

FP&M SETA–SACPO Collaboration Framework 2016–19

Research Study:

Information-gathering to support the Fibre Processing and Manufacturing (FP&M) Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) in building strategic and innovative partnerships with TVET Colleges

Summary Report

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July 2017

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INTRODUCTION

Report context and focus

In alignment with the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) III, the Fibre Processing and Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority (FP&M SETA) and the South African College Principals' Organisation (SACPO) Collaboration Framework emphasise the fundamental role of both TVET colleges and the FP&M SETA in contributing to national economic development and growth through regionalised skills development programmes that will stimulate opportunities for job creation and poverty reduction (NSDS III Objective 4.3). The mechanism viewed as optimum for achieving this objective is sector-wide strategic partnerships that include all relevant stakeholders, social partners and role players. TVET college–FP&M SETA collaborative partnerships are intended to play a central role in bringing about the envisaged changes.

Accordingly, the FP&M SETA in collaboration with SACPO commissioned a research project, the overall purpose of which is to gather and synthesise specified information as the basis on which the FP&MSETA can devise its strategic approach to TVET college partnerships support.

The framework (“Proposal 1”) for directing information gathering or “profiling” comprised two main focus areas, as follows:

- 1) Geographic area-specific (provincial, regional and local) information about:
 - economic growth and development strategic priorities and plans (sectoral)
 - extent to which one or more of the FP&M SETA sub-sectors are active employers in the region
 - TVET college representation
 - each college’s programmes qualifications mix (PQM), FP&M SETA-related in particular; current FP&MSETA accreditation status; as well as linkages and partnerships (in relation to industry, local government and community enterprises)
- 2) College capacity to support teaching and learning with regard to:
 - lecturer capability with regard to qualifications, knowledge and skill and associated professional development needs
 - workplace placement opportunities for students and lecturers

As the research project essentially represents a pilot study, it was decided to limit the sample to twelve (12) TVET colleges distributed across four provinces – Gauteng, KwaZulu-Natal, Mpumalanga and the Western Cape. The four-province focus was decided on following an initial geographical mapping of FP&M sector activity or presence, which indicated significantly

higher occurrence rates of FP&M (sub-) sector activity and, by extension, employer presence in these provinces compared to the rest (five). College selection occurred correspondingly.

Report structure

With regard to the report's organisation, it is a report in Two Parts.

PART ONE comprises the Overall Report in which findings are presented as synthesised and interpreted from the primary and secondary data contained in the College Profiles (see below under Part Two).

Section One contains Specific Findings in relation to the following four themes:

- i) Spatial distribution of FP&M sector activity (four provinces related regions) and (geographically) aligned TVET college presence as well as their respective current FP&M SETA programme offerings and accreditation status
- ii) Established college practices pertaining to PQM planning and implementation; and the implications thereof for PQM alignment to (dominant or prioritised) sectoral activity and skills development needs in a region.
- iii) College capacity to support teaching and learning, with the focus on teacher qualifications and capability (with regard to required knowledge and skill) and the effectiveness of established placement practices
- iv) Respondent views on priority college capacity-related areas in relation to which SETA support should be extended – with reference to current challenges and constraints being experienced with regard to occupational and workplace programme provision.

NOTE: Only in Section One do findings speak directly to the FP&M SETA – in the subsequent sections, whilst findings specifically have a bearing on the FP&M SETA with regard to their implications (for support), so do they also in relation to all other SETAs; that is, in a 'SETA-generic way'.

Sections Two to Four respectively contain Overall Findings, Overall Recommendations and Overall Conclusion.

PART TWO of the report contains Comprehensive College Profiles (twelve) by way of Appendices; that is, descriptive data (primary and secondary) organised in relation to the four focus areas noted in relation to Section One above.

FINDINGS

Specific Findings

Theme 1: (FP&MSETA-specific)

Spatial (regional) distribution of FP&M sector activity and aligned TVET college programme offerings

SPECIFIC FINDING 1:

Limited (current) scope of FP&M SETA programmes at TVETCs

FP&M SETA programme provision by public TVET colleges at this time is extremely limited. KwaZulu-Natal colleges contribute the highest number of programmes offerings by a significant margin and are set to increase this contribution significantly in the immediate future.

Theme 2:

PQM planning (and alignment) and implementation-related aspects and their implications

2.1 Obtaining economic and strategic intelligence as basis for PQM development

SPECIFIC FINDING 2:

Colleges generally only possess 'broad awareness' of economic sector activity & skills development needs/ priorities

Whilst (sample) colleges across the board appear broadly aware of dominant sector-specific activity/ employment trends and associated skills development needs and opportunities in their respective regions – and, relatedly, of national, regional and local government economic growth and development (sectoral) strategic priorities, plans and programmes/ activities – such strategic awareness/ economic intelligence appear to primarily operate at the 'macro' level' and therefore does not necessarily direct or influence "responsive" (occupational) programme planning in a direct, immediate way at 'micro' level.

SPECIFIC FINDING 3:

Reactive occupational programme planning & implementation

Occupational and skills programme planning and delivery in (deliberate) response to needs/ demand established through stakeholder identification and engagement at both regional level and local or 'micro' level (in support of local economic growth and development or LED) only

occurs on a limited basis (across sampled colleges) – restricted to those that have established the required fit-for-purpose (formal) research capacity.

2.2 Impact of current funding model on Occupational PQM planning

SPECIFIC FINDING 4:

In essence, concerns around funding availability / the promise of guaranteed funding ultimately emerge as the overriding consideration in decision making about occupational PQM makeup in any one year

Simply put, reported “non-negotiable” compliance with sustainable (“for-profit”) provision requirements, as dictated in terms of the self-funding dispensation or model that governs occupational programme provision, is having the effect of colleges, first and foremost seek out and apply for relatively easily-obtainable funding from public sector sources – the National Skills Fund (guaranteed funding for a period of three years), SETAs as well as government departments.

Correspondingly, the collective scope of provision associated with such funding therefore to a large extent shapes college’s occupational PQM makeup in any one year – that is, in contrast to ‘micro-level’ needs-orientated and sector-promoting programme planning.

2.3 Occupational PQM implementation

SPECIFIC FINDING 5:

Varied modes of programme delivery being adopted (internal vs external)

Seven of the 12 sampled colleges predominantly adhere to an internal provision mode, with three colleges relying on (exclusively) outsourced provision and two colleges using a combination of internal and outsourced delivery – with financial, human resource and infrastructure constraints the key factors contributing to the use of external providers.

Theme 3:

Institutional capacity to support teaching and learning

3.1 Lecturer capability

- **Qualifications profile of teachers**

SPECIFIC FINDING 6:

The majority of staff members, academic and occupational, are qualified to teach the content knowledge of programmes, but do not have sufficient professional teaching qualifications and workplace knowledge/ experience.

- **ETDP capacity of lecturers (and development needs)**

SPECIFIC FINDING 7:

Limited workplace/ trade knowledge and practical experience

Workplace/ trade knowledge and practical experience represent the most pressing knowledge dimension shortcoming among lecturers.

SPECIFIC FINDING 8:

Insufficient learner assessment proficiency

A significant number of teachers lack sufficient proficiency in learner assessment and, accordingly, find the setting of assessment tasks in strict alignment with curriculum requirements or prescriptions problematical.

SPECIFIC FINDING 9:

Insufficient learner assessment proficiency

The provision of specialised staff to facilitate higher level programmes problematical (“and requires SETA support”).

SPECIFIC FINDING 10:

A well-functioning QMS indispensable for ensuring quality teaching and learning

A well-established and functioning Quality Management System is an essential requirement for ensuring sustained quality teaching and learning.

1.3.2 Placement capability

- **Students**

SPECIFIC FINDING 11:

Limited work-integrated-learning (WIL) opportunities

The placement of students in the workplace poses a variety of challenges which often deny students the opportunity to gain workplace exposure and work-integrated-learning. These include: a) lack of a fulltime, dedicated WIL/WBE structure or system; b) indemnity of students at host employers; and c) financial constraints (stipends, travel allowance etc.)

SPECIFIC FINDING 12:

Unreliable work placement

Systemic shortcomings prohibit successful job placement and tracking of graduates (exit support).

- **Lecturers**

SPECIFIC FINDING 13:

Insufficient lecturer upskilling support

Colleges are in great need of placement opportunities for lecturers to obtain workplace exposure and practical knowledge. Challenges posed include funding for: travel; accommodation; stipends and temporary replacement lecturers.

Theme 4:

Respondent views on SETA support to colleges

SPECIFIC FINDING 14:

Resistance to buy-in and commitment by employers in respect of learnership agreements and workplace access

- *Companies they don't have time for all the paperwork involved nor can they afford the interruption to production that comes with teaching students.*
- *As host employers companies and businesses are liable should injuries to students occur at the workplace, they do not want to sign indemnity agreements for the reason they do not carry Workman's Compensation for students.*

SPECIFIC FINDING 15:

SETAs should facilitate / initiate collaborative partnerships between colleges and workplaces/ employers

This can be achieved by:

- Providing in-service training opportunities for staff (up-skilling)
- SETAs to facilitate a supportive link with employers
- SETAs to make available a Workplace Skills Plans of companies.
- Provide a list of SETA clients for colleges
- SETAs must promote buy-in from companies acting as intermediaries between training providers and workplaces

- SETAs to facilitate the establishment of regional and provincial TVET / Skills Development Forums as college support mechanism

SPECIFIC FINDING 16:

SETA funding to be reviewed and extended:

a) Funding support too limited in scope and therefore does not address capacity requirements for sustainable occupational programme provision in a holistic manner

Specific areas identified in respect of which SETA funding support is advised relate to:

- funding for infrastructure development as opposed to only focusing on programme funding (learnerships and skills programmes) – given the fact that workshop and equipment availability cannot accommodate multi-programme (ministerial and occupational) practical training needs/ requirements
- funding of materials development courses and provision of quality learner materials to colleges free of charge
- employing contract staff
- up-skilling/ capacity development of lecturers to deliver new qualifications
- developing courses for occupational unit personnel and (ii) leadership and management
- training of mentors and coaches (experienced artisans are not always available)
- funding provision for WIL programmes and placement officers
- staff placement in business and industry with regard to monetary incentives, hiring of replacement staff, and accommodation & travel
- funding of student stipends and travel allowances
- established Career Resource Centres for students which may also support lecturers' guidance on careers
- collaborating with colleges to establish a sustainable funding model in support of occupational programme delivery

b) A disconnect between SETAs and colleges in respect of training planning and funding, with particular reference to

- SETA (discretionary) funding “dictates” college trainings – i.e. invariably overriding established college skills development focus areas
- SETA funding turn-around time takes too long with the result that the need/ relevance of planned trainings invariable had expired by the time monies are received

SPECIFIC FINDING 17:

Accreditation and verification-related aspects need attention/ resolution:

- *The accreditation process takes too long and should be fast-tracked*
- *SETA financial and material support required for equipping / upgrading training facilities*
- *Centralised (Johannesburg-based) accreditation of assessors problematical for rural colleges*
- *SETAs should conduct Continuous External Verification – i.e. as opposed to it only occurring at programme completion (... “resulting in backlogs in student certification”)*

SPECIFIC FINDING 18:

SETA visibility and engagement with colleges to be addressed:

- *Lack of ‘SETA-familiarity’ on part of college management compromises college capacity and status as provider*
- *Lack of continuous, issue-driven engagement between colleges and SETAs*
- *SETAs lacking a human face – personal contact / relationship with an appropriate SETA official invariably not possible*

SPECIFIC FINDING 19:

SETAs ideally placed to facilitate regional and provincial structures for collaborative engagement

- *SETAs to facilitate the establishment of regional and provincial TVET/Skills development Forums to support colleges*
- *Inclusive stakeholder forums (SETAs, TVET Colleges, companies etc.) to meet regularly to share data*

Overall Findings

SYNOPSIS 1:

There is an overwhelming appreciation of the need for an all-inclusive/ cross-sectoral partnerships-approach to TVET and skills development. This general lack of dynamic and sustained linkages and collaborative partnerships represents the most critical constraint to colleges performing their strategically-mandated role and responsibilities as agents for economic growth and development, and by extension, poverty reduction.

MAIN RECOMMENDATION:

SETAs need to facilitate such collaborative partnerships by identifying companies and encouraging/ mediating industry and business buy-in.

SYNOPSIS 2:

Funding-related aspects in combination with partnership-limitations conspire to significantly inhibit college capacity for dynamic and responsive occupational programme provision.

MAIN RECOMMENDATION:

SETAs need to provide colleges with support in the following major areas:

- a “sustainable” funding model
- research capability to inform programme planning, with particular reference to “micro-level” needs assessment
- infrastructure/ facility capacity (and accreditation) to accommodate simultaneous (integrated) multi-programme delivery;
- programme resources (material development)
- lecturer capability, with particular reference to lacking requisite industry/ practical knowledge as well as (to a lesser degree?) pedagogical knowledge and expertise
- participation in regional and provincial TVET/ skills development (multi-stakeholder) forums
- (guidance and expertise-sharing)