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Rhodes University Research Chair Partnership Initiative for  
**M&E in a SETA Environment**

**Overall Framework**  
**DRAFT FOR COMMENT**

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## Glossary of Terms

<b>Evaluation</b>	Judgement of the performance of planned, ongoing or completed programmes or interventions, through systematic study. It addresses issues of contribution or causality, and analyses why intended outcomes were or were not achieved.
<b>Goal</b>	The higher-order objective to which a policy, programme or intervention (hereafter programme) is intended to contribute.
<b>Impact</b>	The results of achieving specific outcomes, which may exceed the sum of the total, and may be unintended and negative. Examples include the impact of training on income levels and employment. Impact could also refer to changes in a situation that a programme brings about.
<b>Indicator</b>	A measure designed to reflect the performance of a programme. It is a quantitative or qualitative factor that provides a simple and reliable means to assess achievement, to reflect the desired changes connected to the programme, or assess performance.
<b>Logical framework (Logframe)</b>	Management tool used to improve the design of programmes and projects. It involves identifying strategic elements (inputs, activities, outputs, intended outcomes and impact) and their causal relationships, indicators, and the assumptions or risks that may influence success and failure. In complex systems logical frameworks are often replaced by non-linear theories of change reflecting multiple pathways to impact.
<b>Monitoring</b>	Monitoring refers to the systematic collection, recording and reporting of information in order to track progress towards the achievement of objectives, and to identify the need for, and undertake corrective action.
<b>Outcomes</b>	Outcomes are “what we wish to achieve”. Initial or immediate outcomes may be the results of inputs, while intermediate or medium and long-term outcomes result from interactions between earlier outcomes and context. Outcomes are specified in terms of the effect the programme is expected to have on beneficiaries or contexts.
<b>Outputs</b>	The tangible products that result from a programme and usually precede outcomes; may also include changes resulting from the programme which are relevant to the achievement of outcomes. Examples include new courses or materials produced or qualifications achieved.
<b>Performance</b>	The degree to which a unit, department or partner operates according to specific criteria/ standards/ guidelines or achieves results in accordance with stated goals or plans.
<b>Performance indicator</b>	A variable that allows the verification of desired changes or shows results relative to what was planned.
<b>Performance measurement</b>	A system for assessing performance of programmes or role players against stated goals.
<b>Theory of Change</b>	A tool that describes a process of planned change, from the assumptions that guide its design, the planned outputs and outcomes and the relationships between them, to the long-term impacts it seeks to achieve. It is useful for identifying indicators of progress and impact.

Table 1: Definitions adapted from DHET National Plan for Post-school Education and Training 2019-2030 (Draft)

# Section 1: Introduction and Background

## Purpose and Process

Internationally and nationally, there is a strong belief that monitoring and evaluation can and must contribute to transparency, accountability, learning and improved performance. In 2015 the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) acknowledged that the absence of effective monitoring and evaluation has created a situation where Sector Education Training Authorities (SETAs) and DHET are unable to answer important questions related to the performance and impact of the SETAs. One response to this situation has been the establishment of a Research Chair Partnership Initiative focussing on Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) in a SETA environment. This is an initiative of South Africa’s 21 SETAs, supported by the Department of Higher Education and Training and funded by the BANKSETA and ServicesSETA, with additional support from the National Skills Authority (NSA). The Research Chair is located in Rhodes University over a three-year period from August 2018 to March 2020.

Its main focus is to develop and support an M&E framework for evaluating the SETAs (to be implemented by the NSA) and associated frameworks, guidelines and tools to be used by the SETAs themselves, within the system of post-school education and training (PSET) that, in turn, contributes to national development and global sustainability. This line of sight between global, continental and national aspirations, on the one hand, and the performance and impact of SETAs on the other, allows for the development of M&E frameworks at different levels. The current document refers to the overarching framework to be used by the NSA (or other entity) to evaluate the SETAs. The relationship to other frameworks is shown in Figure 1.

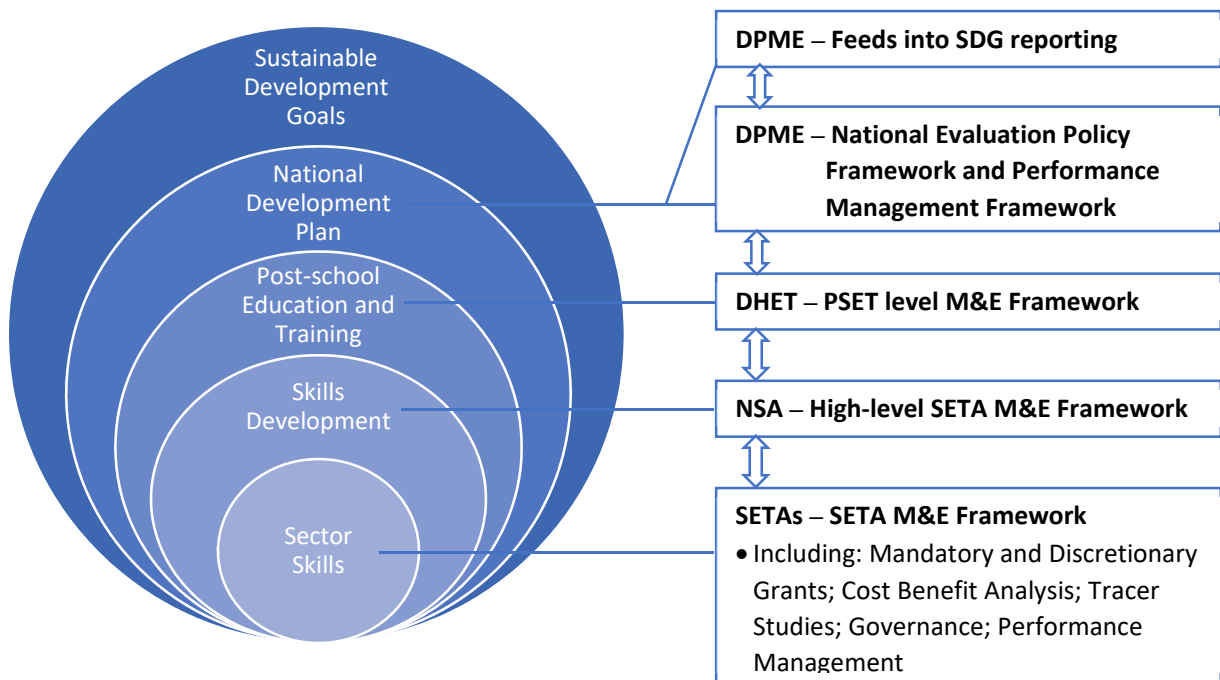


Figure 1: The Macro-SETA Environment

It must be noted that post-school education and training cannot take full responsibility for achieving the aspirations of addressing unemployment, inequality and poverty, so central to the National Development Plan and the SDGs. However, there is a link between inadequate skills and constrained

economic as well as social development. It is for this reason that a substantial investment is made in skills development by both the public and private sectors (and citizens themselves). In order to monitor and evaluate the investments made and the associated outcomes and impacts, a number of interlinked M&E frameworks have been developed in South Africa. Where these M&E frameworks are aligned, stakeholders at multiple levels should be able to access relevant and reliable data on the relationship between investments in skills development and the achievement of goals outlined in the National Development Plan and the Sustainable Development Goals. Figure 2 depicts some of the entities to whom reporting on sector skills development occurs, from within SETAs to national government, which in turn reports into international bodies.

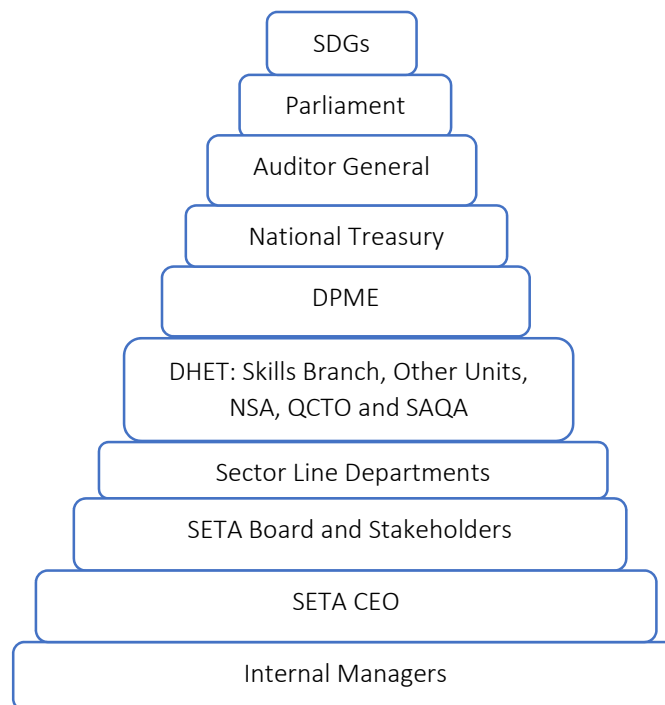


Figure 2: SETAs' multiple reporting lines

One of the recurrent comments relating to this extensive reporting line-up is that there are inconsistencies and occasionally contradictions with regard to monitoring, evaluation and reporting requirements across these various levels and entities. There is also a tendency to focus on narrow performance monitoring and numerical targets at the expense of deeper evaluative processes focused on learning and change. Furthermore, while individual SETAs report to these entities, they do not share outcomes and learnings with each other, and entities such as DHET do not have a good view of the impact of the SETA system as a whole. To achieve this, an overarching M&E framework is needed. This framework has been drafted (the current document) along with several other outputs, based on an extensive research and consultation process outlined below.

### Research and Consultations Undertaken

The research started with an initial detailed literature review covering policy and planning documents related to monitoring and evaluation and skills development (Ward and Rosenberg). This review of policy was supplemented by an analysis of previous assessments, ministerial reviews,

evaluations and independent studies focusing on the SETA landscape and SETA performance (Ward and Rosenberg). Existing SETA M&E frameworks were collected and analysed (Rosenberg and Nodada). Based on this analysis, four scoping reports, covering different aspects of M&E, SETA functions and skills development, were produced (see Appendix 1).

Insights emerging from these scoping reports were used to inform the identification and content of key informant interviews. These interviews (conducted by Rosenberg, Ward and Tsotsotso) have involved senior officials from DHET (Directorate of Policy, Research and Evaluation; SETA Support; Skills Branch; SETMIS; NSA and SETAs. Workshops involving DHET and the SETAs have also been organised to share provisional findings and to discuss their validity and implications for M&E (facilitated by Rosenberg, E., Ward, Tsotsotso, Rosenberg, G., and Raven). Specific evaluations are being undertaken (e.g. into enterprise development, by Rosenberg, G.) and tools and guidelines are being developed (Raven, Rogan, Rosenberg). During 2018-2019 the Collaborative Research Working Group meetings have been used to share and discuss findings, gaps and draft proposals with stakeholders (DHET, NSA and SETAs). These processes of reporting, engaging, reviewing and refining have been integrated into an ongoing learning process that seeks to both build M&E capacity within the extended SETA environment and to embed M&E within the relevant institutions. (See Appendix A for a list of and links to the source documents.)

Over time it has become apparent that the National Skills Authority is being positioned to take on a key role with regard to M&E in the SETA environment. The Business Plan developed by GTAC provided a useful reference point. The current document positions the NSA's M&E responsibilities with regard to the SETAs within the broader policy landscape and presents an M&E framework that supports this focus within the NSA's mandate. The high-level SETA M&E Framework should be located within the National Monitoring and Evaluation Framework developed by the DPME and the recent (draft) M&E Framework for post-school education and training being developed by DHET. It should also support and align with the M&E Frameworks of individual SETAs to allow for streamlined reporting across multiple entities (see Figure 2 and below).

### Policies Guiding M&E in the SETA Environment

Two key policy areas need to be considered for the development of monitoring and evaluation frameworks in the skills development sector of post-school education and training. The first policy area relates to the government-wide M&E system and the second relates to the positioning of skills development within the National Development Plan and associated implementation systems. This is particularly relevant to the NSA that is, according to the *White Paper on Post-school Education and Training*, required to focus on monitoring and evaluating the SETAs and ensuring the alignment between skills development and the national development strategies and priorities.

The Constitution of South Africa sets out the basic values and principles governing public administration and makes provision for a number of institutions to monitor and evaluate this service delivery across government. In order to address the constitutional mandates for monitoring and evaluation, and in particular in an attempt to address the fragmented nature of M&E in government, Cabinet approved the development of a Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation (GWM&E) system in 2007. The GWM&E System requires that government institutions formally adopt an M&E strategy that includes a description of current and future (planned) M&E systems and a capacity building plan detailing how the institution will put in place the human capacity to fulfil its M&E functions. In addition, the Public Finance Management Act requires that each accounting officer

establish a monitoring and evaluation system for the institution for which they are responsible. In order to support the GWM&E and associated responsibilities related to M&E, the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation (DPME) produced the National Evaluation Policy Framework in 2011.

In line with the above requirements, the Department of Higher Education and Training adopted its first Monitoring and Evaluation Framework in 2013. The DHET M&E Framework covers Post School Education and Training and, following significant changes in this sector as well as reviews of the DHET M&E Framework by both the Auditor General and the DPME, is currently (2019) being revised. The diagnostic review by DHET and the DPME (2016) was clear that the external monitoring and oversight used to support education sector outcomes needed to be strengthened. This included the implementation of the policies and procedures for monitoring external entities such as the SETAs. A key challenge in this regard is the multiple role players who have an interest in skills development and therefore the performance of the Sector Education and Training Authorities.

The external monitoring and evaluation of the SETAs, as well as the M&E processes within the SETAs, therefore need to be developed to feed into the broader DHET vision and mandate, as well as broader requirements for information, without becoming too demanding on resources or leading to contradictory demands across multiple mandates.

A number of policy and planning documents provide more specific detail on the vision and mission for the PSET system broadly and the SETAs specifically along with related commitments to monitoring and evaluating these systems and institutions. The National Development Plan envisages that by 2030 South Africa should have access to education and training of the highest quality. In the section of the NDP focused specifically on skills development, SETAs are identified as the entities that are responsible for the delivery of sector-specific skills interventions that help to achieve the goals of the National Skills Development Strategy and develop the skills needed by employers. The *White Paper on Post-School Education and Training* (WP-PSET) sets out a vision for a post-school education system that enriches lives, promotes social justice and overcomes historical inequalities. It goes on to provide specific guidance on the role of SETAs and notes that monitoring and evaluation must make it possible *to understand the levels of efficacy that are being achieved, and to identify where any blockages in the system may be emerging.*

The *National Plan for Post-School Education and Training* (NPPSET) gives effect to the vision set out in the National Development Plan and the WP-PSET. More specifically, it sets out key system goals, objectives, outcomes and strategies for the period 2019/2020 to 2029. The NPPSET is clear that SETAs will concentrate on supporting skills planning, industry engagement, funding and workplace-based learning, and will be monitored and evaluated by the National Skills Authority. The plan also states that capacity for M&E must be improved across the PSET system.

The National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) in turn provides a more specific vision, principles and outcomes relating to skills development within the broader NPPSET. The vision articulated in the NSDP is “an educated, skilled and capable workforce for South Africa” that contributes to economic growth, employment creation, productivity and social development. The National Skills Development Plan, in line with the WP-PSET and the NP-PSET, notes that the National Skills

Authority will play a major role in the monitoring and evaluation of the SETAs and that it (the NSA) will ensure that the systems are in place to support, monitor and evaluate the SETAs' implementation of the NSDP.

The draft DHET M&E Framework notes that it is crucial for each sub-sector of the PSET system to develop their own M&E Frameworks in order to contribute to legislated objectives, transparency, accountability and improved performance. It is also evident from the above that it is envisaged that the NSA will play a leading role in the monitoring and evaluation of the SETAs. The intention for this framework is therefore mainly to guide the NSA in fulfilling its expanded mandate. Guidance on the SETAs' own M&E frameworks and related performance management processes will be provided in other documents produced by the Rhodes University Research Chair Partnership Initiative.

### Findings from Previous Evaluations and Reviews

The skills development system including the National Skills Development Strategies and the institutions working within this system including the SETAs have been the subject of a large number of evaluations and reviews. These studies provide a solid evidence base of both improvements and ongoing challenges within the skills develop system and associated institutions. This section summarises key findings as the basis for developing a system level theory of change and within this, more specific recommendations related to monitoring and evaluation in the SETA environment.

In all of the evaluations and reviews considered to inform this research into M&E in a SETA environment, an overriding finding was that skills development, and by implication the SETAs, were being relied upon to address numerous challenges in our society. *As other sources of government funding become increasingly constrained, people are turning to the Skills Levy and by association the skills levy institutions to address many challenges within the PSET system.* This has led to a diffuse focus and multiple objectives which extend beyond skills provision and have at times been interpreted to include, for example, the actual absorption of trained youth into the labour market. This, combined with the lack of a detailed Theory of Change, causal pathways, implementation plan, and allocation of responsibility, has at times left skills development open to diverse and potentially expanding interpretations. This has had implications both for evaluating impact and for assessing the performance of role players within the skills development landscape.

A related finding was that the diffuse focus meant that multiple interpretations could be brought to bear on implementing institutions such as the SETAs, creating potentially conflicting demands in the subsequent planning, implementation, impacts and perception of performance. This was particularly apparent in tensions between the direction provided by the Sector Skills Plans produced by the SETAs following engagement with sectoral stakeholders, and the Service Level Agreements between the SETAs and DHET. Other tensions emerge as the Minister of Higher Education and Training, the SETA Boards or SETA CEOs all at times override the research informing the SSPs to push other agendas including those derived from alternative planning processes such as the MTSF.

The Sector Skills Plans are central to the work of the SETAs and many of the later reviews noted how these had been improved in recent years and aligned to the Strategic Plans and the Annual Performance Plans. The importance of the SSPs requires that they are professionally researched, provide sound analysis of the sector and articulate an agreed sector strategy to address skills needs. Many of the reviews noted the complexity of this kind of research and the need to separate broader



cross sectoral and even PSET level research from focused sectoral research. The reviews also noted the uneven research and strategic sector planning capacity across the SETAs. This appears to have been exacerbated by the lack of role clarification and co-ordination between the DHET units supporting the SETAs.

The significant improvements in the SSPs and related documents as well as the alignment of the SPs, APPs and Annual Reports to the requirements of the NSA, National Treasury and Auditor General have the potential to significantly streamline reporting requirements. This progress needs to be taken further as many SETA role players have complained about the diverse institutions that have an interest in the SETAs and the resultant proliferation of reporting requirements.

The development of the Sector Skills Plans, the individual Strategic Plans, the Annual Performance Plans and a range of related documents and budgets, does not automatically translate into good implementation. There is a need for, amongst other things, accurate and relevant data capture, for meaningful monitoring and insightful evaluation to inform and strengthen implementation and future planning. Data collection, accessibility, reliability and comparability/ integration in particular remain a substantial challenge at both the PSET and skills development levels. This requires the development of more reliable data collection and management systems and the capacity to use this data to support monitoring and evaluation in the SETA environment.

In addition to the challenges associated with developing and tracking plans, performance issues related to governance of the SETAs have been a recurrent challenge. Substantial interventions and improvements have been achieved in this area over the years including clearer mandates, small board sizes and independent audit committees. However, challenges remain in some SETAs, with a number of the reviews citing the conflation of governance and operational roles and responsibilities cited as an issue. A key tension in this regard is the contradiction between a Board's normal duty of putting the performance of the organisation (in this case the SETA) first, on the one hand, and the current practice of Board members representing various constituencies such as business, labour and government. This has at times led to adversarial politics playing out at SETA Board level to the detriment of the performance of the SETA. An evaluation of SETA Governance has been scoped, to provide insight into whether the Good Governance Protocol has been effective in improving SETA governance issues, and to provide further guidance on how SETA governance is to be continuously monitored and evaluated.

In addition to the broader systemic issues identified above, there are a number of capacity and administrative challenges within specific SETAs. Previous evaluations and reviews have noted that while some SETAs have staff and managers with industry experience, many do not and even fewer have that expertise and experience across the sub-sectors they represent. This is particularly important given the focusing of the role of SETAs as 'intermediaries' between employers (demand) and education and training providers (supply) components of the skills system. This role requires managers and staff with substantial sectoral knowledge, PSET knowledge and the ability to manage complex projects involving diverse role players. Previous and current reviews suggest that this capacity is lacking in some SETAs and individual staff members and that this is impacting negatively on implementation. This situation is exacerbated by the diverse (unfocused) expectations of SETAs and the corresponding pressures on middle and senior managers to navigate and respond to diverse, ad hoc and at times contradictory demands.

Previous evaluations and reviews have also suggested that in many SETAs, the administrative systems are complex and poorly managed. This is exacerbated by the fact that there is also substantial inconsistency between the systems used by different SETAs and therefore encountered by employers, learners and training service providers. In the context of needing to act as intermediaries between workplaces, employers and education providers, this has had a significant impact on performance. One example of this is that many employers, particularly those in smaller organisations that lack the skills or resources to navigate the SETA administrative systems, withdraw from SETA related skills planning and development processes. This in turn results in smaller businesses' skills needs being underrepresented in skills planning and ultimately in smaller businesses subsidising the cost of larger business skills development.

One response to many of the issues identified in previous evaluations and reviews, has been a proliferation of monitoring frameworks, performance standards and associated indicators. While there is evidence that this has led to improvements in some areas, there are also many examples of staff learning to 'game' the standards and indicators. An example of 'gaming' in this context is where a SETA or individual manager sets the targets for learners at a level they know they can achieve in order to show outstanding performance. Another example is the propensity for designers of standards and indicators to rely on performance measures that are either compliance based or focused on short-term outputs rather than longer-term outcomes and impacts. This has the potential to misdirect activities by focusing on easy wins at the expense of long-term value. An example here may be the focus on lower level qualifications in order to achieve learner numbers without considering the need for higher level skills within the economy. These activities result in what has been described as SETAs "hitting their targets but missing the point".

This summary of findings from previous evaluations and reviews highlights some of the areas that a M&E framework would need to consider in order to support and track improvement in the SETA environment. Many of the issues raised have received substantial attention and, in some areas, significant improvements are already evident. Two broad areas of performance are relevant: performance internal to the organisation (management performance) and broader performance that is linked to impact related to the SETA mandate within the national commitment to skills development and PSET. Both considerations are central and will be addressed in this framework, although it should be noted that the SETAs' management performance is already to some extent monitored through a number of mechanisms, under the auspices of DHET's Skills Branch. The M&E role of the NSA will require attention to both internal management performance and the external impact of the SETAs, even if the former is managed by another entity within DHET.

## Section 2: Improving Internal and External Performance of the SETAs

It is the intention of the National Evaluation Policy Framework that monitoring and evaluation support performance improvement. The two areas of performance identified above are closely linked and there is a strong premise that improved management performance in terms of HR management, financial management, good governance and strategic management are key enablers of institutional performance (service delivery or results) in terms of the institutional mandate, strategic plans and delivery agreements. How exactly better management translates into better service delivery or results (appropriate skills development, for example) is an important consideration for the development of a high-level M&E Framework for the SETA environment that would be overseen by the NSA.

One of the major challenges faced in this regard is that while the National Evaluation Policy Framework recognised that both internal management performance and external institutional performance were important foci for monitoring and evaluation, management performance was not included in the policy framework. This exclusion means that the relationship between the internal performance of an organisation or institution and its delivery through its plans, programmes and projects is unclear. The simple graphic representation below provides some insight into these relationships and may be useful for a high-level M&E framework.

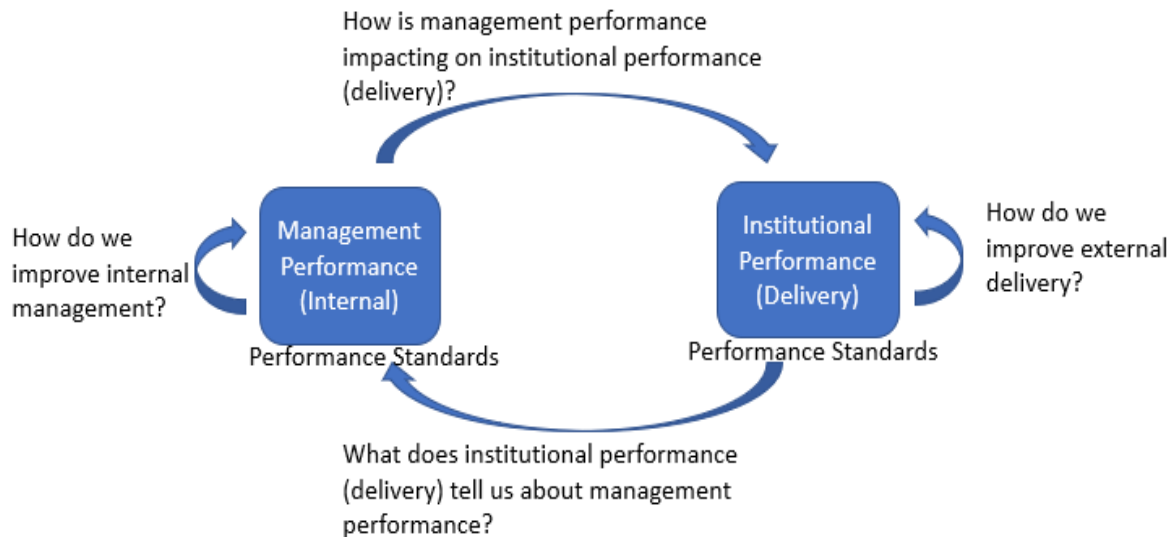


Figure 3: Links between Performance Management and Institutional Performance

Performance management can be understood as a systemic effort to improve performance through an ongoing process of establishing desired outcomes and impacts, clarifying a theory of change, setting performance standards, then generating and using emerging data and insights to improve practice. The purpose of these processes is therefore to support a continuous process of improving individual, departmental and systemic performance. Some examples that have reference to previous evaluation and reviews of SETAs illustrate this point. The role of strategic planning, particularly the quality of the process of developing Sector Skills Plans, Strategic Plans and Annual Performance Plans, has been recognised as central to the ability of SETAs to deliver on their mandates in terms of focusing the allocation of Discretionary Grant funding to high priority skills development. Similarly, the quality of human resource management, including the hiring of staff with knowledge of the sector that the SETA serves, is central to the SETAs' ability to play an intermediary role linking employers and training providers. And, expenditure management and the administrative systems established to improve performance in this area may have unintended consequences, if the administrative systems become so complex that only large well-resourced institutions participate in the grant reporting and accessing processes. These examples reveal how important it will be to consider both management and institutional performance as sites for monitoring and evaluation. However, it is the relationship between these two areas that is being recognised as an increasingly important site for monitoring, evaluation, reporting and learning for improvement.

The intention in working across this performance system should not be limited to monitoring and ensuring compliance with specific policies, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts. Rather this work should be guided by monitoring and evaluation processes that guide the direction of policy implementation, management practices, service delivery and ultimately to ensure that government institutions are doing what matters most in the overall aspirations of our country, as articulated in documents such as the National Development Plan.

### Management Performance Framework

Given the importance of management performance in the overall performance of SETAs (and in fact all institutions), it is important to briefly consider the national management performance framework. The commitment to improving management performance within the public sector is well established in South Africa and is mentioned in the Constitution (e.g. Section 195), the National Development Plan (e.g. Chapter 13) and the Medium Term Strategic Framework (e.g. Outcome 12). In 2011, the same year that the National Evaluation Policy Framework was released, the DPME, working in collaboration with a range of government departments including the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) and the National Treasury, and independent bodies including the Auditor-General and the Office of the Public Service Commission, developed the Management Performance Framework.

Within the Management Performance Framework four management Key Performance Areas (KPA) were identified. These were Strategic Management, Governance and Accountability, Human Resource Management, and Financial Management. These four areas are common across many management performance systems and are believed to be critical determinants of good performance. In order to support and operationalise the management performance framework, the four KPAs were further broken down into 17 Management Performance Areas (see Figure 4 below) which were in turn measured against 31 standards. An implementation evaluation of the Management Performance Framework has noted that two additional areas require attention in terms of global best practice. These are Asset Management and Information Management. Both these areas have increasing relevance to the SETAs with the significance of data and information management including systems such as SETMIS requiring particular attention.



Figure 4: Management Performance Framework (Source: DPME, 2012)

The Management Performance Framework with the associated KPAs, management performance areas and standards, has been developed to comply with (and support compliance with) national legislation that is applicable to all government entities and is therefore to the SETAs. It is also the intention that assessments based on the Management Performance Framework be comparable across institutions whether these be SETAs or large national departments. This raises an important consideration for the development of a high-level M&E framework. Given the extensive work that has gone into developing the Management Performance Framework, and particularly the alignment with legislative requirements of transversal departments such as National Treasury, the recommendation here is that the NSA and M&E partners do not use a separate set of management performance standards for the SETAs that may be at odds with the existing national management performance framework and associated standards. Rather, efforts should be made to streamline the process, address issues of quality of and access to monitoring data, optimise the value of monitoring performance, and reduce the need for multiple reports in different formats.

As noted above, however, management performance is only part of the picture and institutional (service delivery) performance is another important part of the performance of public institutions. Here the specific mandate of the SETAs, the role as intermediaries between employers and training providers and the development of adequate, appropriate and high-quality skills that contribute towards economic and social development, suggests a need for a clear theory of change within which to monitor and evaluate institutional performance. As will become evident, the relationship between management performance and institutional performance are directly interlinked suggesting the need for evaluative processes that include a focus on this relationship.

### Section 3: System Level Theory of Change and Indicators

Based on research during 2018-2019, culminating in a Theory of Change (ToC) workshop on 11 October 2019 involving DHET, the NSA and SETAs, the following theory of change model was produced. This is a high-level model with requisite simplicity, directing us to the top 10 indicators for high-level monitoring and evaluation. This ToC aims to reflect the multiple mandates of the SETAs which include acting as intermediaries between employers and training providers in ways that simultaneously contribute to the achievement of national priorities including developing skills for transformation, livelihoods and enterprise development.

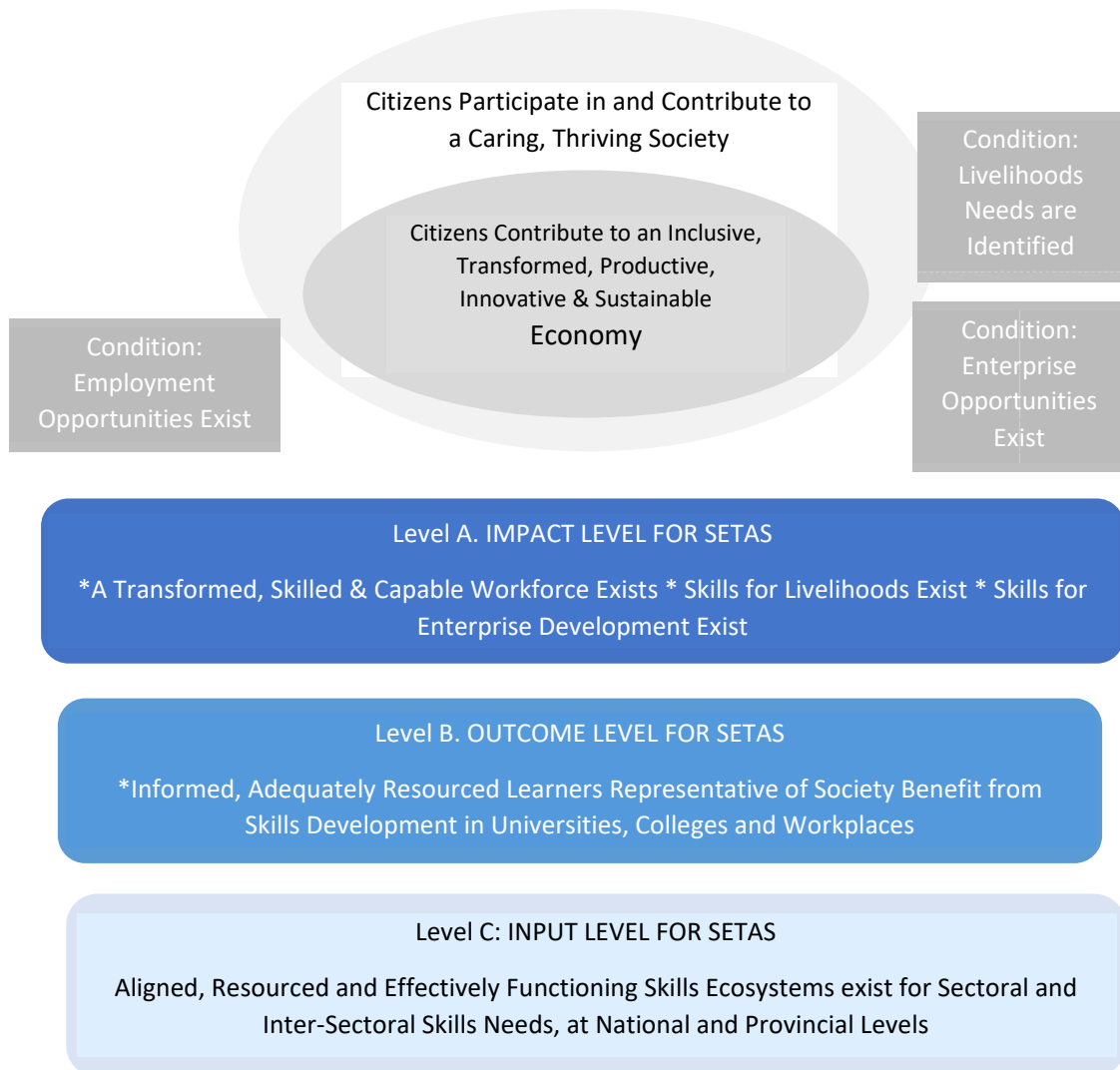


Figure 5: High-level Theory of Change

In order to achieve the overarching goal of citizens participating in and contributing to a caring, thriving society and the intermediate goal of citizens contributing to an inclusive, transformed, productive, innovative and sustainable economy, specific impacts, outcomes and inputs are required. The achievement of the goals through programme and project impacts require that certain conditions be in place and it should not be assumed that the SETAs are responsible for conditions. Thus, for example, a broad partnership, or social compact, between government, labour, business and civil society will be required to create the conditions for employment, livelihood opportunities and entrepreneurship. At the impact level (Level A in the above diagram), the SETAs should be making a significant contribution to the achievement of a transformed and capable workforce, to skills that improve livelihoods and skills that enable entrepreneurial activity.

The achievement of the goals and impacts will in turn require particular outcomes (Level B) and inputs (Level C) many of which, although by no means all, the SETAs play a vital role in achieving directly. Due to the complexity of the post-school education and training sector, there will be a need to better understand, articulate, monitor, evaluate and improve the contributions of that many different institutions related to skills development. In the context of developing an M&E framework for the SETA environment it will also be important to identify those areas for which the SETAs have a significant responsibility. In the list below we have used an asterisk (\*) to denote such areas.

1. \*Skills intelligence (including both demand and supply), that is regularly updated, to inform all other activities
2. Learning pathways, qualifications and standards
3. Functioning providers (Higher Ed, TVET, Community and Continuing Ed, Basic Ed)
4. \*Skilled and capable educators and trainers for skills development
5. \* Funding that is adequate, suitably disbursed and effectively managed (access)
6. \*Attention to transformed and equitable access ('leaving no-one behind')
7. \*Career and study guidance aligned with real needs and opportunities (access)
8. \*Monitoring, evaluation and feedbacks for continuous improvement

For each of the key areas (\*) contributing to the inputs (Level C) and outcomes (Level B), broad 'indicators' of SETA contributions and success can be defined. These are listed below and expanded in Table 2.

1. SETAs lead the ongoing production of sector-specific and cross-sectoral skills intelligence to steer expenditure, learner choice, and the development of provider capacity, programmes, qualifications and pathways.  
**Indicated by quality, quantity of SSPs**
2. SETAs fund and guide capacity development for educators, trainers & mentors.  
**Indicated by expenditure aligned with SSP**
3. SETA funding is suitably disbursed, effectively managed and governed (according to skills intelligence and PFMA).  
**Indicated in Financial Reports (analysis of)**
4. SETAs contribute to an aligned, functioning skills ecosystem at national and provincial levels.  
**Indicated by support processes evaluated**
5. SETAs fund and guide learner participation in PSET in colleges, universities and workplaces, enabling inclusivity in gender, race, disability and geographic spread.  
**Indicated learner data and expenditure disaggregated**
6. SETAs contribute to a skilled and capable workforce guided by skills intelligence  
**Indicated by skills tested aligned with SSP**
7. SETAs fund and guide skills for enterprise development guided by opportunities.  
**Indicated by skills tested aligned with SSP**
8. SETAs fund and guide skills for sustainable livelihoods guided by needs assessments.  
**Indicated by skills tested aligned with SSP**
9. SETAs fund and guide career and study guidance informed by skills intelligence.  
**Indicated in quality, quantity of programmes**
10. SETAs use and contribute to M&E for continuous improvement of skills development.  
**Indicated by aligned monitoring reports, evaluation reports and strategic plans (aligned)**

If these 10 broad ‘indicators’ are effectively monitored and evaluated (by the NSA and partners) across all 21 SETAs, a clear, high-level picture of SETA inputs, outcomes and impact will emerge. We will be able to answer the question: *Is the money appropriately spent and are the intended outcomes and impacts achieved?* The use of the term ‘NSA and partners’ is intentional as some of these ‘indicators’ relate to management performance while others are more closely aligned to external institutional performance. By way of example, the development of coherent SSPs, SPs and APPs [point 1 above] would be covered under the ‘Strategic Planning’ management performance area of the Management Performance Framework. Similarly, the disbursement and management of funds [point 3 above] would be covered by the supply chain management and expenditure management areas under financial management. Monitoring and evaluation would also be covered under



Strategic Management. Data related to some of the ‘indicators’ may well be gathered for or by other partners or frameworks and may not need to be duplicated in the high-level M&E Framework. It would however be important to access this information and use it to better understand the relationship between management performance and institutional (external) performance.

Focusing on these 10 core ‘indicators’ and recognising the overlap between these indicators and monitoring, evaluation and reporting processes required by a range of institutions opens up the opportunity to streamline SETA reporting. This idea is represented graphically in Figure 6 with the ‘core’ corresponding to the 10 core ‘indicators’ while acknowledging that there will be some need to increasing levels of detail related to this core at various institutional levels of engagement and decision-making.

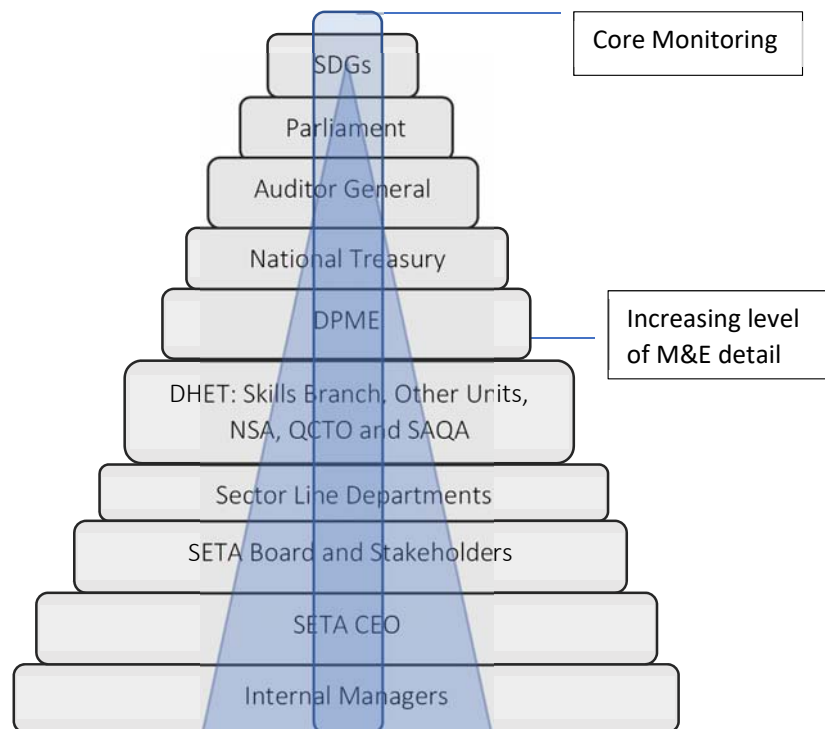


Figure 6: Streamlined 'core' Monitoring and Reporting

The question *Is the money appropriately spent and are the intended outcomes and impacts achieved?* could be answered by focussing on the 10 core ‘indicators’ which will be important for a range of stakeholders including:

- The Presidency, Minister of Higher Education and Training, Minister of Labour and Employment, Parliament and Parliamentary Committees
- National Treasury and the Auditor General
- Sectoral stakeholders – employers, employer bodies
- Civil society organisations

- Intended beneficiaries
- SETAs themselves
- DPME, DHET and the National Skills Authority
- and others.

Currently we are unable to answer this question, despite intending to monitor *more* indicators. The relationship between the number of indicators monitored and our ability to generate useful information for understanding, accountability and improvement is discussed further in Section 4.

## Section 4: Monitoring

Monitoring refers to the systematic follow-up of activities and results usually in relation to pre-set targets and objectives to track progress towards the achievement of these targets and objectives. Where deviations are identified, monitoring should lead to corrective actions. Indicators are quantitative or qualitative descriptions that provide simple and reliable ways to measure achievement against the targets and objectives being monitored. Within this relationship between monitoring and the indicators used in the monitoring process, many unintended consequences need to be guarded against in the development of a high-level M&E Framework.

The proliferation of indicators in the context of poor data management capacity in particular can undermine the effectiveness of monitoring and its ability to support the generation of useful and timely insights.

There is a tendency when working with documents like the National Skills Development Plan to assume that all the objectives and principles must be monitored. Where objectives and principles have not been well integrated, this results in a kind of matrix that rapidly multiplies areas that require monitoring and evaluation. This is exacerbated further by the need to develop shared protocols, including agreed-upon scope, definition, resources for monitoring, reporting lines, as well as mechanisms for responding to monitoring findings. This becomes particularly important when the NSA, DHET or other institutions need to aggregate results across the SETAs or where it is necessary to compare trends over time. This expansion and complexity of indicators is evident in the lists such as the *Compendium of Indicators to Monitor the Performance of the PSET System* that runs to 35 pages and contains over 80 indicators. The *Enhancement of the Framework for the Monitoring and Evaluation of the PSET Sector* has 116 indicators, many of which are disaggregated into, on average, five sub-indicators including: age, field of study, qualification level, nationality, race, gender, disability, public/private, etc. This results in well over 500 disaggregated sub-indicators. Nearly all the indicators contained in the abovementioned documents are relevant to the SETAs. This suggests that some focusing will be required in order to develop a manageable number of indicators.

Limiting the number of indicators for the high-level M&E framework increases the likelihood of meaningful and accurate M&E actually taking place. The alternative is a multitude of indicators that cannot be accurately managed, leading to high levels of reporting and low levels of insight. Inappropriate indicators (outside the mandate and sphere of influence of SETAs) should be avoided, as this diverts attention and resources to work that is not SETA business (such as job placement or employment). Similarly, an obsession with meeting targets should be avoided. Studies indicate that

despite a majority of SETAs meeting targets, concerns regarding non-performance continue and SETAs report that at times they veer off from more effective and impactful approaches, in order to ensure that they meet (especially higher) targets. This is another example of hitting the target but missing the point and is evident in for example the investment in lower level courses to increase numbers when what is actually needed in a particular sector may be higher skills levels. More attention should be given to whether SETAs are actually addressing the needs articulated in their SSPs, which should be aligned to sectoral (employer) needs and national priorities, as well as skills for enterprise opportunities and livelihood needs.

Building on the priority areas developed in the previous section, the ten broad indicators have been disaggregated for deeper insight, again with parsimony in mind. Some indicators are qualitative in nature, and the achievement will be summarised with a qualitative statement, while others can be summarised in a figure (quantitative) – see Table 2.

Table 2: Proposed indicator Monitoring Framework

High level indicator	Disaggregated	SETA 1	SETA 2 ...	... SETA 21	Sum of Outcomes
Production of sector-specific and cross-sectoral skills intelligence	1. Quality of info				Qualitative
	2. Coverage				Quantitative
	3. Updated				Quantitative
	4. Useful format				Qualitative
	5. Applied				Qualitative
Fund and guide capacity development for educators, trainers & mentors in private and public providers, workplaces (small, medium and large)	6. Spend on cap dev - TVET College staff				Quantitative
	7. Spend on cap dev - Community College staff				Quantitative
	8. Spend on cap dev - university staff				Quantitative
	9. Spend on cap dev - mentors in small to large workplaces				Quantitative
	10. Inform provider cap dev with up to date skills intelligence				Qualitative
SETA funding is suitably disbursed, effectively managed and governed	11. % funding spent on skills				Quantitative
	12. Funding adequacy at learner level				Quantitative and Qualitative
	13. Alignment with skills intelligence				Qualitative
	14. Efficiency (time to use)				Quantitative and Qualitative
	15. Adherence to PFMA				Quantitative and Qualitative
Fund and guide learner participation in PSET in colleges,	16. Bursaries, Learning /skills programmes funded				Quantitative
	17. Apprenticeships / internships funded				Quantitative

universities and workplaces, enabling inclusivity in gender, race, disability and geographic spread	18. Funds spread across gender, race, disability, geographic areas				Quantitative
	19. Aligned with skills priorities				Qualitative
	20. Provider quality assured				Quantitative
SETAs fund and guide career & study guidance for all learners informed by regularly updated skills intelligence on skills needs & opportunities i.t.o. livelihoods, enterprise development, and employment	21. In place for all races in urban and rural areas				Quantitative
	22. In place for more and less able learners of all genders				Quantitative
	23. In place for school and post-school learners				Quantitative
	24. Informed to reflect real opportunities incl. enterprises, employment, livelihoods				Qualitative
	25. Regularly updated information				Quantitative
Use and contribute to M&E for continuous improvement of skills development	26. SETA has a coherent M&E framework/ strategy and a feasible M&E implementation plan in place				Quantitative and qualitative
	27. SETA produces quality monitoring data against relevant indicators				Quantitative and qualitative
	28. SETA undertakes relevant evaluations				Quantitative and qualitative
	29. SETA is using M&E findings to guide strategic decisions and actions				Quantitative and qualitative
	30. SETA contributes to high level (cross-SETA) M&E				
Contribute to an aligned, functioning skills ecosystem	Aggregate the above contributions to summarise SETA inputs. Obtain a view of other contributions to the system (e.g. DHET, NSF, Quality Councils, Providers, Employers, Employer Associations, Labour). Compare SETA inputs to the other inputs (qualitatively and quantitatively) to make a judgement on the SETAs' contribution in relation to the wider system.				
Contribute to a skilled and capable workforce	31. Skills are available to fill vacancies				Quantitative and Qualitative
	32. Skills produced meet employer needs / demand				Quantitative and Qualitative
	33. Employers value SETA support				Quantitative and Qualitative
Fund and guide skills for enterprise development	34. Skills are available to start, maintain enterprises				Quantitative and Qualitative
	35. Skills dev is aligned with enterprise needs and opportunities				Quantitative and Qualitative
	36. Enterprise owners/start-ups value SETA support				Quantitative and Qualitative

Fund and guide skills for sustainable livelihoods among the unemployed and under-employed	37. Skills are available to support livelihoods				Quantitative and Qualitative
	38. Skills dev is aligned with livelihood needs and opportunities				Quantitative and Qualitative
	39. Civil society value SETA support				Quantitative and Qualitative

Sub-Indicators 1-30 should be monitored by all SETAs, the NSA and DHET Skills Branch (selected). Indicators 31-39 should be monitored by SETAs as part of skills intelligence, and by the NSA.

A streamlined indicator protocol will be provided once there is agreement on the Indicators. This will include definitions and scope as well as data sources and quality guidelines, to assist in the gathering of comparable data across all SETAs.

Central to the use of indicators within a monitoring system is an effective and efficient data management system. Data management in this context refers to the processes of creating, sharing, using and managing information within and across organisations. In the case of the SETA system, the flow of skills development data from industry, training institutions and the SETAs themselves, through the respective SETAs, to the NSA, DHET and stakeholder departments and agencies defines the SETA data management system. Without the smooth retrieval, processing, and querying of this data, the SETA monitoring systems and the usefulness of relevant indicators would collapse.

A significant amount of investment and work has gone into the development of the Skills Education and Training Management Information System (SETMIS). This system stores and maintains records of skills education and training data related to Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) and their providers, employers, assessors, moderators and learners. As of March 2019, all SETAs create electronic data submission files in standard formats and submit them for inclusion in SETMIS. While there is agreement that this system has the potential to support and enhance monitoring and evaluation, there are still concerns that without a clear SETA theory of change, SETAs will continue to commit limited resources to capture data on indicators which do not necessarily support enhanced understanding, organisational learning and performance improvements. It is hoped that the framework proposed here will address this issue, which is one of the most significant changes that can be made to improve M&E in a SETA environment.

## Section 5: Evaluation Plan

The proposed Theory of Change model with its derived high level indicators in Sections 3 and 4 is intentionally simple. It needs to serve as the uncluttered backbone of a robust system through which the NSA can implement and support high-level SETA M&E in the SETA environment. That is, it needs to support the generation of relevant monitoring data within and across SETAs and the conduct of relevant meta-level evaluations within the NSA. It also needs to be fed and nourished with good quality information related to the relevant management and institutional performance areas highlighted in the Theory of Change.

In this section, we look at the evaluations that need to be done across SETAs (meta-level evaluations) in alignment with this Theory of Change, and an implementation plan for them. This plan is informed by the policy and reviews analysed in our scoping reports and the interviews and workshops that build on the insights from these reviews. The findings from these processes revealed concerns about the limited range of evaluations undertaken by SETAs, the *ad hoc* or unsystematic nature of evaluations of SETAs, and the limited extent to which evaluation findings are used in the SETAs and the wider system. It has also been noted that where meta-level evaluations (of the SETA system as a whole) have been undertaken, they do not systematically build on each other. As noted in Section 1, the NSA has been identified as the custodian for such ‘overall’ evaluations and the plan below speaks specifically to the NSA and its partners.

Central to the approach being proposed in this framework is a commitment to building a learning and improvement cycle across the SETA environment. The National Evaluation Policy Framework notes that the primary purpose of evaluation is improving performance and that this is linked to questions of judgement. Judgement in this context is associated with merit or worth and seeks to understand what worked, how and for whom. These processes of judgement and learning should ultimately contribute to improved management performance, better institutional performance (service delivery or results) and the achievement of national and sectoral plans and global goals. Building on organisational learning approaches and notions of expansive learning, this framework seeks to link forms of evaluation suggested in the National Evaluation Policy Framework and supported by DPME Guidelines into an expansive learning spiral. This expansive learning cycle will build the ability of the NSA and other skills development partners to understand and respond to internal and external challenges and opportunities for performance improvement across the SETA environment.

In a review of the recently introduced (2019) Chapter 5 in the SSP template that focused on Monitoring and Evaluation within the individual SETAs, it is evident that many of the SETAs have used a project cycle approach to frame the evaluation process. This process has a number of steps including: analyse context; design intervention; implement the intervention; evaluate the outputs and outcomes; use the insights to review the context and redesign the interventions if required. One of the key limitations of this simple representation is that it implies that evaluation is left to the end of the implementation of the intervention. Its strength is that it highlights the importance of a number of phases in the development, implementation and review of an intervention or programme.

An intervention in this context could be as broad as the National Skills Development Plan or the National Plan on Post School Education and Training or as focused as a particular discretionary grant project financed by a specific SETA.

An expansive learning approach allows us to mitigate the limitations of leaving evaluative processes to the end of an intervention while building on the strength of recognising the importance of multiple phases in skills development work. More specifically, by bringing evaluative approaches to the analysis of context, the design, the implementation of interventions, the implementation of a particular approach to skills development, the review of outcomes or impacts, the review of costs and benefits, the determination of contributions made, or a synthesis of reviews across time or across multiple initiatives or institutions, it becomes possible for high-level M&E to support deep systemic change. For each of these phases, forms of evaluation have been developed and nearly all are supported by detailed guidelines available on the DPME website (and contextualised in guidelines produced by the Rhodes M&E Research Chair Partnership Initiative). Figure 7 illustrates how these phases and associated forms of evaluation can be structured into an expansive spiral that supports learning and improvement at each stage and cumulatively across the skills system.

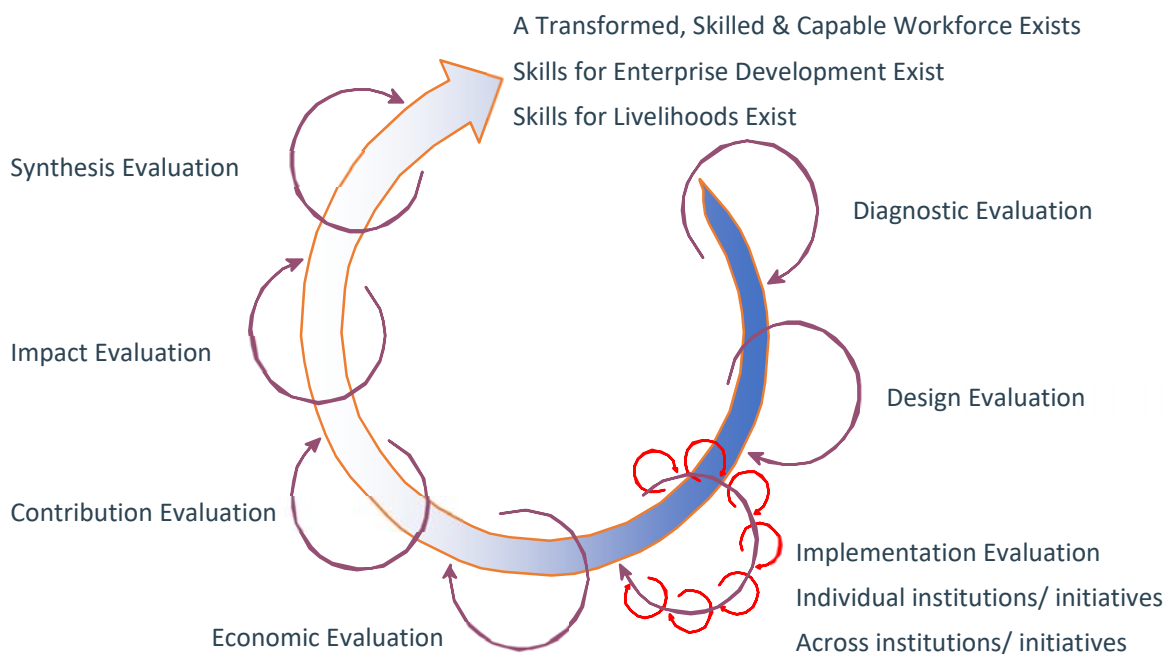


Figure 7: Expansive Evaluation Spiral

Building on this evaluation framework, the main actions for the evaluation plan are as follows:

1. Undertake a spectrum of evaluations purposefully and systematically within SETAs and at a meta-level (diagnostic, design, implementation, economic, contribution, impact and synthesis evaluations).

2. On an annual basis, review evaluation findings *across reports in relation to each other*, in order to build system-wide insights. The Annual National Skills Summit is one opportunity to do this.

In order for the above to succeed, the following sub-actions are also needed:

3. Build capacity in the system to design and undertake these evaluations using a variety of methods, innovative approaches and accepted M&E standards
4. Link monitoring to evaluation and make sure appropriate data collected as part of monitoring is available to evaluators, to inform in particular impact evaluations.
5. Build a culture of learning in the PSET system and systemic capacity to use evaluations
6. Remove systemic and other obstacles to implementing credible recommendations from evaluation reports.
7. Resource evaluations adequately but also ensure value for money through quality reviews.

[Detailed guidelines on how to undertake and achieve the above, will be developed after approval of the overall framework. Below are some pointers for consideration (see also Section 5).]

Building on the model presented in Figure 7 it is evident that the NSA will need to support and use a spectrum of evaluations for system wide learning and performance improvement. No single evaluation can meet all needs and we often expect more from single evaluation reports than they can realistically deliver. However, if a range of evaluations is in place, that have been sequenced to cover different phases of planning and implementation, and their findings are reviewed centrally in relation to each other, a full and useful picture can be developed to guide strategic action and improvement at multiple levels of the SETA system.

The spectrum of evaluations below is informed by the DPME guidelines ([www.dpme.gov.za](http://www.dpme.gov.za)), and provides further detail to the brief overview provided above and represented in Figure 7.

- **Diagnostic evaluations**  
Commission and undertake evaluations to diagnose where there might be issues in the system, and what exactly the problems might be. Example: What is the relationship between SETA performance management, and SETA outcomes? Do SETAs that are well managed, produce better outcomes? Where do things go wrong? What can be done about it? Use the findings to guide remedial actions.
- **Outcome evaluations**  
Commission and undertake studies across all SETAs to determine the outcomes of generic initiatives, for example internships or learnerships. Tracer studies are an example: Refine and institutionalise the indicator protocol developed in 2019 and roll it out regularly; add other tracer studies for a growing picture of outcomes achieved. Where outcomes are low, initiate diagnostic evaluations to determine the problem and guide remedial actions.
- **Implementation evaluation**  
Commission and undertake implementation evaluations to better understand how certain initiatives are being implemented, for example, support to providers, or the development of skills intelligence. How do SETAs produce labour market intelligence, where are they



successful and where not, what works for whom, why and under what circumstances? What does not work, and why? What can be done about it? This is an example of a realist approach to evaluation which is very suitable to understand implementation issues across the 21 SETAs.

- **Economic evaluations**

The jury is out as to whether we are spending enough on skills, or too much. If too much, are SETAs being inefficient? A cost-benefit evaluation tool is being finalised and should be piloted in 2020 to see if it can point out value produced, as well as possible inefficiencies in the system.

- **Evaluating SETA Governance**

Poor governance in some contexts has been known to be an issue and measures have been taken to address it. An evaluation has started to consider the SETA Governance Protocol and its effectiveness in improving governance. This study should also provide guidelines for future governance evaluations, which should be undertaken in partnership with multiple entities with a stake in SETA governance.

- **Impact evaluation**

Here we are interested in whether all the activity and funds spent result in the high level impacts (the top layers in the Theory of Change) being achieved. Impact evaluations should also be undertaken from time to time to evaluate the implications and impacts (both positive and negative) of particular policy level interventions.

- **Contribution evaluation**

SETAs are not the only role players in the PSETA system or the wider system for building South Africa's economy and society. To understand whether they are bringing their side, or letting the side down, we need to some extent to be able to distinguish their contribution from the other role players (such as providers, employers, macro-economic policy, central government, and more) and also understand how well the different role players align and work together, or not. This requires meta-level contribution analysis (to complement impact evaluation).

- **Synthesis evaluation**

To develop a full picture of what is going on, what is being achieved, and who is going wrong where, a meta-level synthesis perspective is needed. This requires a small group or groups of people with different vantage points to periodically look across all available evaluation reports (in particular, those systematically commissioned and undertaken as outlined here) and their findings compared across SETAs and across areas of operation and impact. The findings should be shared and further deliberated with wider stakeholder groups, from which strategic actions for systemic or pin-pointed improvements should be derived. The National Skills Summit is one such opportunity; others include SETA CEO Forums and more.

## Learning from Evaluation and Informing Strategic Planning

Evaluations require careful planning, human resources, appropriate data and budgets. Despite this intensive investment, organisations often fail to optimally use evaluation findings to improve systems. To learn from evaluation findings, the learning cycle needs to be closed: findings must be curated and presented (written and verbal form) into the contexts where interpretation, comparison, trend analysis and sense-making needs to take place. This needs to take place on a regular basis and in a supportive rather than punitive atmosphere, in order to establish the sought-after *learning culture*. It is proposed that the NSA plays this role and provides this meta-level function for all the SETAs, as there is not currently a mechanism whereby evaluations conducted in and for SETAs can be brought together with each other, and with the meta-level evaluations that are undertaken from time to time (e.g. the NSDS III evaluation).

This level of reflection can guide policy and decision making at a meta-level to (for example) create more enabling conditions for SETAs' work; remove policy obstacles and perverse incentives; fill gaps; and communicate collective achievements or challenges into the appropriate stakeholder contexts (e.g. National Treasury, employers' associations, SETA Boards, DHET Planning Directorate, etc).

In the next section the resources required for the implementation of the framework are described.

## Section 6: Enabling Mechanisms

Central to understanding the scope of a high-level M&E Framework for the SETA environment is developing clarity on the role that SETAs are expected to play in the post-school education and training sector and more specifically, in relation to skills development. The issue of scope has come up in nearly every review of the various skills development strategies, the SETA landscape and particular SETAs. The White Paper on Post School Education and Training is adamant that the SETAs must be given a clearer, narrower and more focused role. This commitment is acknowledged in the Nationals Skills Development Plan and implied in the draft National Plan for Post-school Education and Training.

All these documents focus particularly on the SETAs playing a central role as intermediaries between employers (demand) and training providers (supply). This will require SETAs concentrating their efforts on supporting skills planning through engagement with industry, ensuring that funding is allocated to support provision against demand, and enabling access to and strengthening provision of workplace-based learning (WPBL). In addition to these core functions, there are repeated calls for SETAs to play additional roles including broader skills intelligence, building capacity and occasionally infrastructure at training institutions, providing career guidance, ensuring employment of learners and many more. Some of the core and particularly the additional responsibilities are not the sole responsibilities of the SETAs. This clarification of both the roles and the contributions legitimately expected of different institutions will have significant implications for the focus, scope and results of monitoring and evaluation processes for which the NSA, SETAs and other partners will be responsible. This will in turn have implications for the capacity required to design, oversee and support a high-level M&E Framework in the SETA environment. To ensure the monitoring and evaluation plans outlined above function well, a number of mechanisms, provisions and considerations are therefore considered below.

It is important to refine the definition of intermediation with regard to the role of the SETAs as well as clarifying the responsibilities that other institution will have either independently or in terms of supporting SETAs in this intermediation. This includes formalising who will take the lead role in particular activities, and who will be responsible for specific outputs, outcomes and associated performance standards. A range of documents, many of them currently in draft form, provide a very broad framework within which to start to fill in some of this detail. In order to focus and refine this high-level M&E framework, it is necessary to recognise and clarify the diverse role players in the delivery of skills planning and development and to make explicit the specific roles that the NSA and the SETAs play in this system. Table 3 suggests a way of starting this process of clarification.

*Table 3: Recognising the Diverse Role Players and the SETAs' and NSA's Specific Roles [to complete]*

<b>Learners and Skills Ecosystems require:</b>	<b>Responsible Agencies are:</b>	<b>SETAs' Roles are:</b>	<b>Relevant M&amp;E System and Agencies:</b>
Skills intelligence to inform all other activities, that is regularly updated	SETAs Employers DHET (HEMIS, SETMIS, NLDB) Dept of Labour and Employment StatsSA		
Learning pathways, qualifications and standards	SAQA CHE QCTO		DHET, CHE QCTO Umalusi
Functioning providers	DHET ..... SAIVET (not in place) HEIs (providers) Colleges (providers) DBE: Schools	Limited	DHET ... CHE QCTO Umalusi
Skilled and capable educators and trainers	DHET DBE SETAs -	Fund educator capacity development ETDP SETA has a specific role	
Funding	SETAs NSF NSFASS DHET other ...? NRF / DST		
Attention to transformed access	As above		
Career and study guidance aligned with real needs and opportunities	DHET ... SETAs		
Ongoing review and improvement of M&E and its use for performance improvement	DPME NSA		

## Human Resources for Implementing the Overall Framework

The White Paper on Post School Education and Training states explicitly that the NSA should become an expert body with high-level monitoring and evaluation skills. In order to understand what this would require DHET commissioned a study by National Treasury/ GTAC to develop a business plan for a restructure and refocused NSA. This proposal therefore builds on the White Paper and the NSA business plan developed by GTAC (Ngeleza et al. for DHET, 2019) in proposing that:

- the NSA is repositioned and resourced (with staff and budget) to lead SETA M&E,
- within DHET,
- in partnership with DHET Skills (Planning) and Policy Advice,
- in close collaboration or combined with a Knowledge Management function, and
- in close collaboration with a new Board and dedicated sub-committee.

We recommend that DHET Skills Branch continue to focus on monitoring but within the revised framework presented here. This monitoring data must be available for evaluation purposes, meaning a close collaboration between the NSA and DHET Skills Branch should be established.

The NSA needs to appoint Director, Deputy Director and Assistant Director level staff with expertise in monitoring and evaluation. Their roles will include:

1. Convening an annual think tank to conceptualise an annual evaluation plan as part of a multi-year evaluation plan (this could be done with the NSA Board and/or relevant sub-committee)
2. Commissioning a range of evaluations (see above) according to this plan
3. From time to time undertaking and/or participating directly in evaluations
4. Reviewing evaluations and doing quality control (also with Board representation)
5. Convening quarterly review meetings looking across SETAs' monitoring and evaluation findings (with Skills Branch, SETAs and other key role players – the CRWG could be used for this purpose)
6. Convening annual meta-level synthesis and review events, to form meta-level conclusions about SETA performance and impact (this could be linked in part to the National Skills Summit)
7. Communicating and coordinating the communication of evaluation findings to a range of relevant stakeholders
8. Engaging with SETAs and other policy role players including DHET Policy Directorate in the application of findings, for system-level and organisational level strategic decision making
9. Provide oversight for an evaluation data quality control system in partnership with HEMIS, SETMIS and other role players
10. Putting in place and managing a meta-level M&E system, i.e. a system to monitor the implementation of the overall SETA M&E framework
11. Supporting M&E capacity development for the SETA M&E system (NSA and SETAs).

## Capacity Development

Functioning M&E systems require four-fold capacities that need to exist in individuals, organisations and the PSET system as a whole (see Figure 8).

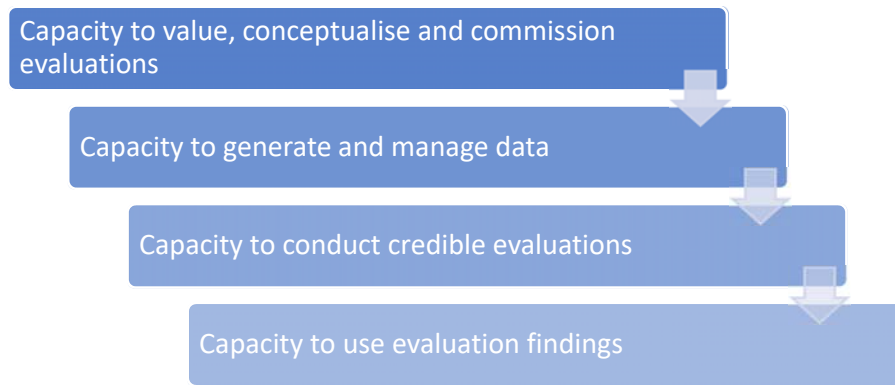


Figure 8: Four-fold capacity needed for M&E in the PSET system

Table 4 guides practical capacity development activities for the Overall SETA M&E framework.

Table 4: How to build individual and system capacity for M&E in SETAs and NSA

M&E Capacity	Level: Individual M&E Practitioners	Level: Wider System
Capacity to value, conceptualise and commission evaluations	NSA staff tasked with SETA M&E DHET staff tasked with SETA M&E Senior SETA M&E staff  Strategy: Workshops Opportunity: Course and learning network	DHET Policy, Research and Evaluation Directorate NSA Senior Management SETA Senior Management Strategy: Presentations Opportunity: NSA Board Meetings, SETA CEO and AA Forums
Capacity to generate and manage data	All SETA M&E staff SETMIS Strategy: Workshops, practical projects Opportunity: Course and learning network	DHET Skills Branch Employers Providers Strategy: Workshops Opportunity:
Capacity to conduct credible evaluations	All SETA M&E staff NSA staff tasked with M&E Service providers Strategy: Workshops, practical projects Opportunity: Course and learning network	
Capacity to use evaluation findings		DHET, Providers, Employers NSA Senior Management SETA Senior Management Strategy: Presentations, think tanks, forums Opportunity: National Skills Summit

The main methodology for capacity development of M&E practitioners and managers is not a once-off or isolated course, but a ‘change management’ process that supports the introduction of new M&E frameworks and processes through a course that is:

- Customised to the SETAs’ context (and this framework, as well as other guidelines developed in the research partnership)

- Change projects (in which course participants undertake an evaluation or related work activity as part of course participation)
- Followed up by ongoing learning networks e.g. sessions in the Collaborative Research Working Group Meeting, the National Skills Summit, and informal online platforms to exchange ideas, challenges and solutions to problems encountered during implementation.

In this way the framework can be continuously strengthened.

It is recommended that the course be piloted in 2020 and subsequently developed into an accredited programme to continuously offer through a higher education institution partnership.

## Appendix 1: Source Documents

Ward, M. and Rosenberg, E. 2019. SETA M&E Project 1 (Develop a High-level M&E Framework for SETAs): Scoping Report. Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

Ward, M. and Rosenberg, E. 2019. SETA M&E Project 3 (Develop Standards for SETA Performance): Scoping Report. Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

Ward, M., Rosenberg, E. and Tsotsotso, K. 2019. SETA M&E Project 3 (Develop Standards for SETA Performance): Workshop Report. Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

Ward, M. and Rosenberg, E. 2019. SETA M&E Project 6 (Develop a M&E Framework for the Discretionary Grant): Scoping Report. Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

Ward, M. and Rosenberg, E. 2019. SETA M&E Project 7 (Develop a M&E Framework for the Mandatory Grant): Scoping Report. Rhodes University, Grahamstown.

All SETA M&E Project Reports and other deliverables are available at [www.ru.ac.za/elrc/projects/meinasetaenvironment/publicationsusefullinks/deliverables](http://www.ru.ac.za/elrc/projects/meinasetaenvironment/publicationsusefullinks/deliverables)

## Appendix 2: Selected References (Please see Source Documents for comprehensive list of references used)

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