and partnership throughout society. While it is neither perfect nor complete, it sets out firm proposals to solve the country’s problems, and to deepen the engagement of South Africans from all walks of life in building our future.” (NDP, 2012).

The National Development Plan is a broad strategic framework. It sets out a coherent and holistic approach to confronting poverty and inequality based on the six focused, interlinked priorities but some areas are highlighted here as they have a direct impact on private providers at all levels and of all types. Growth and jobs, education and skills, and a capable and developmental state are three priorities that stand out. These speak to raising employment through faster economic growth; improving the quality of education, skills development and innovation; and building the capability of the state to play a developmental, transformative role.

Each of these priority areas named above impact on private providers, as the qualifications, learning programmes, skills development programmes and courses, and continuous professional development (CDP) courses which address these priority areas are offered across the scope of private providers.

Other elements emerge from the NDP which are also stated as themes in the NSDP, and bear brief mention as they have direct impact on private providers as well.

#### **3.4.1 Sequencing and willingness to prioritise**

Implementing this plan will require some tough, potentially unpopular decisions. It identifies high-level priorities and, in some areas, a specific sequencing. For example, it highlights the need to raise the quality of FET colleges before rapidly expanding capacity. Several challenges require attention, including a critical shortage of skills.

#### **3.4.2 A capable and Developmental state**

It requires leadership, sound policies, skilled managers and workers, clear lines of accountability, appropriate systems, and consistent and fair application of rules. To achieve the aspiration of a capable and developmental state, the country needs to enhance Parliament's oversight role, stabilise the political administrative interface, professionalise the public service, upgrade skills and improve coordination. The skills profile of the public service mirrors the national skills profile. There are critical shortages of good-quality doctors, engineers, information technology professionals, forensic specialists, detectives, planners, accountants, prosecutors, curriculum advisors and so on. In addition, the management ability of senior staff operating in a complex organisational, political and social context requires greater attention. To solve both the technical and managerial skills shortages, government has to take a long-term perspective on developing the skills it needs through career pathing, mentoring, and closer partnerships with universities and schools of management.

### **3.4.3 People with disabilities**

In line with the priorities of the plan, people with disabilities must have enhanced access to quality education and employment. Efforts to ensure relevant and accessible skills development programmes for people with disabilities, coupled with equal opportunities for their productive and gainful employment, must be prioritised.

### **3.4.4 Improving the quality of education**

Improving the quality of education requires careful management, support from all interested parties and time. By 2030, South Africa needs an education system with the following attributes:

- High-quality, universal early childhood education, and increase the quality of education so that all children have at least two years of preschool education and all children in grade 3 can read and write.
- Quality school education, with globally competitive literacy and numeracy standards
- Further and higher education and training that enables people to fulfil their potential
- An expanding higher-education sector that can contribute to rising incomes, higher productivity and the shift to a more knowledge- intensive economy
- A wider system of innovation that links universities, science councils and other research and development role players with priority areas of the economy.
- Management of the education system
- Competence and capacity of school principals
- Teacher performance
- Further education and training (FET). The FET system is not effective. It is too small and the output quality is poor. Continuous quality improvement is needed as the system expands. The quality and relevance of courses needs urgent attention. When quality starts to improve and the employability of graduates begins to increase, demand for FET services will rise automatically.
- Higher education. The performance of existing institutions ranges from world-class to mediocre. Continuous quality improvement is needed as the system expands at a moderate pace.

### **3.4.5 Technological change**

Science and technology can also be leveraged to solve some of the biggest challenges in education and health. Many parts of Africa that have never enjoyed fixed-line telephony are widely served by efficient cellular phone networks that provide a range of services. Educational materials can be delivered electronically to remote villages the use of digital communications has changed society in ways that are not yet fully understood. It is clear, however, that young people have embraced the new media, and this represents a potentially powerful means of fostering social inclusion.

The use of technology and digital learning mechanisms have been prioritised during the COVID-19 pandemic. The efficiency of digital learning platforms used by most education, training and skills development providers has emphasised the importance of development in this area,



especially to address inequalities for those who do not have access to devices which can host digital platforms.

### **3.4.6 Building a future for South Africa's youth**

South Africa has an urbanising, youthful population. This presents an opportunity to boost economic growth, increase employment and reduce poverty. To build a future for the youth, the NDP proposes the following, which is similar to 3.3.4 above and which are themes which emerge in the NSDP as well:

- Improve the school system, including increasing the number of students achieving above 50 percent in literacy and mathematics.
- Increasing learner retention rates to 90 percent and bolstering teacher training.
- Strengthen youth service programmes and introduce new, community-based programmes to offer young people life-skills training, entrepreneurship training and opportunities to participate in community development programmes.
- Strengthen and expand the number of FET colleges to increase the participation rate to 25 percent.
- Increase the graduation rate of FET colleges to 75 percent.
- Provide full funding assistance covering tuition and other essential components of education and training.
- A subsidy to the placement sector to identify, prepare and place matric graduates into work. The subsidy will be paid upon successful placement.
- Expand learnerships and make training vouchers directly available to job seekers.
- A formalised graduate recruitment scheme for the public service to attract highly skilled people.
- Expand the role of state-owned enterprises in training artisans and technical professionals.

#### Workshop discussion

Reflect on common themes which emerge from the WP-PSET, the NP-PSET and the NDP 2030.

Consider how these elements are included in your institutional arrangements.

## **4. THE NATIONAL SKILLS DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

### **Why a plan and not a strategy or a policy?**

A plan of the nature of the NSDP is based on Policy statements, such as the WP-PSET and the NP-PSET. Policy statements have been seen as “wish lists” framed by government policies of the day, but devoid of finer detail and plans which take policies and strategies into the realm of real activity and agency which can be measured, monitored and evaluated. The NSDP takes policy and strategy, into a new realm, and into actual plans which will be monitored and evaluated in terms of effectiveness, efficiency and social return on investment.

Policies may be judged on many grounds. For example: is a policy based on accurate knowledge? Is it based on acceptable principles? Is it aiming to achieve acceptable objectives? How has the policy been arrived at? Who has been involved in the process of policy advice and development? Have reasonable means been chosen to reach the policy objectives? It is a common error for policy documents to give the impression that policies are matters for governments only, both to determine and to execute. In democratic systems of government, policies must be arrived at through open social and political processes which involve all major stakeholders and interest groups, and which citizens feel free to influence, for example through the media. Implementation has to be steered by the public service or statutory bodies, but can only succeed if the affected organs of civil society feel that they are partners with a stake in the outcome.

The present circumstances in our country make it difficult to propose detailed implementation procedures with confidence, or to judge what pre-conditions are likely to be required for successfully translating policy ideas into reality. In the end, a policy is judged in the court of real life: did it win sufficient support? Has it proved capable of implementation? Has it succeeded in achieving its objectives? What benefit has it brought to society?<sup>5</sup>

The transformation and re-shaping of the system so that it can play this role will require an investment of energy, commitment and time, which emerges from a plan. It is essential to start this process and put in place the mechanisms which will permit it to develop. These include capacity building in the design of the NSDP, and its objectives, and end with a basic institutional plan, which in turn is based on a loosely developed ToC or reframed institutional plan.

### **The approach taken in this capacity building manual**

The NSDP 2030 comprises four main sections. The first section deals with the ‘generic’ issues such as the vision, mission and purpose of the NSDP 2030. The second section covers the Outcomes of the NSDP, with descriptions of what these outcomes mean; the third section deals

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<sup>5</sup> ANC Policy document on Education and Training 1994

with the NSDP Principles, and the fourth section covers the NSDP outcomes and sub-outcomes and performance indicators.

For the purposes of this capacity building manual, the approach is one that deals with the NSDP outcomes, and ‘probes’ how the NSDP has impact specifically on private providers. In doing so, each of the four areas covered in the NSDP named above are dealt with. There are key words or phrases which are discussed to clarify meaning, and/or to grow understanding and how to align these key elements to the considerations of private providers.

## **4.1 The vision of the NSDP**

The **vision** statement “An Educated, Skilled and Capable workforce” speaks to three elements of the education and training system. It speaks to an **academic/theoretical** aspect, where knowledge and understanding are highlighted as key components and achieved through different ways people learn; a **level of skill/s** which are developed in a simulated and/or practical environment and in a workplace and/or on-the-job environment in an institution or workplace; and a **capability component** which speaks to the “coming together” of knowledge, understanding, skills to do and apply, and the third dimension of the so-called soft skills. Few people include the third dimension in their approach to teaching, training, facilitation, development, coaching or mentoring. In the 21<sup>st</sup> century skills development environment these “skills sets” are seen as vital components of “capability” in the workplace or in any form of agency. There are numerous lists of these skills; and one of the most “useful” and credible lists” remains the Critical cross field outcomes which were developed in 1998 as part of what had to be included in all qualifications being designed for registration on the NQF.

The NSDP 2030

“outlines a multi-tiered approach to understanding skills needs, namely, identifying skills needs at an organisational or workplace level; identifying skills needs at sectoral level of occupations in high demand and priority occupations; and identifying skills needs at national level of occupations in high demand and priority occupations. All these tiers or levels are interconnected. If skills needs are not adequately identified at workplace level it has an impact at the sector and then national level in terms of accurately determining skills needs” (BANK SETA, 2019: 12).

### **4.1.1 The Critical Cross Field outcomes (CCFOs)**

The CCFOs express qualities that should be achieved in all qualifications and to some extent in any unit standard. These outcomes demand evidence of problem-solving, the ability to work with Others, to access information, understand the consequences of one's actions and so on. SAQA defines CCFOs as “those generic outcomes that inform all teaching and learning” (Ref:

SAQA Website – Glossary of Terms). According to SAQA, CCFOs 'are those outcomes deemed critical for the development of the capacity for life-long learning'. It is compulsory for standards setters to incorporate some of the critical outcomes into standards as they are developed, and qualifications must contain all of the critical outcomes at the appropriate level on the NQF.

These are the critical outcomes adopted by SAQA:

- Identify and solve problems in which responses demonstrate that responsible decisions using critical and creative thinking have been made.
- Work effectively with others as a member of a team, group, organisation, community.
- Organise and manage oneself and one's activities responsibly and effectively.
- Collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information.
- Communicate effectively using visual, mathematical and/or language skills in the modes of oral and/or written presentation.
- Use science and technology effectively and critically, showing responsibility towards the environment and health of others.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the world as a set of related systems by recognising that problem-solving contexts do not exist in isolation.

SAQA also identified five developmental outcomes which were defined as follows:

In order to contribute to the full personal development of each learner and the social and economic development of the society at large, it must be the intention underlying any programme of learning to make an individual aware of the importance of:

- reflecting on and exploring a variety of strategies to learn more effectively;
- participating as responsible citizens in the life of local, national and global communities;
- being culturally and aesthetically sensitive across a range of social contexts;
- exploring education and career opportunities; and
- developing entrepreneurial opportunities.

There are many debates around how the critical outcomes can be integrated into learning programmes. The meaning of the outcomes (and how they can be applied) is highly context- and discipline- dependent. Their integration into learning programmes can only be achieved through embedding these outcomes in the programme materials, and in the methodology in which facilitators are trained. In general, the approach is to design activities which explicitly encourage some of the process skills implied by the outcomes. In terms of methodology, the emphasis would be on the promotion of active, exploratory and self-directed learning.

## **4.2 The mission of the NSDP**

The mission is “To improve access to occupations in high demand and priority skills aligned to supporting economic growth, employment creation and social development whilst also seeking to address systemic considerations”.

Improved access relies on an education, training and skills development system which is fair, transformational, innovative, agile and flexible. It relies on a system that will pivot seamlessly towards the requirements of a changing world of work, future of jobs, and a world geared up for the 4IR and the 5 IR.

The NSDP makes some linkages to the NDP and to the New Growth Path (2011) which both propose that “Improvements in education and skills levels are a fundamental prerequisite for achieving the visions of an educated, skilled and capable workforce. The writers of the NSDP acknowledge that “Neither of the plans elaborates in any detail on the specific skills required to support economic and social development”. The NSDP seeks to provide the detail which will “colour in” the road that will be travelled towards achievement of the NDP2030.

### **4.3 Outcomes of the NSDP**

#### **4.3.1 Identify and increase production of occupations in high demand**

The primary aim of determining occupations in high demand is to improve the responsiveness of the post school education and training system to the needs of the economy and to the broader developmental objectives of the country. The national list of occupations in high demand will be compiled and reviewed for every two years, to support planning processes in the post school education and training sector, particularly in relation to enrolment planning, decision making on the prioritisation of resource allocation, qualification development, and career information and advice.

Skills that are required are most frequently expressed in ‘occupational’ terms. Accordingly, the first and primary reason for using the notion of ‘occupation’ is that ‘occupation’ is the language used in the demand side, which is the labour market.

The NSDP starts with understanding and determining the demand of the labour market and national priorities that can be interpreted into interventions from education and training institutions through their planning processes on the supply side. The methodology of Centres of Specialisation (CoS), amongst others, has the potential to prove to be the vehicle to drive an approach to meeting the occupations in high demand, rather than assuming that supply will generate demand. This approach will be encouraged, where possible.

**Four key words/phrases: Determine occupations, demand, supply, qualification development.**

##### ***4.3.1.1 Determining occupations through the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO)***

The list of occupations in high demand is identified from a number of sources, which provide empirical evidence of demand and supply side for which occupations are in high demand and

which providers will supply education, training and skills development on the supply side. The SETAs Sector Skills Plans provide information about the occupations.

When the SETAs were established in 2001, the Sector Skills Plans (SSPs) comprised a section on scarce and critical skills, from which an overarching national skills demand and supply list was compiled, which was called the *Scarce and critical Skills List*.

In 2007 the Department of Labour introduced the **Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO)**, and SETA skills planning and reporting were aligned to the OFO and its codes, which go up to six (6) digits. The OFO codes are still used for skills reporting and provide the categorization of basis for the list of occupations in high demand. The DoL adopted the use of the OFO in 2005 as a tool for identifying, reporting and monitoring scarce and critical skills and maintained it through an annual updating process.

This process and responsibility was taken over by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) in 2009. During the annual updating process in 2010 the DHET, supported by GIZ, decided that the annual updating of the OFO should also include adapting the OFO (Version 9) to better reflect the structure of ISCO - 08. The newer version of ISCO, version 08, offered more comprehensive framework structure. The DHET has thus decided to align the OFO to the ISCO – 08 structure in an attempt to create a standardised framework which would also align to the international framework.

#### **4.3.1.2 What is the OFO?**

The OFO is defined by the DHET as “a skills-based coded classification system that captures all jobs in the form of occupations’ (2017, p4). The purpose of the OFO is that it provides ‘a framework for the identification, articulation, reporting and monitoring of skills demand and supply in the South African labour market’ (DHET, 2017, p4). DHET uses the OFO as their main tool for this purpose. In essence, the OFO is a coded occupational classification system. It is the Department of Higher Education and Training’s key tool for identifying, reporting and monitoring skills demand and supply in the South African labour market. The OFO is constructed from the bottom-up by:

- analysing jobs and identifying similarities in terms of a tasks and skills;
- categorising similar jobs into occupations; and
- classifying these occupations into occupational groups at increasing levels of generality. The OFO adds value to skills development planning and implementation purposes in that it:
  - provides a common language when talking about occupations
  - captures jobs in the form of occupations; and
  - groups occupations into successively broader categories and hierarchical levels based on similarity of tasks, skills and knowledge.

#### **4.3.1.3 Construct of the OFO**

The eight Major Groups are: 1 Managers; 2 Professionals; 3 Technicians and Associate Professionals; 4 Clerical Support Workers; 5 Service and Sales Workers; 6 Skilled Agricultural, Forestry, Fishery, Craft and Related Trades Workers; 7 Plant and Machine Operators and Assemblers; and 8 Elementary Occupation.

Within each **Major Group** occupational groups are arranged into **Sub Major Groups, Minor Groups** and **Unit Groups** primarily on the basis of aspects of skill specialisation. **Occupations (six digits) are subdivisions of the Unit Groups** and are further detailed through specialisation and alternative occupation titles.

#### **4.3.1.4 The classification units**

The classification units are **jobs** (the kind of work performed reflected as occupations on the OFO) and the **concept of skill**, which is the kind of work done (that is, the tasks and duties), and the classification criteria for identifying Major, Sub Major, Minor and Unit Groups are the two dimensions of skill, i.e. skill level and skill specialisation.

#### **4.3.1.5 Definitions of the terms Job, Occupation, Skills and profession**

The first and primary problem is “that the OFO allows for a lack of conceptual clarity between job, occupation and profession. These three concepts may share some similarities but are in actual fact distinct concepts”. (BANKSETA, 2019)

The distinction between job and occupation is a crucial one. A **job** is defined as ‘a set of tasks and duties carried out or meant to be carried out, by one person for a particular employer, including self-employment’ (2017,p6) while an **occupation** is ‘a set of jobs whose main tasks and duties are characterised by a high degree of similarity (skill specialisation)’ (DHET,2017,p6). This means a range of jobs with sufficient similarity in purpose and tasks are mapped to one occupation. In the OFO context a **skill** is defined as ‘the ability to carry out duties and tasks of a specific job’ (DHET, 2017, p6).

**Jobs** in the workplace could either be related to occupations or specialisations on the OFO, depending on the extent to which the output of that particular job is unique. **Occupations** are described in relation to a descriptor or core purpose statement and a set of tasks, which are defined on the OFO at the group above the occupational level i.e. Unit Group level.

**Occupations** are arranged into groups based on consideration of two elements, namely skill level and skill specialisation (DHET, 2017). **Skill level relates to the complexity** and range of tasks to be performed in a job by looking at the nature of the work performed, the level of formal education and the extent of on-the-job training or experience required (DHET, 2017). **Skill specialisation** focuses on specific areas of expertise and relates to the field of knowledge required, the tools and machinery used, the materials worked on or with, and the kinds of goods and services produced.

A sub-set of occupations that has attracted extensive research attention over the past few decades is that of **professions**. Professions can be defined as: "...a certain type of occupation that has succeeded in convincing audiences they are characterized by (1) abstract, specialized knowledge, (2) autonomy, (3) authority over clients and subordinate occupational groups, and (4) a certain degree of altruism."

#### **4.3.1.6 Impact of change drivers on occupations**

Despite the short comings of the OFO there is ample room for improvement in terms of increasing the accuracy of mapping jobs to occupations taking place within this sector. The revision of the OFO that allows for more accurate data input is therefore crucial.

**Digitisation and technological developments** are significant drivers of change. This means occupations are changing rapidly, with often a greater integration of roles and greater degrees of complexity. In the case of technological developments and advances due to 4IR the pace of change would potentially be more marked hence resulting in the need for more concerted and focused efforts to keep abreast of changes to **ICT occupations**.

#### **Impact on Private Providers (PPs):**

There are four (4) Performance indicators stated in the NSDP for this Outcome; being (i) the increase in numbers of people participating in high, intermediate and elementary skills education and training (in line with the OFO and occupations in high demand); (ii) the development of a list of priority occupations identified from hard-to-fill vacancies by employers and occupations that are required to advance South Africa's developmental needs i.e. SIPS, Operations Phakisa etc.; (iii) identification (or development) of qualifications to which the occupations in high demand are aligned; and (iv) alignment with demand and supply to improve enrolment and completion of priority occupations.

There are four areas which impact on private providers and in which providers can become engaged:

##### **4.3.1.7.1 Engage with the OFO input for updates**

Private providers should engage with the inputs into the OFO, both as providers of qualifications and CPD or short courses or skills development interventions, and as employers themselves. Some private providers are levy payers to SETA/SETAs, and as such they provide input in their skills reporting documents as well. Providers will be very well placed to add new information to update the OFO, as their clients may request types of programmes to be offered which align to what are jobs or occupations or professions on the OFO. This extends to input to the Department about the trends in jobs and occupations.

##### **4.3.1.7.2 Understand what the demand is**

PPs should read the Occupations in High Demand; read the SSPs of the SETAs for those sectors to which they have aligned their offerings. Understand and engage with literature or forums in



which labour market information is shared or provided. PPs also have “demands” as they are also companies or SMEs and also employ skilled and knowledgeable people.

#### **4.3.1.7.3 Align to ‘supply’ skilled, knowledgeable and capable people**

PPs main business is offering education, training and skills development and CPD programmes, either in the form of qualifications or skills programmes or other types of skills development interventions. Remain abreast of what is on offer, plan for accreditation for new qualifications and be innovative and creative with how your curriculum is designed and delivered. Pivoting to online, digital, blended, flipped, e-learning modes and MOOCs have emerged as incredibly important approaches which PPs should be adopting.

#### **4.3.1.7.4 Qualification development, learning and career pathways**

PPs should be totally informed about all technical issues related to the qualifications they offer, as described in the registered qualification. Important information about learning and career pathways are found in these registered qualifications and PPs should use this information in their prospectuses and to do career guidance. Also PPs must know when a qualification is nearing its registration end date, and engage with the relevant QC about either re-registration or the development of a new qualification. Use APPETD as a “vehicle” if necessary to become involved in design teams.

### **4.3.2 Linking Education and the workplace**

Improving the relationship between education and training and work is a key policy goal of the WP-PSET. This recognises the importance of workplace-based learning in achieving the policy objectives of the post school education and training system. The WP-PSET is unequivocal that the main purpose of TVET is to prepare students for the world of work, a position that is in line with international practice. The OECD’s review of TVET systems in 20 countries concluded that a key feature common to effective TVET systems everywhere is a focus on training for employment. Workplace based learning is important for the employment prospects of students in the system.

Workplace based learning is explicitly supported and promoted in various policies and strategies including, but not limited to, the Skills Development Act (SDA), the NSDS III, the NDP, the NGP, the SETA Workplace-based Learning Programme Agreements Regulations, the National Skills Accord, the Youth Employment Accord, the Strategic Infrastructure Projects (SIPs), the National Youth Policy 2014 – 2019, the draft Turning the Public Sector into Training Space Strategy, the Public Service Human Resource Development Strategic Framework: Vision 2015, and the draft DHET Workplace-Based Learning Policy.

The alignment of planning and funding cycles of skills levy institutions will allow for much greater coherence between workplaces and education and training institutions in offering workplace learning opportunities to students in PSET, and industry experience for lecturing

staff, particularly in public institutions. The role of SETAs as intermediary bodies is posited as a key factor in linking the world of work and education.

**Key words and phrases: Opening of workplace based learning opportunities to be increased; industry experience for lecturing staff; Role of SETAs.**

#### **4.3.2.1 Workplace-based learning**

The WP-PSET and the NDP and NP-PSET speak about workplace-based learning as a key component on the PSET system. The DHET published Workplace based learning programme agreement regulations (2018) (The regulation). In this document workplace based learning is defined as

“An educational component of an occupational qualification that provides students with real life work experience where they can apply academic and technical skills and increase the prospect of employability”.

A workplace based learning programme is defined as

“An intervention as contemplated in an occupational qualification which a person internalises knowledge, skill and competencies and gain insights through exposure to work by achieving specific outcomes to enhance employability.”<sup>6</sup>

The types of learning programmes which require workplace based learning are apprenticeships, learnerships, candidacy, and internships. The following definitions are applicable for workplace based learning programme agreements:

An “apprenticeship” means a period of workplace based learning culminating in an occupational qualification for a trade.

A “Candidacy” means a period of workplace based learning undertaken by a graduate as part of the requirements for registration as a professional in the required professional designation as stipulated by a professional body.

A “learnership” means a period of workplace based learning culminating in an occupational qualification or part qualification.

An “**internship**” has meanings depending on the type of internship. It means a period of workplace based learning undertaken as part of the requirement for the “**N Diploma**” (at level 6 of the NQF, under the QA scope of the QCTO); or a “**student internship**” **Category A**, which means a period of workplace based learning undertaken as part of the requirement for the **Diploma, National Diploma, Higher Certificate or Advanced Certificate** as a vocational

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<sup>6</sup> Schedule: Skills development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998): Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETA) Workplace based learning programme agreement Regulations, 2018.

qualification stipulated in the Higher education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF). “**Student internship Category B**” means a period of workplace based learning undertaken as part of the requirement for a **professional qualification** (HEQSF).

A “**graduate internship**” means a period of workplace based learning for the purposes of allowing a person who has completed a post-school qualification to gain workplace experience or exposure to enhance competence or employability. This may include academic staff.

The Regulation gives guidance about how to register a learnership. A Quality Council (QC) must complete the registration form (Annexure B to the Regulations) and request the DHET to register the learnership. A learnership is registered only if the qualification is registered with SAQA.

There are three parties to learnerships, apprenticeships and internships, namely the learners, the providers and the employers.

#### **4.3.2.2 The role of SETAs**

The National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) makes provision for SETAs to exist for the next 10 years. This provision allows SETAs sufficient time to plan and execute skills development programmes that meet the needs of the sector in the short- medium- to long-term. NSDP places a greater emphasis on Work-Integrated Learning and Workplace-Based Learning. This focus intends to produce work-ready graduates to meet the skills demand of the sector to support economic growth of the services sector. The SETAs must work closely with employers to urge them to open up workspaces for this intervention.

The SSP, Strategic Plan (SP) and Annual Performance Plan (APP) make a strong emphasis on labour market research to strengthen skills surveillance and support evidence-based decision-making. In response to research findings, the SETAs must work with the QCTO to strengthen the supply-side of skills demand through relevant and current qualifications and appropriately accredited service providers. A centralisation of the quality assurance system under the QCTO is gaining momentum. SETAs Quality Management Divisions must work closely with the QCTO to ensure adequacy of the supply-side.

#### **Impact on private providers**

The key impact on private providers for outcome 2 of the NSDP is to be ready to support the increase of workplace based learning opportunities. This is in keeping with the key focus in NSDP to increase the opening of workplace based learning opportunities to support apprenticeships, learnership, candidacies and internships.

#### **4.3.2.3.1 Grow understanding**

A significant impact on private providers is to grow knowledge and understanding and expertise in the policy and legislative environment governing workplace based interventions. This means the private providers should have access to the latest policies and regulations about this issue, and train their staff who work with workplace based learning programmes. This speaks to

responsibility, accountability and institutional quality assurance and quality management processes.

#### **4.3.2.3.2 Develop and sustain partnerships**

Private providers must develop, grow and sustain their partnerships with public and private sector employers, and SETAs, to ensure that their students and graduates are placed in any of the workplace based learning programmes. Private providers can themselves be placement places as employers.

#### **4.3.2.3.3 Manage assessment of workplace based learning interventions**

Private providers can play a crucial role in assisting to “manage” the assessment of the workplace based learning component of apprenticeships, learnerships and internships, as many employers feel ill equipped to do this.

### **4.3.3 NSDS 3 Improving the level of skills in the South African workforce**

South Africa is challenged by low productivity in the workplace, as well as slow transformation of the labour market and a lack of mobility of the workforce, largely as a result of inadequate, quality assured training for those already in the labour market. The Skills Supply and Demand in South Africa Report (2016), indicates that it is universally recognised that higher levels of educational attainment are associated with better health and wellbeing, higher employment rates, better labour opportunities, and higher earnings. The Report further notes that the education level of the employed population is increasing. From 2010 to 2014 the share of the employed with a matric certificate or higher education qualification increased by 2.6% from 49.9 to 52.5%. The share of the employed with a tertiary education increased from 19.3% in 2010 to 20.5% in 2014. The number and share of the employed with only a primary education or lower was still over 2 million workers in 2014, with this group constituting 16.6% of the employed in 2010 and 13.8% in 2014. The majority of these 2 million workers are over 35 years of age, close to 90% are from the African population group and just 10% are from the coloured population group. The NGP calls for increased workplace training of workers already in employment in order to improve productivity and the overall growth and development of our economy. To address this challenge, the Mandatory Grant, Discretionary Grant and Administration budgets of the SETAs will be reviewed as SETAs are required to support employed workers. SETAs must support the training of employed workers and encourage employers to expand such training in order to improve the overall productivity of the economy, achieve transformation and address skills imbalances in our workforce in particular and the labour market in general.

**Key words or phrases:** increase workers participating in various learning programmes to address, critical skills required by various sectors of the economy, to transform workplaces, improve productivity and to improve economic growth prospects in various sectors of the economy.

#### ***4.3.3.1 Increase the number of employed people to participate in learning programmes***

The NSDP 2030 follows the ‘trend’ of the NSD strategies in that it requires skills development opportunities for unemployed and employed people. NSDP outcome 3 focuses on employed people. A key focus is that there must be an increase in the numbers of employees who are supported through skills development interventions.

The skills development interventions can be qualifications, skills programmes, CPD, in various forms and formats.

The envisaged return on investment of such interventions is development or enhancing the critical skills required in workplaces, transforming workplaces, improving productivity in workplaces, and thereby improving economic growth prospects in various sectors of the economy.

#### **Impact on private providers**

There are three areas of impact on private providers suggested below.

##### **Increased access and capacity**

The impact on private providers is the ability to enhance access and placement opportunities in the institution/s. This is dependent on the size and scope of the provider, and the number of qualifications it is accredited to deliver; its quality assurance and quality management capacity; and its faculty/teaching staff and administration staff.

##### **Increase sustainable partnerships**

Private providers should continue to build partnerships with companies, SME, SETAs, government departments at all three levels (national, provincial and local), professional bodies, and each other. It may happen that providers could partner to deliver in a big project with layers of different types of skills development needed.

##### **Align with Occupations in high demand, the OFO, the EIR and 5IR, and the skills for future workplaces**

Private providers are significant providers in the skills development space. They have been ‘partners’ of SETAs since the early 2000’s when SETs were first established, and were of the first providers to work with SETAs to provide learnerships and internships. They aligned with scarce and critical skills offerings. Now they need to align with delivering qualifications and skills programmes to supply learning programmes for the new ‘demand drivers’.

#### **4.3.4 Increase access to occupationally directed programmes**

The NDP target of 30,000 artisans to be produced annually by 2030 is an indication that South Africa's intermediate skills base is too low to support the country's socio-economic development goals. The workforce is also not keeping pace with the skills required to remain competitive in an increasingly knowledge-based economy. To address this, the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations has, since 2012, been developing new occupational qualifications which will become an important part of the offerings in TVET colleges and CET colleges. The new occupational qualifications require some work experience for certification. Although there might be some flexibility in the design of different qualifications, there is no doubt that the system requires better and more systemic arrangements for workplace-based learning in order for the programmes to inspire confidence among employers and to improve employment outcomes for students. Skills levy institutions through their funding will play an important role in supporting the increased production of occupationally directed programmes.

**Key words and Phrases: Increase in artisans produced; new occupational qualifications; programmes to inspire confidence among employers and to improve employment outcomes for students**

#### ***4.3.4.1 Increase in number of artisans produced***

The performance indicators of NSDP Outcome 4 are focused on increasing the number of artisans towards meeting the NDP target. The types of skills required by artisans are intermediate to high level skills. The importance of partnerships and 'better and more systemic arrangements for workplace based learning', and increased funding from SETAs for artisan training.

#### ***4.3.4.2 New occupational qualifications***

The QCTO is the QC tasked to ensure the development and growth of its sub-framework. Occupational qualifications comprise knowledge/theory (in keeping with the knowledge-based economy); practical and workplace based learning components. There is increased recognition that the placement of learners in workplaces is becoming difficult, hence the acknowledgement that simulation can play a big part to alleviate the need for placement in a workplace, if these are not available. QCTO has also been given approval to add new qualification types to its sub-framework, and final consultations are underway. These are occupational higher certificates, occupational advanced certificates, and occupational diplomas and occupational advanced diplomas. The inclusion of these qualification types will enable the delivery of high level skills in the occupational and artisan space; and will enhance articulation for people who want to study qualifications offered on other sub-frameworks.

#### ***4.3.4.3 Programmes to inspire confidence***

Workplaces are increasingly gearing up for a new world of work, and for the future of work. Inclusion of 4IR and 5IR approaches and digital learning has brought skills development into immediacy in the workplace which is unprecedented. Programmes which are offered in blended learning modes, or totally online, is making skills development and learning more accessible to employees, and is proving to be a cost effective and efficient way for skills development to take place. New learning programmes must incorporate the new sets of skills required in the 21<sup>st</sup>

century workplace and must be offered as digital learning opportunities, to keep up with the fast changing skills needs of the workplaces .

### **Impact on private providers**

There are three potential impacts on private providers:

#### **Increased number of Artisans to be training**

Private providers are already providing artisan training. Increased focus on occupations in high demand, and in aligning artisan training along the key drivers of a knowledge-based economy are important.

#### **Alignment with new occupational qualifications and types of provision**

Private providers should continue to seek ways to be part of the design and development of occupational qualifications. This is based on their knowledge and experience in providing occupational qualifications and the so-called ‘historic’ qualifications which were registered on the NQF during the SAQA Act period.

Private providers are encouraged to align their quality management and quality assurance systems with the requirements of the new qualification types, so that when they need to be accredited by the QCTO to offer the Occupational higher certificates, advanced certificates, diplomas and advanced diplomas.

#### **Programmes to inspire confidence**

Private providers are to ensure that they align to blended and online modes of provision; and that they are careful to incorporate all the skills sets required for the ‘future of work’ requirements. Most private providers are already offering their programmes in blended learning modes or totally online modes.

### **4.3.5 Support the growth of the public college institutional type as a key provider of skills required for socio-economic development**

#### **Support for TVET Colleges**

The WP-PSET describes TVET colleges as the cornerstone of the post-school education and training system for South Africa and proposes an expansion of this institutional type to absorb the largest enrolment growth in the post-school system. The NDP also situates TVET colleges as critical pillars of the emerging post-school system and vital for social and economic development. The growth of stronger TVET colleges will expand the provision of mid-level technical and occupational qualifications. These will articulate directly into the world of work for the growing numbers of young people leaving the schooling system. A significantly expanded TVET institutional type will also relieve the higher education institutional type which is already under strain from high demand driven by student aspirations for post-school education and a lack of alternative and attractive opportunities elsewhere in the PSET system.

TVET is a high priority for government. The focus on this institutional type since the recapitalisation of the public TVET colleges, and a range of intervention programmes since the creation of the Department, including the Turnaround Strategy, have led to some positive changes. The TVET colleges are starting to show results, but the system has been asked to do too much, too fast, with too little support. This institutional type must build upon its existing strengths, but growth must be realistic. TVET colleges cannot be expected to improve capacity and quality without adequate planning, support, and resourcing. Expansion has to be built on improved capacity and performance, both of which require significant new investment in a chronically underfunded area. Countries with strong TVET colleges have good relationships between industry and the TVET colleges. In these systems, TVET colleges play a particularly important role in directly linking intermediate technical education to the labour market. This means that the South African system will benefit from a better understanding of skills needs for South African society and industry, and the ability of TVET colleges to respond to social and economic needs, in particular those at the intermediate level in the labour market. Some labour market analyses show that job prospects for a TVET college graduate are comparable to those for a matriculant at 50%, but much higher for qualified artisans where a study showed a placement rate of 79%. This means that TVET colleges do not always add substantial value to the opportunities for prospective labour market entrants. Centres of Specialisation will be advocated to be the mode of delivery of identified occupational programmes, where this is practically possible. This mode of delivery will be encouraged, promoted and expanded in the TVET institutional type as it places the role of the employer at the centre with other stakeholders, such as SETAs. The role of the social partners remains central to the success of this methodology.

**Key words and phrases for TVET:** Expansion of TVET Colleges as critical pillars; provision of mid-level skills; Centres of specialisation; labour market.

### **Support for CET Colleges**

The NSDP acknowledges the role to be played by the Community Education and Training (CET) institutional type in expanding skills development in the country. The CET colleges will cater for the knowledge and skills needs of the large numbers of adults and youth requiring education and training opportunities, unemployed people, and those employed but in low or semi-skilled occupations. The aim, therefore, is to create a differentiated institutional type that caters to the varied needs of communities, individuals and society. Programmes that are responsive to the needs of communities and that enable individuals to find work, start businesses, and develop sustainable livelihoods and progress into other education institutions, will be offered in CET colleges. The focus on “community” implies that these colleges are located within communities, and that they will contribute to local needs and local development, building social agency and social cohesion. Links to communities will take several forms, including building relationships between CETCs and NGOs, CBOs, local government, and the local economy and labour markets. The CET colleges link directly with the work of public programmes to provide appropriate skills and knowledge. These programmes include the Expanded Public Works Programme (EPWP), Community Works Programmes (CWPs), the state’s infrastructure development programme,



and economic and social development initiatives such as the Community Development Workers (CDW) and Community Health Workers (CHW) programmes. Such programmes can provide work integrated learning opportunities while the colleges provide classroom and workshop-based learning. There is an important role for SETAs in facilitating such partnerships. The NDP further proposes that CET colleges should reach an additional 1 million learners by 2030. The National Skills Fund (NSF) will play a significant role in this institutional type as directed by the NSDP, targeting especially the unemployed and strengthening the capacity of this institutional type to deliver skills for socio-economic development.

**Key Words and phrases:** unemployed people; differentiated institutional type; responsive to the needs of communities; enable individuals to find work, develop sustainable livelihoods and progress into other education institutions; including building relationships between CETCs and NGOs, CBOs; roles for SETAs and NSF.

#### ***4.3.5.1 Support for TVET Colleges***

The challenge in this outcome is that it only focuses on public colleges and ignores the private colleges. The support to TVET Colleges, as per the performance indicators involves:

- SETA offices established and maintained in TVET colleges.
- Support to the development of numbers of Centres of Specialisation supported
- Support to TVET Lecturers who must be exposed to the industry through Skills Programmes
- Support to Managers to receive training on curriculum related studies
- Lecturers awarded Bursaries
- TVET colleges infrastructure development (equipment/ workshops) to be supported.

#### ***4.3.5.2 Support to the CET Colleges***

- Number of CET college lecturers awarded skills development programmes
- CET colleges' infrastructure development supported (equipment/ workshops/ Connectivity/ ICT)
- Number of Managers receiving training on curriculum related studies
- Number of CET learners accessing AET programmes

#### **Impact on Private Providers**

The greatest impact is to engage with the Department about the exclusion of private providers which offer programmes that are offered by public TVETs and CETs.

APPETD can support the private provider to re-open this discussion urgently. The impact is that private providers are also impacted by the negative effects of COVID-19 in terms of people

having lost their jobs, and companies drastically reducing their skills-development spend; and companies closing. This has an impact in every aspect of the life of private providers. Financial support from the Department, from SETAs and from the NSF are critical to private providers as well.

Private providers should calculate their actual contribution to the economy in terms of their staff complement (employment of people) their tax contribution - company tax and the taxes paid by employees) and the number of students who are receiving quality learning. Private providers contribute to the supply of knowledgeable, skilled and capable people to the “world of work”. Thousands of students do not gain access into public institutions, and find an excellent ‘home’ in private provision. All of these issues need to be considered in discussions with the department.

#### **4.3.6 Skills development support for entrepreneurship and cooperative development**

Small, Medium and Micro-sized Enterprises are a crucial part of South Africa’s economic growth. It is estimated that SMMEs contribute more than 30% to South Africa’s GDP. With regard to employment, SMMEs in South Africa absorb about 70% to 80% of the employed population but contribute less than 4% to export earnings, leaving a large margin for growth. High unemployment is compounded by low/no net job creation. Entrepreneurial perception and competencies in the adult population fall below the average for efficiency driven economies. The inability of the youth to engage in economic activity and find employment suggests that young people may not be receiving the necessary skills and work experience to drive the economy forward. This situation cannot be allowed to persist. The challenge of inculcating a culture and spirit of entrepreneurship and self-employment lies not only in making funding available but in developing the skills and competencies of the youth and potential entrepreneurs in general. It is recognised that entrepreneurship and cooperative development is less about obtaining formal occupational qualifications and more about applied, peer and mentored learning and support. Research suggests a demand for short, modular, competency-based training which reduces time and, hence, the opportunity cost of training; that skills needs are similar at each stage of a business life cycle; and that bespoke support produces better results than programmes with set curriculum and timeframes for later stage businesses. Support for the cooperatives can play an important role, not just in the margins, but in the mainstream of the South African economy. These vary from ‘stokvels’ to burial societies, and financial, trade and production cooperatives. There is compelling evidence of the success of cooperative models, particularly internationally. Cooperatives are intended to provide economic benefit through collaboration and economies of scale thereby reducing input, operational and distribution costs. Entrepreneurs that form and or join cooperatives, have similar needs to other businesses in terms of access to information, markets and finance. Skills levy institutions will actively support skills development needs of entrepreneurs and cooperatives within their sectors, with particular focus on the unemployed, youth, women and people with disabilities.

**Key words and phrases:** crucial to economic growth; adults and youth participate; inculcate a culture of entrepreneurship; applied, peer and mentored learning and support; short, modular, competency-based training; success of cooperative models; skills levy institutions support entrepreneurs.

#### ***4.3.6.1 Supporting entrepreneurs development and a sustainable SME***

In NSDS 11 the SETAs all had to have targets of the numbers of entrepreneurs they would “produce” based on the qualification registered on the NQF, by the Services SETA. This initiative had mixed success; mainly because very few providers were accredited to provide the qualification, and becoming an entrepreneur with a sustainable small or micro business was much more difficult than what was envisaged. SETAs were required to pay for the training of a number of students; and then these students had to develop a small or micro business and still be successful after 12 months. This is a huge task, and is actually a process that requires single focus of dedicated people to train, support and guide the growth of a sustainable entrepreneurial venture or SME. In NSDS 2 this objective was one of many, and received diluted focus in the SETA. With only one or two providers which were ready to do the training, many people could not access the training. The lessons learnt have underpinned the NSDP outcome.

#### ***4.3.6.2 NSDP focus***

The focus on NSDP is on skills development support and training support. This is a positive departure from NSDS 2, in which the establishment of the SME and its sustainability after 12 months was part of the performance indicator.

NSDP has a focus on inculcating a culture of entrepreneurship, rather than establishing a small or micro enterprise. This is achievable if there are part qualifications and qualifications registered on the NQF. People of all ages are included in this outcome and this is helpful as well.

#### ***4.3.6.3 Design of the learning programme***

The focus is on short, modular learning programmes. The NQF Act allows for part qualifications to be developed and registered as part of qualifications. This helps to provide short learning programmes and build up to achieving the qualification after a while.

### **Impact on Private Providers**

Private providers are ideally placed and positioned to deliver short, modular, capacity-building programmes and short learning programmes. Many private providers offer the qualification and/or part qualification already, so this outcome can be “embraced” by private providers as opportunities to train people who are entrepreneurs and to guide them towards successful business development. Numbers of private providers are entrepreneurs themselves and have built business of all sizes and scopes.

Funding support from SETAs, the NSF and other sources does not seem to be only for public providers.

#### **4.3.7 Encourage and support worker initiated training**

Trade unions and their education programmes, as well as other worker-initiated training programmes, play an important role in the skilling of workers in broader sector policy and capacity to effectively engage in the workplace and broader economy. Trade unions and worker education and training initiatives are able to use the critical networks of their organisations (e.g. shop stewards and union officials) to educate their members and other workers to suit their needs in a manner that is also beneficial to the economy as a whole. South Africa has a long history of worker education and training that needs to be supported and expanded. Worker-initiated education and training can contribute to a workforce that is better able to understand the challenges facing the economic sectors in which they operate. Skills levy institutions will play a crucial role in supporting and encouraging worker training initiatives. This will benefit the workplace, our economy, as well as the developmental objectives of our country.

**Key words or phrases:** Trade Unions; education programmes; Worker-initiated training; workplace engagement; supported through the relevant skills training interventions

##### ***4.3.7.1 Trade Union and Worker-initiated training***

The Trade union movement in South Africa is vibrant and active. The training of trade union members, to become shop stewards, and to become branch leaders etc. takes place through the initiatives of the trade union leadership itself or through workers' initiatives to be trained in areas of governance, fiduciary responsibility, policy development, policy understanding, legislation, and labour law. In recent years there has been a move from the worker training providers to become accredited by the QCs, and to have their training that was offered in the past evaluated in RPL assessments, to award the workers who underwent the training credits for what they learnt.

The training of workers through an institution such as Workers' College enjoyed funding for SETAs and the NSF in the past. The NSDP outcome formalises this arrangement through direct finding from skills development institutions such as SETAs and the NSF.

##### ***4.3.7.2 Current providers of Worker education***

There are very few providers which provide worker training and education. Most of the training comprises short courses, and not for credit courses. The providers are mainly private providers, or the training departments of the trade union which have been established as a type of third stream revenue education and training organisation to provide worker training to the trade union. The Workers' College is one of the providers which does worker training. Workers' College initiated discussions with the DHET and the QCTO to have their training programmes accredited and to be accredited to offer qualifications.

### **Impact on Private Providers**

The Workers' College is a private provider. Private Providers could engage with trade Unions and Trade Union Federations to initiate discussions about how they can establish partnerships. The provision of numbers of CPD courses, part qualifications and qualifications are within the scope of what private providers do. Private providers can partner with Trade Unions and Federations to approach SETAs and NSF for funding for joint worker initiated training.

### **4.3.8 Support career development services**

Career development is a key component of the NSDP. For each and every person being able to embrace their full potential, career development is vital. Our entire skills development system must dedicate the required resources to support career and vocational guidance as this has proved to be a critical component in successful skills development initiatives world-wide. Both the SETAs and the NSF respectively must seek to build career guidance initiatives in their sectors and generally as a key component of the NSDP. The preamble to South Africa's Constitution notes the importance of 'freeing the potential of each person' whilst the NDP talks about the need for every individual to 'embrace their potential'. This embracing and freeing up of potential is critical to the nations' socio-economic development. Career development services, therefore, do not just aim to provide quality career and study related information and counselling services, but also to contribute to the larger goal of assisting our people to 'embrace' and 'fulfil their potential'. One of the most important milestones in someone's life is to make a career choice. The decision someone makes will have a significant impact on the rest of his or her personal and professional life. There has been limited emphasis, particularly at a school level, on career and vocational guidance for our youth. The result is that young people in particular may opt for a programme because it is marketed or there is financial aid. There is a lack of guidance to direct young people to programmes for which they have an aptitude, and which will provide training in areas needed in the economy. The OECD (2017) Report: Getting Skills Right in South Africa, calls for the provision of tailor made career advice services to students early on, based on better skills needs information.

**Key words and phrases:** Key component of the NSDP; Vital; dedicate resources; embrace their potential; larger goal of assisting people to embrace and fulfil their potential; lack of guidance; tailor-made career advice services.

#### ***4.3.8.1 Importance of career development***

The NSDP emphasises the importance of career development services by stating it is a key component of the NSDP. The key performance indicators require the following:

- Career Development Events to be held in urban areas on occupations in high demand;

- Career Development Events to be held in rural areas on occupations in high demand;
- Career Development Practitioners to be trained;
- Capacity building workshops on Career Development Services to be initiated;
- Career development services (including material) must be accessible to all, especially in rural areas and targeted beneficiaries.

### **Impact on Private Providers**

In each of the areas highlighted above, private providers can play a role. Private providers must use their prospectuses to provide career development and career guidance. It is important to build on the sound relationships with schools that exist.

Workshop activity

Develop a brief Political, Economic, Social, Technological, Environmental and Legislative (PESTEL) analysis, superimposed on Strength, Weakness, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT)

#### 4.3.9 PESTEL Analysis of Private Provision

	STRENGTH	WEAKNESS	OPPORTUNITY	THREAT
POLITICAL				
ECONOMIC				
SOCIAL				
TECHNOLOGICAL				
ENVIRONMENTAL				
LEGISLATIVE				

### **SECTION 3: THEORY OF CHANGE**

This section is covered in the workshop, and also post-workshop by the provider. Feedback on the achievement of the outcomes will be provided as part of the final research report.



## 5. THEORY OF CHANGE

### 5.1 Definition of Theory of Change (ToC)

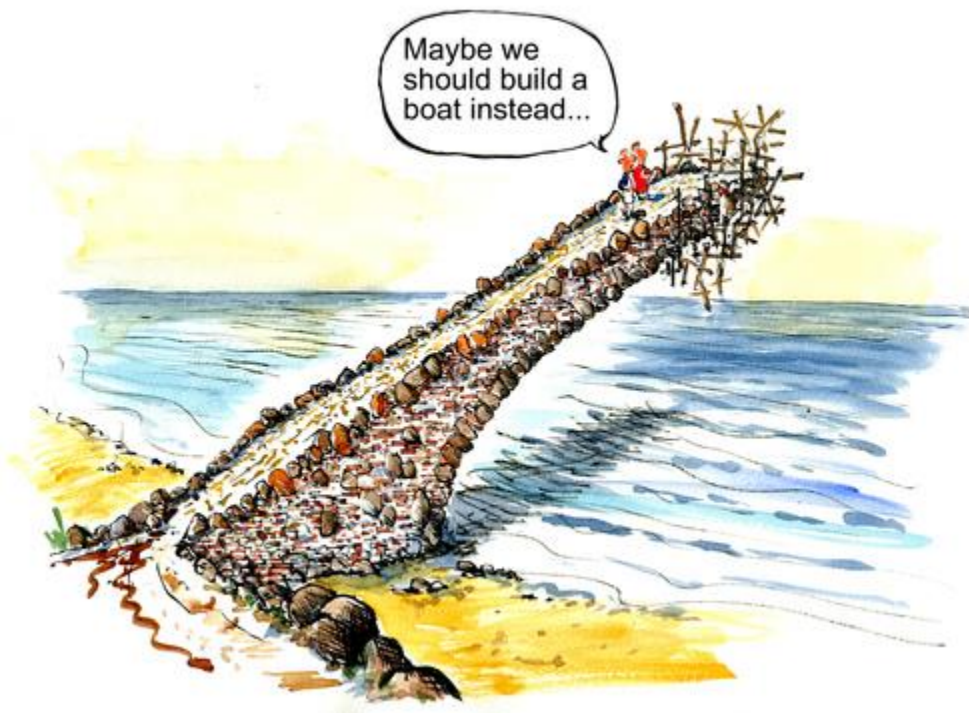
ToC approaches are used to assist organisations and institutions to understand significant change, and to position themselves through a well-thought through reframing process to make sense of the change and what they need to do to align themselves with the change. People in organisations need to envision how to make sense of and to navigate the complex environment in which the programme is operating shaped by the norms, values, experience and beliefs of the people who create it. It is therefore important to involve different stakeholders; to be sure different perspectives are captured in the ToC. Designing a ToC together will:

- Lead to a common understanding of how change occurs
- Create awareness on different norms and values between stakeholders
- Generate co-ownership of the ‘programme’
- Help to decide on the scope of the ‘programme’
- Support decision-making on what interventions should be pursued to achieve the biggest impact by whom
- Expose gaps in your activities or show you where there is an overlap with the activities of other actors or programmes.

ToC is essentially a comprehensive description and illustration of how and why a desired change is expected to happen in a particular context. It is focused in particular on mapping out or “filling in” what has been described as the “missing middle” between what a programme or change initiative does (its activities or interventions) and how these lead to desired goals being achieved. It does this by first identifying the desired long-term goals and then works back from these to identify all the conditions (outcomes) that must be in place (and how these are related to one another causally) for the goals to occur. These are all mapped out in an Outcomes Framework.

The Outcomes Framework then provides the basis for identifying what type of activity or intervention will lead to the outcomes identified as preconditions for achieving the long-term goal. Through this approach the precise link between activities and the achievement of the long-term goals are more fully understood. This leads to better planning, in that activities are linked to a detailed understanding of how change actually happens. It also leads to better evaluation, as it is possible to measure progress towards the achievement of longer-term goals that go beyond the identification of program outputs. A sound ToC draws on a range of evidence – previous similar projects and programmes, previous research and evaluation, the mental models of stakeholders

(including planners, managers and staff, partner organizations, and intended beneficiaries), and observation of the programme and patterns in outcomes and impacts. It is important to ensure that the process is adequately inclusive of relevant perspectives, values and evidence. If the ToC has only used a group meeting to build it, it is likely that some more systematic analysis and review of relevant research and evaluation will improve its quality



A ToC is a description of why a particular way of working will be effective, showing how change happens in the short, medium and long term to achieve the intended impact. It can be represented in a visual diagram, as a narrative, or both.

A ToC can be developed at the beginning of a piece of work (to help with strategic planning), or to describe an existing piece of work (so you can evaluate it). It is particularly helpful if you are planning or evaluating a complex, initiative but can also be used for more straightforward projects.

## **5.2 Uses of a ToC:**

A ToC is a flexible methodology with a wide range of uses to underpin planning and evaluation throughout an organisation.

### **5.2.1 ToC for planning new work**

Increasingly we use ToC to help people plan interventions. By plotting out your theory you expose any weaknesses in your thinking.

Some weaknesses can be ameliorated, for example by getting other stakeholders involved in creating change, or undertaking additional activities to increase the likelihood of change taking place. Risks can also be closely monitored once you identify them. However other weaknesses may prove so critical you need to rethink your entire intervention plans.

In contrast to using ToC to *describe* a project ready for evaluation, in this case we use a *creative* approach to building theory. By focusing on the change you want to see – rather than the activities – you open up the conversation. What is the best way to achieve that change? Who needs to be involved?

### 5.2.2 ToC for strategy

ToC methods and thinking can be used in strategy work. The ToC becomes the guiding framework for what we (or clients) want to see changed in operations, activities, models of provision and delivery etc. Through a ToC an institution can develop their next five-year strategic plan, which fleshes out the details and makes it relevant to the current context; below this there may be operational or business plans.

In strategy work, much as spoken about aligning your ToC – as a long-term articulation of your work and its intended goals – with a detailed strategy rooted in your organisational resources, expertise, legitimacy and priorities within a specific time frame. In traditional strategy processes, the ToC is the answer to the ‘What’s your vision?’ question. We need to get past the often-woolly vision statement – and a ToC can provide the rigour to explore this in detail.

### 5.2.3 Process to do a Theory of Change

It is helpful to involve a variety of stakeholders when you develop a ToC – you could include staff, trustees, beneficiaries, partners and funders. The development process, and the thinking involved, is often as important as the diagram or narrative you produce.

A theory of change should be:

- **credible** – based on previous experience and insight from your different stakeholders or relevant research where appropriate
- **achievable** – you have the necessary resources to carry out the intervention
- **supported** – your stakeholders will be involved in defining and agreeing your theory of change, which builds support for it
- **testable** – a complete but not over-complicated description of your work and its outcomes, with prioritised outcomes for measurement and [indicators](#) to collect data against them.

**An example** provided in this **How To** is based on a [hypothetical theory of change](#) for a youth unemployment project to guide you.

### **5.2.3.1 Plan your process**

Begin by deciding **the purpose** of your theory of change: are you using it to plan new work or is it a description of work that you are already doing? Will you be using it for evaluation? Who will be using it most and how? The purpose of your theory will affect the process you use and who you involve.

Once you are clear about the purpose of your theory of change, think about who you want to involve in the process and why.

If you are using your theory of change to **plan new work** you will need to involve key decision makers in your organisation. You may also want to include other groups, such as your wider staff group, beneficiaries and informed external stakeholders – make sure you’ve thought in advance about how open you are to new ideas and ways of working that they may suggest.

If your theory is **describing existing work**, you will probably want to involve people with experience of your intervention (for example, frontline staff and beneficiaries) in the development process.

You also need to think about:

- how much time you have to commit to the process
- how much of the process you want to run face-to-face (for example, through workshops or meetings) and how much you want to consult on documents
- whether you want to involve an external consultant.

If you and your colleagues don’t have expertise in ToC and facilitation, it may be helpful to involve an external consultant. Using a consultant also means that all staff can participate in theory of change development workshops (rather than facilitating them). A consultant can also bring a helpful external perspective, although they may need briefing and support to understand your organisation’s work.

### **4.2.3.2 Collect evidence of need and context**

To be credible, a theory of change should be rooted in a clear understanding of the issue you want to address. If you’re developing a theory to plan new work, you’ll need to collect three main types of evidence to help you:

- **evidence of need.** This helps you to understand why your intervention is needed and the specific requirements of your beneficiaries.
- **evidence of context.** This might include an analysis of other service providers and support available to your beneficiaries, or of other internal and external factors that could affect your work.
- **evidence of the effectiveness** of other interventions seeking to bring about your intended outcomes (these could be ones you have tried before, or interventions others have run). This may

help you to decide on a particular way of working that's most likely to bring about the type of changes you want to see.

Evidence may be found in academic literature, reports from your own or other organisations, and the expertise and experience of key stakeholders. If this evidence doesn't already exist, you may need to [collect it yourself](#), as a first step in your theory of change development.

As far as possible, it's helpful to collect and share evidence before bringing people together to develop the theory of change; this will make your theory of change work more effective.

#### **4.2.3.3 Agree your intended impact**

The **main issue** you are addressing with your work should be reflected in its ultimate resolution – this is your intended [impact](#). Your impact is the starting point for your theory of change, the goal towards which everything is directed. Your **impact statement** should clearly describe the broad or long-term difference you want to see happen.

If you have good insights into the needs of your beneficiaries (see step 2), you will be better placed to develop an impact statement that is reflective of what they want to change in their lives and/or in the wider system.

You may also want to think about how your impact statement fits in with local strategic priorities or funding programmes, so that you can place your work in a wider context. This could involve looking for relevant research or identifying connections between your work and those broader priorities.

#### **Example**

The intended impact might be a 'reduction in youth unemployment in the local area'.

#### **4.2.3.4 Articulate your long-term outcomes**

Next, work backwards from your impact to think about the changes that need to happen in order to achieve it. These are sometimes called 'necessary pre-conditions' – in other words, things that need to change before your long-term impact can happen. You may be able to identify these by thinking about the causes of the main issue you are trying to address with your work.

In the example, the main [long-term outcome](#) that needs to be achieved before the impact of a reduction in youth unemployment is that young people need to get sustainable jobs which they then stay in. This is a relatively simple theory of change with just one target group. If you have more than one target group, you may have a long-term outcome for each group. Try to have **no more than about four long-term outcomes** – beyond this, your theory can become too complex.

As you develop your long-term outcomes, it may be helpful to think about the different areas in which change could occur. Changes for individuals might be in their:

- situation (e.g. housing, employment)
- wellbeing (e.g. mental or physical health)
- behaviour (e.g. involvement in crime, drug use)
- attitudes and feelings (e.g. how people feel about themselves or others)
- skills and abilities (e.g. communication skills or ability to work under pressure)
- relationships (e.g. with peers, family or at work)

Other changes might be seen in:

- policy (e.g. changes in immigration law)
- environment (e.g. better access to green spaces)
- services (e.g. new services or services delivered in different ways)
- ways of working (e.g. new partnerships developed)
- social norms (e.g. knowledge, attitudes, values or behaviours).

### **Example**

In order to reduce youth unemployment, young people will need to:

- get sustainable jobs
- remain in their jobs.

#### **4.2.3.5 Map your intermediate outcomes backwards**

Next, work backwards and plot the preceding stages in much greater detail. You will need to consider what changes need to happen before your long-term outcomes can occur.

### **Example**

To achieve our long-term outcome ‘young people get sustainable jobs’, young people will need to:

- increase their job-specific skills and experience
- become more work-ready
- become more motivated to work.

There will also be other changes that need to occur before these outcomes can come about. For example, for young people to become more motivated to work, they need to have an increased awareness of the benefits of working and a greater interest in working.

Once you have defined your outcomes, you can show the order in which they will occur. For each outcome, think about what change will be needed before it can happen, and if and how it relates to other changes.

It is generally best to work backwards. However, if you are describing an intervention that already exists, it is possible to combine working backwards from the impact and working forwards from the work you already do.

#### **4.2.3.6 Identify outputs**

You are now ready to start thinking about what outputs (products, services or facilities) will help you to bring about the outcomes you have identified.

For a **new piece of work**, this will involve thinking creatively about the outputs that will be most effective in bringing about your desired outcomes, and when they are best delivered. To help with this, you could consider the outcomes you hope will occur through your work, and then review external research to see what kinds of outputs have brought about these outcomes in the past (see more in step 2).

If you are creating a theory of change **for an existing project**, plot your existing activities and outputs. This is a good chance to discuss how well outputs are delivering your anticipated outcomes and may lead to some revision of what you do, and how you do it. At this point, it is also helpful to explore which outcomes your work directly contributes to, and which ones are beyond the scope of your work. If you are using your theory of change for evaluation, this step is essential to ensure you evaluate the right things.

Remember that some outputs will involve collaboration with other agencies and some outcomes may only be achieved if other services are also involved in some way, so these contact points or joint activities will need to be charted as part of your theory.

#### **Example**

We might identify that, in order to increase young people's understanding of what being in work means (the outcome), we will need to run a series of talks from employers and employed young people (the outputs).

#### **4.2.3.7 Clarify assumptions**

Any theory of change is rooted in assumptions. Assumptions are the conditions that need to be in place to make the theory work; they explain the logic behind the overall programme and behind the causal links (for example, showing that an output will lead to an outcome, or that one outcome will lead to another) in the theory.

Assumptions are usually unstated – we may think they are so obvious that we don't need to mention them. However, exploring assumptions is important: they can affect how successful an intervention is and may need to shape how you deliver your intervention or be tested out in your evaluation – or both.

Assumptions can be about:

- the links between inputs and outputs, outputs and outcomes, and outcomes and impact
- the links from one outcome to the next

- the quality and reach of your intervention
- the roles played by other actors
- the overall project rationale.

Once you have plotted out your theory of change (steps 2 to 6 above), you can reflect on the assumptions that underpin it. As well as considering the bullet points above, you could ask ‘what beliefs, values and perspectives have shaped our theory of change?’

As you identify assumptions, consider which are critical – that is, those on which your theory rests, and which may derail your project if they turn out to be false. If, when using theory of change for planning a new piece of work, you identify very significant critical assumptions underlying that work, you may need to rethink your plans – or at least have risk mitigation plans in place.

If you are using theory of change for evaluation, you will need to monitor critical assumptions carefully and test them through evaluation. Gathering early evidence about these may be important to ensure your work stays on track.

Articulating other, less critical, assumptions may help you to:

- identify things you could do to increase the chances of the theory working
- identify other organisations or stakeholders you could work with
- clarify roles and responsibilities of those involved in delivering your intervention.

For all assumptions (critical and others) consider if there is existing evidence to support them – you might find this in academic literature, reports from your organisation or others and in the expertise and experience of key stakeholders. For planning purposes, understanding the existing evidence base may help you decide if your intended way of working is likely to be effective. For evaluation, it can be helpful to focus your data collection on areas where there is little or no existing evidence to build your understanding of what works and in what context.

If you are testing a new way of working, there won’t be evidence to gather before you start delivering your intervention. In this case, make sure you plan data collection carefully so you can build up your own evidence base.

### **Example**

Our assumptions in our hypothetical case study include the following:

- the target group of young people will respond to outreach and engage with the project.
- Young people will have sufficiently stable lives to engage productively.
- Families will get involved and be supportive.
- The model of peer support will be inspirational.
- One-to-one work will build confidence and increase learning.
- Work experience will provide appropriate skills to match available jobs.



- There are sufficient jobs for the young people.
- Available jobs will be permanent positions.

#### **4.2.3.8 Establish timelines and plan resources**

Write in timelines in your accompanying notes for when you expect to see the activities and outputs happen. This should shape stakeholder expectations of what can be achieved through your intervention. It will also help you plan when to collect data.

If you think through the work associated with the delivery of your outputs, this will help you to plan the resources you will need and to set a budget for the intervention. Remember to bring to the surface assumptions about the amount of staff and volunteer time that will be needed or about the level of skills that will be necessary and available to you for delivering the intervention. When you evaluate, one question to consider may be whether appropriate resources were planned and delivered.

#### **4.2.3.9 Produce your diagram and narrative**

As you develop your theory of change you will need to make it available in a useful format. Most people find a diagram or map helpful. [We've reviewed some of the software options for creating one.](#)

It's also helpful to write up a narrative theory of change as a more comprehensive description of the theory, as diagrams can be difficult to understand on their own (especially for people not involved in developing them, or a long time after you created them). Your narrative should include:

- a description of **the process** by which the theory of change was developed (and who was involved, and how)
- a description of the **intended impact**
- a summary of the **need and context** for the intervention
- a description of the **outcomes leading up to the impact**
- a description of **outputs** – how your work will bring your intended outcomes about (you could mention inputs – human, material or financial resources – here too)
- a description of how you will work with **other actors**
- a reference to **timelines** – when you think things will happen
- a description of **critical assumptions**, and how you will measure them
- a link to your [monitoring and evaluation framework](#), if there is one

#### Workshop work project 1

Do a basic ToC exercise yourself or with your colleagues in your institution. Focus on the following mainly, but the ToC example above can guide you as well:

Where are we now?

If we do nothing about where we are now, what will happen?

What issues are core change drivers?

Where do we want to be in terms of the NSDP?

What are we going to do, to get where we want to be in terms of the NSDP?

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