

# STRATEGIC PLANNING PLATFORMS

# 7

DISCUSSION BRIEF 7



## BACKGROUND

The planning cycle of the SETAs will, according to the National Skills Development Plan, be aligned to the Medium-Term Strategic Framework's 5-year planning cycle and the Medium-Term Economic Framework's three-year budget cycle. This requires that the SETAs, with key stakeholders, establish five-year priorities through the Sector Skills Plans, develop a three-year budget against this plan and submit an Annual Performance Plan in accordance with the Public Finance Management Act.

The Service Level Agreement between the SETAs and the Department of Higher Education and Training is based on the priorities within the outcomes identified in the National Post-School Education and Training Plans and the National Skills Development Plan. The SETAs are required to conduct monitoring and evaluation to inform the annual updates of the Sector Skills Plans. In 2019 the inclusion of M&E plans in Chapter 5 of the SSP was introduced. It is proposed that the National Skills Authority will then conduct three-year reviews with the SETAs and DHET to evaluate the contribution that skills levy institutions make to the objectives of the system. This M&E will inform the adjustments to the next three-year MTEF budget against the 5-year MTSF plan and priorities.

Evident in the above is a predominantly internal SETA strategic planning process that informs the development of the Sector Skills Plans. There is also a departmental strategic planning process that locates the planning and action plans within the broader strategic processes and priorities of DHET. Finally, there is a review process that locates the SETA and DHET strategies, their implementation and their M&E within the broader Medium-Term Strategic framework and the National Development Plan.

## INSIGHTS (continued on back page)

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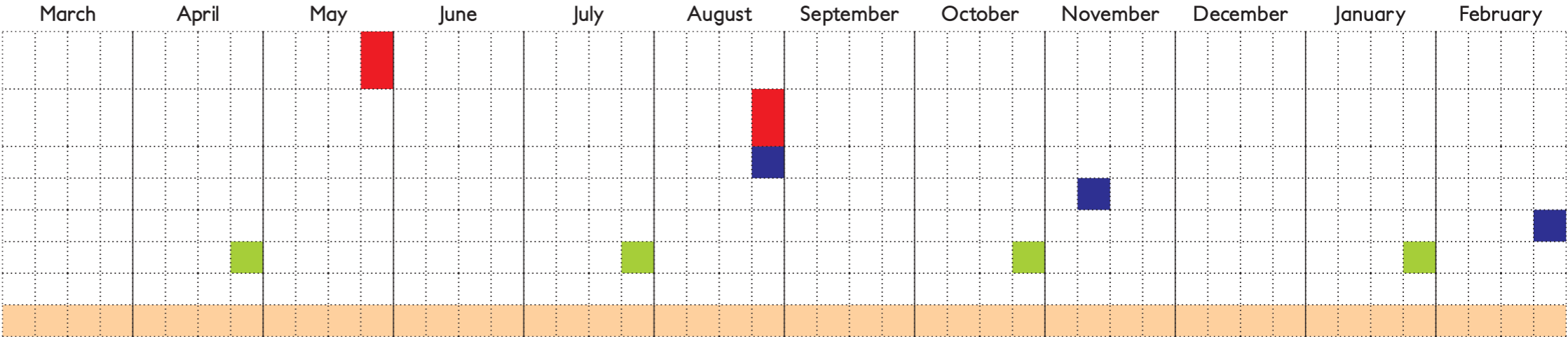
At the cross-sectoral, national level, there is a need for quality and timely labour market intelligence. At the sectoral level, the Workplace Skills Plans form the largest source of information from sectoral and sub-sectoral stakeholders. The WSP information is complemented with strategic research, secondary data analysis, stakeholder consultations and ongoing M&E.



# STRATEGIC TIMELINE

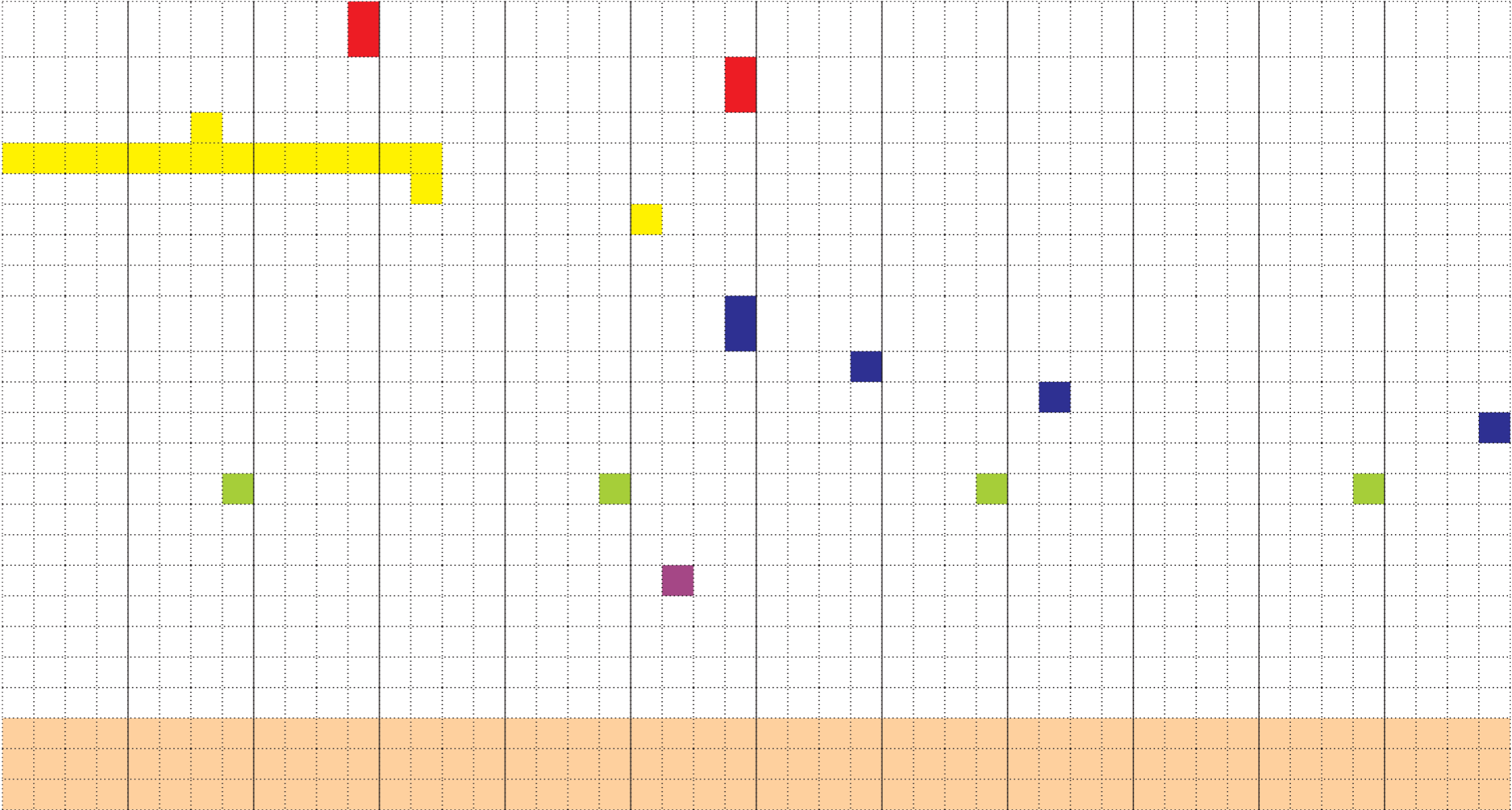
## DHET

- Unaudited financial statements and Draft Annual Report 2019/2020 (National Treasury, Auditor General,)
- Audited financial statements and Annual report 2019/2020 (National Treasury)
- First Draft Annual Performance Plan 2021/ 2022
- Final Annual Performance Plan 2021/2022
- Submit Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan to Parliament
- Quarterly Reports including performance against APP
- Trends in labour market (research) LMI



## SETAs

- Unaudited financial statements and Draft Annual Report 2018/2019 (National Treasury, Auditor General, DHET)
- Audited financial statements and Annual report 2019/2020 (National Treasury and DHET)
- Receipt of all WSPs and ATRs
- Main SSP consultation and development
- SSP First Draft
- SSP Final
- SLA finalisation with DHET
- First Draft Annual Performance Plan 2021/ 2022 (Includes SSP and SLA)
- Submit Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan to DHET
- Final Annual Performance Plan 2021/2022 (Includes SSP and SLA)
- Submit Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan to Parliament
- Quarterly Reports including performance against APP
- Monitoring by National Skills Branch
- SETAs Cluster Evaluation Report Submission
- Regional Skills Forums
- Chamber Meetings
- Trends in Sector (demand and supply)
- Sub-sector research
- Strategic Research Agenda



## INSIGHTS (continued)

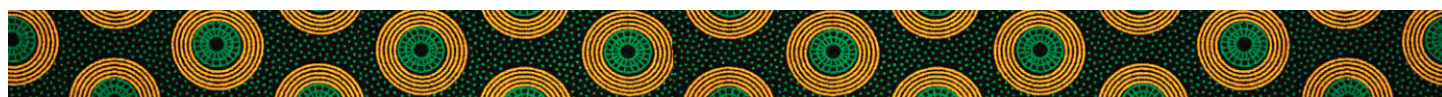
- 2 The structure and content of the WSPs and the Annual Training Reports have significantly improved but the representativity of the employers submitting these plans appears skewed towards large companies.
- 3 The structure and content of the SSP has also been significantly improved over the past few years resulting in clearer strategic planning within the SETAs.
- 4 **The line of sight between the SSPs, the Strategic Plans, the APPs and the Service Level Agreements is not entirely clear. A number of reviews have suggested that the SLA (and occasionally ad hoc requests) undermines the strategic guidance provided by the SSP.**
- 5 The capacity within the SETAs to manage M&E processes that extend beyond compliance monitoring is uneven.
- 6 The M&E within the SETAs and at the interface between the SETAs, DHET and the NSA could be enhanced through the implementation of a more holistic M&E framework built on the national evaluation framework and tools developed by the Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the many strategic frameworks (e.g. the MTSF, the SSP, the Annual Performance Plan) and the strategic moments within these plans (e.g. the development of the SSP, the SP and APP, and the review of SETA performance in relation to the SSP and the SLA) be aligned to an ongoing M&E process at multiple levels.

### Dialogue Questions

- 1 Are all the key strategic planning processes on the spreadsheet in the centre spread? Are any missing?
- 2 Are the dates for particular strategic events accurate on the spreadsheet?
- 3 Is it possible to align particular strategic processes and events with particular evaluative foci at different scales? (see Dialogue Brief 8 for the different evaluation foci suggested by the DPME)
  - a. At the national level would it be possible and useful to do a diagnostic evaluation that links the NDP, the MTSF, the NSDP and the SSPs of the SETAs?
  - b. At the national level would it be possible and useful to do a design evaluation across all of the SETAs to better understand how the plans within the SSPs address the current and future skills challenges and opportunities evident in the NDP?
  - c. Based on the recent tracer studies, how possible is it at the cross-sectoral level to review projects such as learnerships across SETAs through an implementation evaluation?
- 4 The above examples are illustrative of how different evaluation foci can be used at different levels within the skills system. Which evaluations (considering different levels and foci) would you consider a priority?
- 5 Can we identify a series of evaluations that contribute to an expansive learning cycle and thus higher level of understanding and change within the skills system?



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)

All DPME M&E Guidelines are available at [www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Pages/Guidelines.aspx](http://www.dpme.gov.za/keyfocusareas/evaluationsSite/Pages/Guidelines.aspx)

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