SETA Labour Market Survey:

Case studies of firms' experiences

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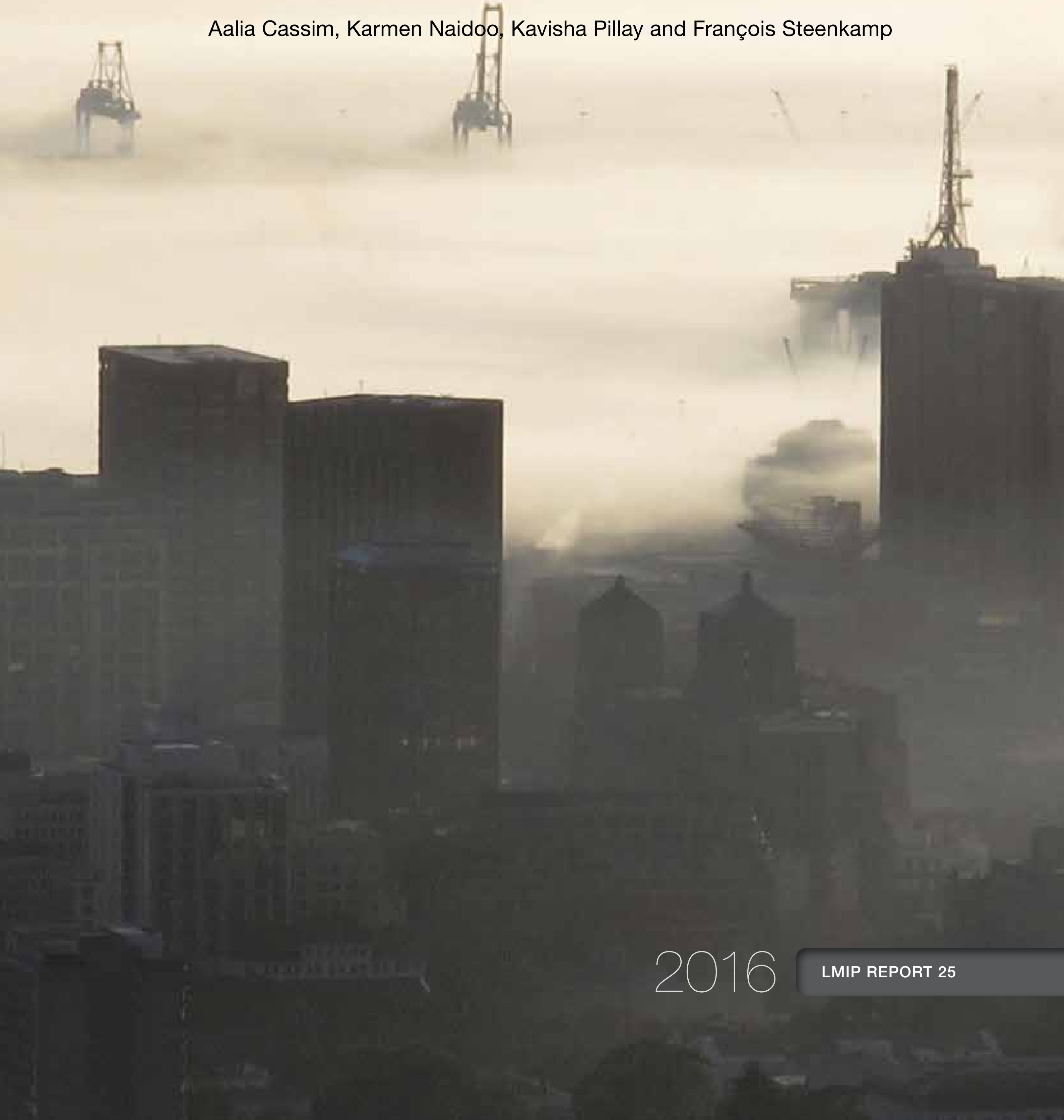

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

BEE	black economic empowerment
CEO	chief executive officer
CHIETA	Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority
CV	curriculum vitae
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
HR	human resources/human resource
IT	information technology
LMIP	Labour Market Intelligence Partnership
LPG	liquefied petroleum gas
MEIBC	Metal and Engineering Industries Bargaining Council
merSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NUMSA	National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa
OFO	Organising Framework of Occupations
SDF	skills development facilitator
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
VAT	value-added tax
VW	Volkswagen

1. INTRODUCTION

The overarching purpose of the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) Labour Market Survey was to collect information that would assist in informing the Department of Higher Education and Training's (DHET) strategy on how to address one of its key mandates, namely skills planning. The survey will therefore serve as one of the suggested tools emanating from the Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) to help establish a credible skills planning mechanism. The survey called for collaboration among the relevant role players in order to achieve this purpose – which is an important step in the development of a credible skills planning mechanism. Furthermore, we consider whether this survey provides better-quality data from firms, thereby leading to more meaningful insights into skills planning.

The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) was chosen as the first SETA in which to pilot this survey, with the survey being conducted from July to September 2014. The employee-level data set captured data on 6 400 employees from about 240 different firms, while the firm-level data set collected data from about 690 firms. Although the response rate was adequate, one of the major challenges in the analysis of the survey data was that, of the firms which responded, not all always answered all the parts of the questionnaire.

Therefore, the purpose of these case studies is to gain a deeper understanding of the systems, human resources, and time necessary for each firm to answer the questionnaire. We interviewed firms with the objective of understanding the practical, administrative and technical issues that arose in collecting data, from the perspective of the respondent. These issues include: converting employee job titles into six-digit Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO) codes; the fact that the survey asked for certain information which firms do not find useful to collect; limited human resources; and the timing of the surveys. This exercise allowed us to uncover the main reasons why some firms were able to answer the questionnaire with ease, while others experienced difficulties. We selected two firms that answered the questionnaire well and two that answered it poorly in order to juxtapose the experience of these different firms. These firms are based either in Gauteng or the Western Cape.

Some of the key research questions guiding these interviews include the following:[1]

- What data systems does the firm use?
- How long does it take to complete the questionnaire?
- How can the questionnaire be improved?
- How can the process of completing the questionnaire be made easier for the firm?
- Is this data internally useful to the firm?

We conducted these detailed studies on the following four firms:[2]

Firm name	Size	Province	Status
Firm A	Large	Western Cape	Answered the questionnaire well
Firm B	Small	Gauteng	Answered the questionnaire well
Firm C	Small	Western Cape	Answered the questionnaire poorly
Firm D	Small	Gauteng	Answered the questionnaire poorly

1 The survey instrument, together with the complete list of questions, will be found in Appendix A.

2 All firms and respondents have been anonymised.

2. FIRM A

[Date of visit to firm: 1 June 2015]

[Name and role of interviewee: Respondent A, Human Resources Administrator]

Introduction

Firm A is primarily a large, family-owned Volkswagen (VW) franchise that consists of a car-repair workshop, a car-parts sales office, and a car-sales dealership. In addition, a Total garage and convenience store also form part of the Group. The data captured from the franchise relates to the Group as a whole and therefore includes employees involved in all these various activities.

The data collected from Firm A was of a good quality, in that the firm was able to answer the entire questionnaire. Moreover, there were no obvious errors. The visit to this firm allowed us to uncover in more detail the mechanisms and systems used to answer the questionnaire.

Human resources and systems: Uncovering how the questionnaire was answered

The human resources (HR) clerk, Respondent A, was responsible for answering all sections of the questionnaire. Respondent A is the only person who manages HR functions for the firm and reports directly to the Finance Manager. Respondent A had most of the information for the survey at hand, but had to clarify a few of the financial questions with the Finance Manager. Therefore, the Finance Manager had a minimal level of involvement and there was no official sign-off by him.

As regards the time needed to complete the questionnaire, Respondent A did it over three consecutive days, completing some parts of it at a time. She estimated that, if she had had to finish the questionnaire all at once, it would have taken her half a working day (about four hours).

Firm A utilises a software program called Sage VIP to manage all the firm's data. Sage VIP includes 'employee', 'financial' and 'equity' modules that allow for the effective management of different types of data and information relating to a firm.[3] In this respect, therefore, Respondent A found it easy to answer the questionnaire, as all the information could be drawn from the Sage VIP system in the format required by the Sector Education and Training (SETA) Labour Market Survey template. It was with the same ease that Firm A was able to report on its black economic empowerment (BEE) status using the 'equity' module of the software. The table below provides further details on how the system is used to answer each part of the questionnaire:

3 Sage VIP offers a complete HR and payroll-processing solution that can be tailored to the specific needs of the firm (e.g. to its size and reporting needs) through the various modules that can be added on. Respondent A estimates that the annual cost of Firm A's Sage VIP licence is R10 000 (including VAT).

Questionnaire section	System/s used to access information	Was the information readily available?
Part A: Employment profile (individual employee data)	Sage VIP: Employee module and the payroll module.	Yes, from the Sage VIP system that can directly export to MS Excel. There was no need for secondary analysis or manipulation.
Part A: Training profile (individual-level training activities)	Sage VIP: Planned training is loaded onto the system every month after management meetings and is guided by a training manual that is provided by VW. As employees complete the training, they are classified as such on the system.	Yes, from the Sage VIP system that can directly export to MS Excel. There was no need for secondary analysis or manipulation.
Part B: Vacancies	There is no formal system where this is captured. However, the matter is spoken about at monthly management meetings and is thus recorded in notes on the meetings. Respondent A, as the HR functionary, is closely attuned to the needs of the various business units, which is how she is able to provide information on vacancies. She also manages the recruitment process, so she has first-hand knowledge of how long it takes to fill vacancies.	Most of the information is available through notes of meetings and through discussions with business-unit managers. The Sage VIP system is able to track individuals from the time that they apply for a job (through loading their curricula vitae (CVs)) to the time that they are either appointed or otherwise exit the recruitment process. In this way, information is provided on the recruitment timeline. Respondent A had to synthesise all this information so as to answer the relevant questions in this part.
Part B: The decision to train and the quality of training	Training schedules and plans are largely predetermined by VW (the parent company). Therefore, this information is to be found in the training manuals provided by VW.	Yes, from the Sage VIP system that can directly export to MS Excel. There was no need for secondary analysis or manipulation.
Part B: Financial information	Sage VIP: Financial module. This allows very detailed data on employees' basic salary, and each additional benefit or deduction, to be collected. Information relating to promotions and leave is also recorded here.	Yes, from the Sage VIP system that can directly export to MS Excel. There was no need for secondary analysis or manipulation.

Firm A's focus on training and on the tracking of training information by employee can be directly attributed to the fact that the firm is linked to a large company such as VW, which conducts much of the training planning for Firm A. VW provides frequent information on training courses, with such courses often being facilitated through the Imperial Training Academy. Firm A cannot operate effectively unless staff update their skills to keep up with changes in VW cars and their parts, or with technological change in the field more generally. This is why training is an important focus for the firm.

The evidence confirming the accuracy of the data provided by Firm A can be found at its offices, on a comprehensive and well-organised hard-copy filing system that is managed by the HR administrator. All invoices relating to training payments are stored here and can be tracked to a General Ledger that is needed in order to apply for the mandatory grant from the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector SETA (merSETA).

Key challenges

Two areas of the survey were highlighted by the HR administrator as being difficult to complete. The first related to the matching of training programmes to National Qualifications Framework (NQF) levels. Some of the training specified by VW is already classified according to NQF levels. However, ad hoc training courses are often difficult to classify. The second concerned the mapping of job titles to six-digit Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO) codes, which was a difficult task for the HR administrator given the industry-specific jobs.

Recommendations

The interviewee provided a few key recommendations during the interview. Firstly, she suggested that, instead of having to log onto the merSETA online system in order to submit information and data – which is often a very slow process or one that does not function well during periods of peak usage – a template should be provided that can be downloaded and completed, and then uploaded. She indicated a preference for an MS Excel template similar to the one provided with this survey instrument. In this way, she could update the information throughout the year and submit it when it is due, rather than having to log onto the system so as to provide the information for the entire year at the time that it is due.

Secondly, the HR administrator would prefer the submission date to fall within the May-to-July period of the year. Given that the firm's financial year-end is at the end of February, she has to work on financial statements during March that are externally audited in April, a process which requires her to be available to make corrections or provide clarifications.

The third recommendation relates to the format of the OFO codes that are provided by merSETA. The HR administrator suggests that merSETA provide OFO codes by subsector separately (i.e. Motor, Metal Plastics, etc.) so that it is easier to look through the codes that could be relevant to the particular firm. Of course, there are some codes that are common across subsectors, so these can be listed for multiple subsectors as necessary.

The interviewee emphasised that, in order to effectively complete a questionnaire like the present one, the HR administrator needs to be closely attuned to the managers of each business unit and have an awareness of what is going on with the operations of the business. The ability to effectively use a data-management software system and MS Excel, as well as good organisational skills, are critical to providing the sort of detailed data that we require. Where authorisation may be needed to provide salary information, the HR administrator could complete all other sections of the questionnaire, leaving only the salary information to be provided by the Finance Manager.

Finally, Respondent A also emphasised that the information requested in the questionnaire is information that the firm would look at and discuss during quarterly (or more frequent) Training Committee Review meetings, and is therefore of importance to the firm. Furthermore, the training information is needed for each employee's performance review.

It is very clear, then, that with the right combination of an effective data-management system and a well-functioning and organised HR unit, completing a survey such as the present one is not an overly difficult or time-consuming task. Furthermore, this is a case where the information requested is also of critical importance to the firm itself with regard to its own operational and planning needs. Thus, there is little additional effort necessary to provide it for the merSETA. As outlined above, there are ways in which the merSETA and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) may assist in making this annual data-submission exercise more efficient.

3. FIRM B

[Date of visit to firm: 8 June 2015]

[Name and role of interviewee: Respondent B, Financial Manager]

Introduction

Firm B is a family-owned business that is involved in the manufacture and installation of liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) appliances for commercial purposes. The firm has been in operation for 26 years. The data captured relates to all workers in the firm at the time of data collection.

The data collected from Firm B was of a good quality. The firm managed to answer most of the questions in the questionnaire, with no obvious errors. The visit to this firm allowed us to gain greater insight into the firm, the systems used by the firm, and the industry that the firm falls under.

Human resources and systems: Uncovering how the questionnaire was answered

Respondent B, who is the Financial Manager of the firm, is also responsible for the human resources (HR) function. Respondent B's role furthermore includes the management of training, and consequently, the bulk of the information requested in the survey was readily available to her. Respondent B is the only person who manages the HR and training functions of the firm. She reports directly to the Chief Executive Officer (CEO), who signed off on the survey. There was, however, limited input from others in the firm in completing the survey.

The Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) Labour Market Survey took Respondent B three to four days to complete, as she could only complete parts of it at a time. Respondent B estimated that, without having to deal with her other work commitments, the survey would have taken about half a day.

Firm B uses various systems in order to manage its data. For instance, the firm uses VIP Payroll to collect employment profile information, including information relating to salaries, individual characteristics, and equity. For the training profile of employees, the firm uses a training matrix that Respondent B personally updates. These systems, as well as the relationships among the key managers of the company, made it fairly simple for Respondent B to answer the questionnaire. The table below provides further details on how the system is used to answer each part of the questionnaire:

Questionnaire section	System/s used to access information	Was the information readily available?
Part A: Employment profile (individual employee data)	VIP Payroll, comprising the employee module and the financial module. Also captures leave days, deductions, benefits, and promotions.	Yes, from the VIP Payroll system that can directly export to MS Excel. There was no need for secondary analysis or manipulation.
Part A: Training profile (individual-level training activities)	A training matrix was collated in MS Excel. Firm B collects the following information: what an individual is trained in; when the next refresher training session should take place; and the current qualification level of the employee and the individual's job description (if it has changed and whether the employee needs further training). In addition, all training requirements are discussed during monthly meetings and are recorded in the minutes of the monthly meetings.	Yes, the training matrix was readily available in MS Excel. In addition, minutes of meetings were available. There was no need for secondary analysis or manipulation.
Part B: Vacancies	There are no formal systems in place to collect information on vacancies, given that this is a small firm. Vacancies are discussed at monthly meetings and are recorded in the minutes of the meetings. Respondent B has personal knowledge of all vacancies and handles all vacancy administration (advertising of vacancies, recruitment, and interviews).	Minutes of meetings are available, but a conversation with Respondent B will also yield this information.
Part B: The decision to train and the quality of training	There is no formal system in place where training decisions are made. The decision to train employees is based on the demand for skills and is at the discretion of the managers of the firm and the CEO. However, given the nature of the industry, certain training is required by regulation, which stipulates certain skill levels for particular job types.	Minutes of meetings are available, but a conversation with Respondent B will also yield this information.
Part B: Financial information	QuickBooks allows Respondent B to obtain any financial report that she requires, including reports containing salary and other employee information.	Yes, using both VIP Payroll and QuickBooks, all financial information can be directly exported to MS Excel. There was no need for secondary analysis or manipulation.

The evidence confirming the accuracy of the data provided by Firm B is to be found in a well-organised filing system. Respondent B is easily able to access any documentation that can verify the data submitted by Firm B.

Key challenges

Although Respondent B did not encounter any specific challenges in terms of completing the questionnaire, she highlighted challenges specific to the firm's interaction with the merSETA and the firm's classification within the broader industry.

Firstly, qualifications for the industry that Firm B falls under are developed by the Chemical Industries Education and Training Authority (CHIETA), but the firm is registered with the merSETA. While the firm is part of the LPG industry, its primary role is the manufacture and installation of LPG piping, which does not fall under the merSETA – although this is where the firm has been classified. Although Firm B is registered with the merSETA, the firm has found the merSETA unresponsive and has had limited communication with them, particularly concerning grants for training. The firm therefore finds itself on the periphery without significant external assistance in terms of its training needs.

Secondly, the Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO) codes were difficult to translate to the LPG installation subsector. For this reason, Respondent B did not indicate the OFO codes in the survey. If the firm were to be classified using OFO codes, it would be placed in the 'generalised other' category or the 'plumbing and air-conditioning' category, which do not provide any detail regarding the type of firm or the type of work that Firm B undertakes.

Recommendations

The interviewee provided a few key recommendations during the interview. Firstly, Respondent B suggested that there be a portal to submit data on an individual employee, such as through Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) filing.

This portal could then be used to furnish the SETAs with individual-level-firm employee data.

Secondly, Respondent B suggested that the period of data collection be revised. She indicated that it would be best to send surveys during ‘quiet periods’, such as September, rather than March, which is the financial year-end for many firms.

Thirdly, in terms of respondents for the questionnaire, Respondent B recommended that these should be persons who have acquired intimate knowledge of the workings of the firm and its employees. In the case of Firm B, the firm is a family business and is small; hence Respondent B has sufficient knowledge of everything that happens in the business. However, in larger businesses, this may very well not be the case. Consequently, it was recommended that the survey be split between the HR manager, who can provide information about human resources, and a foreman, who can provide information about what happens on the ground. The reason for doing this would be to get a better sense of what is happening in the business, as many senior individuals (CEO, directors, etc.) may not know employee-training details but only the outcomes.

Lastly, Respondent B suggested that, in order to determine the success or failure rate in respect of training, researchers should examine issues such as staff motivation and determinants relating to this. This was not only highlighted by Firm B, but also by other firms in the manufacturing industry. Respondent B also noted that the firm would not use the data collected for further analysis, as it was merely a duplicate of what had previously been collected.

Firm B is certainly an example of an organised firm with an efficient data-management system. The questionnaire was answered with ease and information was easily exported from the firm’s internal systems. However, from the interview process, it appeared that constraints on the performance of small firms such as Firm B arise from the lack of response from the merSETA in terms of accessing grant funding and tailoring training courses that are useful to the industry in which the firm operates. Thus, there is a need to review the relationships between the SETAs and firms, as well as the coding of occupations and industries in order to provide an accurate representation of the sector.

4. FIRM C

[Date of visit to firm: 27 May 2015]

[Name and role of interviewee: Respondent C, Office & Human Resources Manager]

Introduction

Firm C is a small manufacturing company consisting of 30 employees. The firm specialises in the design, manufacture, and supply of stainless-steel products, including industrial cooking equipment, conveyor impinge ovens, braising pans, potato peelers, and customised trolleys.

Certain sections of the questionnaire were answered poorly by the firm. The visit to the firm provided insight into the reasons for this. It seems that the questionnaire was answered poorly owing to three factors. Firstly, the design of the questionnaire may not capture all of the idiosyncratic characteristics of small firms. Secondly, the respondent was not aware of certain terminology used in the questionnaire (e.g. the Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO) codes). Thirdly, it is possible that there were communication problems between the enumerator and the respondent.

Human resources and systems: Uncovering how the questionnaire was answered

The respondent, Respondent C, is the Office Manager and was responsible for answering both Part A and Part B of the questionnaire. Respondent C is a senior staff member responsible for all accounting, human-resource (HR), and administrative functions and thus has access to all relevant information. The respondent stated that there was no need for the Managing Director to sign off on the completed questionnaire.

The respondent indicated that both parts of the questionnaire were completed relatively quickly and easily. Part A of the questionnaire took approximately ten minutes. This was due to the relevant information being readily available on the firm's payroll system, and because the firm is relatively small in size (with 30 employees in total). The telephonic interview part of the questionnaire (Part B) took approximately 15 minutes.

The manner in which the respondent accessed the relevant information requested in Parts A and B of the questionnaire seems typical of a small firm. Firm C uses software program such as Pastel Payroll and Pastel Accounting to manage the firm's financial data, and Microsoft Excel to record the firm's administrative and HR-related data. Essentially, all data was recorded on simple spreadsheets, which is sufficient in view of the fact that the firm is relatively small and there is no need for more advanced database systems and programs.

With respect to the completion of Part A of the questionnaire, there were a few gaps. Firstly, data pertaining to the six-digit OFO code for each employee was not provided. When asked about this, the respondent stated that she did not know what these codes were. However, when inspecting the spreadsheet provided by the private consultant detailing employee training at the firm, the six-digit OFO codes by employee were included. Consequently, the data was indeed available.

Secondly, the respondent did not provide any employee-education data. When asked about this, she stated that the firm does not keep a record of the level of education of its employees. When asked whether the level of formal education attained by a prospective employee was important, the respondent stated that it was considered but was not deemed overly important. Rather, the Managing Director, who decides on the hiring of new employees, is more interested in the employees' work experience and the references from their previous jobs. Indicators of the employee's practical-skills level are relatively more important for the firm's hiring decision than the employee's level of education.

Thirdly, regarding data on the individual training profile of each employee, data specifying the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level of the training undertaken by each employee was not provided. The firm has fairly detailed information on the training received by each employee by calendar year. The majority of this training is in the form of on-the-job training and thus has no official accreditation. Two of the 28 employees received Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) occupational training, but the NQF level for this training was not available.

Initial inspection of the survey data shows that the section exploring vacancies was not completed adequately. However, after discussing this with the respondent, insight was gained into why this was the case. Essentially, all decisions regarding staff requirements and vacancies are determined by the Managing Director in an ad hoc manner. Being a small firm, the firm's Managing Director is actively involved in 'floor-level' activities and is thus able to monitor any staff requirements as per the functioning of the firm. Therefore, there is no formal recording of vacancies in the firm.

The section regarding the decision to train and the quality of the training was completed adequately in some parts and poorly in others. In particular, the question enquiring about the quality of training received by employees was completed incorrectly. This is strange, since the data is available. The data states that all employees received internal training. However, a mere examination of the data in Part A indicates that two employees received training from a public training institution (7.1%) and 26 received internal training (92.9%). Since the telephonic

Questionnaire section	System/s used to access information	Was the information readily available?
Part A: Employment profile (individual employee data)	Pastel Payroll.	The majority of data was readily accessible. As regards the OFO code data, the Respondent did not know what these codes were. In respect of employee-education data, the firm does not record or necessarily take into account this information.
Part A: Training profile (individual-level training activities)	Excel spreadsheet.	Yes, the information is readily available on a spreadsheet. The information is recorded by the Workshop Manager and is given to the Office Manager. The Office Manager then sends this information off to a private consultant who deals with all the merSETA and employment equity-related administration.
Part B: Vacancies	No system in place. Staff requirements and vacancy determination are decided in an ad hoc manner by the Managing Director.	Since no formal system is used to determine or record staff vacancies, there is no recorded information.
Part B: The decision to train and the quality of training	No system in place. All training-related decisions are made in an ad hoc manner, with the Managing Director consulting the Workshop Manager and the respective employees in the workshop. There is a spreadsheet detailing training undergone by employees during the calendar year.	Parts of this section were answered adequately. However, the section detailing the quality of the training received was completed incorrectly.
Part B: Financial information	Pastel Accounting.	Yes, the information is readily available. Information regarding training spend in the previous financial year was not provided, even though the same information for the current year was provided.

interview in respect of Part B was conducted after the written component of Part A, the enumerator should have been prepared for this and checked that the information from Part A was consistent with the information being provided in the telephonic interview.

With respect to whether the company can provide verification of its responses regarding employee-level training activities, there is a clear system of recording all employee-training activities. This information is passed on to a private consultant who deals with all of the 'paperwork' relating to the merSETA and employment equity-related administrative tasks. As such, this information is readily available. Furthermore, the firm asks employees to sign letters and invoices detailing the training that they have received from external institutions and the cost of this training.

Key challenges

The respondent detailed two key challenges she faced when completing the questionnaire. Firstly, the respondent struggled to communicate with the enumerator when completing the telephonic survey in Part B. The respondent stated that she found it difficult to understand the questions being asked. However, once she had the questionnaire in front of her, it was easier to understand. Secondly, the respondent did not know what OFO codes are and thus could not provide information on them.

Recommendations

The respondent provided a number of recommendations. With respect to competencies required by the individual answering the questionnaire, the respondent recommended that such individual: be skilled in the software used to store the data and be able to update the data accordingly; understand the rules and classification system applied by the Metal and Engineering Industries Bargaining Council (MEIBC); and know the various employees' levels within the organisation and where they fit into the firm's organogram. The respondent further intimated that the HR Manager would be best equipped to deal with these questions.

The respondent stated that the information asked for in the questionnaire is of no use to the firm. As a smaller firm, there is little need for detailed systems recording the training of employees. Skills development and training is done in an ad hoc manner as per the needs of the firm as it adjusts to the market. Owing to the smallness of the firm and the fact that the Managing Director is very involved in the productive activities of the firm, any skills shortages become quickly apparent to him and he is able to respond accordingly.

With respect to the questionnaire in general, the respondent was of the opinion that it was relatively easy to understand and thus complete. However, when going through the respondent's answers to certain questions, specifically those related to the OFO codes and the NQF levels, it is evident that additional information regarding terminology and classifications may assist in improving the quality of the responses provided by firms.

Two further issues to consider relate to the outsourcing of employment equity- and skills development-related administrative work to external consultants, and enumerator training. With regard to the former, it might be useful to consider whether the survey could incorporate these consultants in the process, since they possess most of the information required in the survey. With regard to the latter, since the completion of Part A takes place before the telephonic interview, the enumerator should be well versed in the answers provided in Part A and must be able to check for consistency in the respondent's responses.

In general, this case study of a small firm does suggest that questions may need to be framed in a manner that is cognisant of smaller firms. Unlike larger firms, their training activities may be more job-specific and can thus only be provided internally. Greater ability to measure and record on-the-job training activities may be useful in respect of such a survey.

5. FIRM D

[Date of visit to firm: 8 June 2015]

[Name and role of interviewee: Respondent D, Finance Officer]

Introduction

Firm D is a family-owned business that began operating in 1969. The firm specialises in mining and engineering, with a focus on welding. The firm also produces target-practice shells for Denel. Furthermore, Firm D is looking to expand into the railway and energy sectors. The data captured relates to all employees in the firm.

The data collected from Firm D, although of good quality, did not provide much insight into the employee profiles, and many questions were left unanswered. In particular, questions relating to salaries, education and qualifications were not completed. The visit to the firm allowed us to gain greater insight into the company, the systems used by it, the challenges facing it, and, importantly, why some parts of the questionnaire were left unanswered.

Human resources and systems: Uncovering how the questionnaire was answered

Firm D does not have a human-resource (HR) department, as the firm is relatively small (it has less than 40 employees). Respondent D, who is the Finance Manager, fulfils the role of HR, payroll and training manager. She therefore had access to all the information required to complete the Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) Labour Market Survey and did not need it to be signed off by any of the directors.

The survey took Respondent D most of a morning to complete (about three to four hours). Respondent D noted that she receives a number of surveys to complete, but prioritised the present survey as it serves a broader purpose relating to skills development in the industry. She added that small firms are highly dependent on the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) for training grants.

Although Firm D provided limited individual-level employee data, it uses various systems in order to manage data that is relevant to it. The firm uses SAGE VIP Payroll to collect employment profile and payroll data. In terms of training information, among her various responsibilities, Respondent D is also the Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) and records all training-related data on an Excel spreadsheet. For financial information, Respondent D uses Pastel Accounting. The table below provides further details on how the system was used to answer each part of the questionnaire:

Questionnaire section	System/s used to access information	Was the information readily available?
Part A: Employment profile (individual employee data)	Sage VIP Payroll comprising the employee module and the payroll module.	Yes, from the Sage VIP Payroll system that can directly export to MS Excel. There was no need for secondary analysis or manipulation.
Part A: Training profile (individual-level training activities)	Respondent D maintains an Excel spreadsheet that contains the following information: name of worker, position, worker's hourly wage, cost per day of training, Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO) codes, as well as what training an employee has undergone, and the time frame of the training.	Yes, directly from the Workplace Skills Plan and the training spreadsheet in Excel.
Part B: Vacancies	There is no formal system in place. The firm has not had any vacancies in the past three to four years. However, if it receives work seekers, the firm keeps the curricula vitae (CVs) on file. New employees are usually hired through recommendations from other workers.	All personal knowledge possessed by Respondent D that she would easily volunteer in a conversation.
Part B: The decision to train and the quality of training	Respondent D is the SDF and the decision to train staff is taken during annual meetings in June. The meetings discuss the budget for training, the type of training available, and who is eligible to receive the training (this is done by Respondent D and the relevant supervisors). All decision and action plans are noted in the minutes of the meetings. Management finds on-the-job training to be more useful than certain training programmes, but makes use of accredited training programmes to cover, for instance, health and safety risks.	All personal knowledge possessed by Respondent D that she would easily volunteer in a conversation. Decisions taken in terms of training are recorded in the minutes of the meetings.
Part B: Financial information	Pastel Accounting is used and contains the following information: salaries, deductions, leave, medical aid, and pension.	Yes, from the Pastel Accounting system that can directly export to MS Excel. There was no need for secondary analysis or manipulation.

Firm D has the following documentation that can verify the accuracy of the data: financial records, Excel training spreadsheet, copy of the Workplace Skills Plan, and wage schedules (wage-rate document for each employee). The documents are all readily available through Respondent D in a well-organised filing system.

Key challenges

Respondent D highlighted three key challenges. Firstly, completing lengthy surveys is time-consuming and in small firms the financial manager or HR manager will often fulfil a number of roles. This suggests that they are often overstretched. They are therefore most inclined to answer questions that are important to the market, such as those sent out by Statistics South Africa on an annual basis. However, it was recognised that the merSETA survey contained important questions. Consequently, this survey would become a priority, because the firm relies on the grant from the merSETA. However, certain information that was considered less important to the firm, such as years of schooling and qualifications, was not provided.

Secondly, given the extensive role of finance managers in small firms, they find the limited resources needed to ensure that everyone who is eligible for training, receives it. In view of this, it would be preferred if training were to be provided by external training managers and that this process be facilitated by the merSETA.

Lastly, while the firm's employees are easily classified using OFO codes, it is found that the coding is constantly changing, and almost on an annual basis. This makes it difficult to track information. In addition, the Workplace Skills Plan, the Bargaining Council and the firm use different coding, which makes communication difficult. The inconsistency in OFO coding makes it time-consuming to fill in documents and makes information less transferrable between institutions.

Recommendations

Respondent D provided a few key recommendations during the interview. The first was that surveys should be kept as simple as possible, with the questionnaire being sent out in an Excel spreadsheet format. This makes it simpler to fill in and allows information to be easily transferred between internal company databases and the survey spreadsheet.

Secondly, Respondent D suggested that the OFO codes be standardised between various skills development plans, domestic firms and international codes. This makes information easily transferrable and easy to track over the long term.

Thirdly, Respondent D suggested that the time of year be considered when surveys are sent out. It was recommended that surveys be sent out around the annual shutdown – from November to December – rather than in the middle of the year. In addition, sensitivities within the industry should be considered. For example, Respondent D did not fill in the salary information, as it was the time of the National Union of Metalworkers of South Africa (NUMSA) strikes and it was thought that this issue was more sensitive than usual.

Fourthly, in terms of respondents for the questionnaire, Respondent D recommended that the respondent be someone who handles the employee and financial data. In a small company, such as in the case of Firm D, the survey would go to the Financial Manager. However, in a larger firm, the survey should be split and sent to the HR manager, the payroll manager and the person responsible for training employees.

Firm D is an example of a typical small business. It is under-resourced in terms of human-resource capacity and therefore provides limited training for its staff. However, it also noted that on-the-job training was far more beneficial to the business than training programmes. Going forward, it would be useful for the merSETA to interact with firms such as this one in order to make sure that such firms get funding for training programmes that improve the efficiency of the firm. In addition, to obtain all the requested information from a firm, it would be worth explaining why it is useful to collect certain types of information, such as education levels of employees, and how these fit into the broader context of improving training systems.

6. CONCLUSION

These four case studies have provided insights from firms that found it a relatively simple task to complete the survey and from those that experienced difficulties in doing so. We have also been able to elicit nuanced insights that relate to firms of different sizes.

The challenge in converting employee job titles into six-digit Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO) codes has been referred to across the board. In particular, given the specificities of some of the jobs in this Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority (merSETA) labour market, it is difficult for firms to code all employee roles. The merSETA is therefore encouraged to engage more with the national list of codes and map them to the potential job titles that are found within its sector. This exercise would then provide some guidance on which codes can be applied to specific jobs that are found in the merSETA sector. This would also be a more useful list of codes to send to firms. In addition, the frequent changes in the OFO codes makes it more difficult for firms to adjust, and is thus raised as an important challenge.

Two of the firms in our set of case studies utilise the Sage VIP system to capture employee data and financial information relating to the firm. This system comes in a standardised package that allows for modules to be added on. For example,s there is one for employment equity information that is used for reporting on black economic empowerment (BEE). There is the possibility of a SETA module being designed to make it as easy and efficient for firms to complete this survey. Moving forward, however, more analysis is needed of the types of information technology (IT) systems that are utilised by a wider range of firms in order to arrive at the best possible systems solution. In addition, there needs to be a review of the time of year that it is best for firms to submit the Workplace Skills Plan/ Annual Training Report, since submission in about March/April is problematic given that this period coincides with the financial year-end for many firms.

In the absence of a standardised module or data-collection system for this survey, there is sufficient enough preference for an MS Excel-based template to be provided, similar to the one provided with present survey. This way, firms can add the relevant information to the template throughout the year and submit it to the merSETA on a specified due date. The present survey only had an Excel template for Part A, but this could easily be extended to Part B and include rules for completion, such as drop-down menus and tick boxes. This is strongly preferred to the existing process of logging onto the merSETA website in order to submit the information online. Of course, the Excel template will have strict rules on how to fill in the information so as to make the final processing by the merSETA a standardised task.

Firms, particularly smaller ones, are often constrained by limited human resources and therefore make use of external skills development facilitators (SDFs). There needs to be more engagement with these external SDFs in order to better understand the role that they can play in completing a survey such as the present one. While they are able to provide the employee-training information, they are not in touch with the internal operations of the firm and thus may not have access to financial information. In addition, they do not have insight into vacancies and other firm-specific information. Therefore, it is fundamentally important that a representative of the firm – ideally, a member of the HR function or the financial manager – be involved in completing the survey, even if in collaboration with an external SDF.

Finally, there are some areas of disjuncture between the information asked for in the survey and that which the firms find internally useful. For example, questions on employees' baseline levels of education and qualifications were poorly answered because firms themselves do not find this information useful and therefore do not collect it. In addition, where on-the-job training is the prevalent form of training, particularly in small firms, there is little detail provided on this type of training in the survey response. For this type of training, there is often no accreditation and thus no associated National Qualifications Framework (NQF) level, nor will the training have a name. Therefore, the survey will need to be adjusted to take this into account and ask different questions about on-the-job training, such as the particular skill that it was targeted at improving or developing.

Overall, it does not seem that completion of the survey was overly time-consuming or exceptionally difficult. A combination of the right type of IT system and a survey champion that can both access the data required and who is attuned to the needs of the business, is key. For the important questions concerning vacancies – which are used to gain insights into skills gaps – it is critical that the respondent answering such questions be involved in management meetings and recruitment to some extent, as this information is often available informally through institutional knowledge or in notes and minutes of meetings. Incorporating the SDFs into this survey process might also be an important element of its success.

In essence, the case studies have provided valuable knowledge on how firms collect, store and access information on their employees and training activities, and this knowledge can be used to enhance the survey instrument and optimise the survey process.

APPENDIX A: SURVEY INSTRUMENT FOR CASE STUDY ANALYSIS

1. How many people were responsible for completing the survey?

    1.1 Please fill in their names and designations (job titles) below, in order of responsibility in completing the survey:

Name	Job title	Which part of the questionnaire were they responsible for?
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

    1.2 Is the completed questionnaire signed off by a senior member of staff?

2. How long did it take for the firm to complete the questionnaire?

3. How does the respondent access information to complete the questionnaire? Is the information readily accessible from existing systems in the company (What are these?) or did the respondent need to pull together the information from the different people in the organisation?

Questionnaire section	System/s used to access information	Was the information readily available?
Part A: Employment profile (individual employee data)		
Part A: Training profile (individual-level training activities)		
Part B: Vacancies		
Part B: The decision to train and the quality of training		
Part B: Financial information		

4. What challenges did the firm face in completing the questionnaire? Why did the respondent face these challenges?

    41. How best can individual-level employee data be provided for the SETAs?
    4.2 What suggestions does/do the respondent/s have to improve the questionnaire (wording, structure, inclusion of explanatory information, etc.) or any parts of it?

5. What suggestions does/do the respondent/s have to improve the data-collection process (is there a specific time of year that is best, templates that can be created, etc.)?

6. How did the respondent translate job titles into six-digit OFO codes (occupations)? How do you think the standardisation of the codes within the SETAs and nationally can be improved?

7. What evidence can the company provide for each of the responses in the questionnaires? For example, for the employee-level training activities, how can we verify that the training occurred?

8. What competencies must the respondent/s have to be able to complete the questionnaire? What authority should the respondent/s have within the firm to access the type of information asked for in the questionnaire?

9. Are the data and information asked for in the questionnaire useful to the firm's own planning and human-resource management? Do you analyse this information internally?

APPENDIX B: SETA LABOUR MARKET SURVEY 2014 (COPYRIGHT)

SETA Labour Market Project

Project 3, Theme 3 of the Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP)*

Development Policy Research Unit
University of Cape Town, South Africa
June, 2014

Data Collection Instrument
Responses to Part A will be collected as an electronic dataset
Responses to Part B will be collected via a telephonic interview

LABOUR MARKET INTELLIGENCE PARTNERSHIP

DEVELOPMENT POLICY RESEARCH UNIT

1

Administrative Details (Dependent on type of interview/survey etc.)

<u>Interviewer Details</u>

Name:

Signature:

Time:

Additional Comments:

<u>Establishment Details</u>

Name:

Branch:

Address:

SETA (if applicable):

Sub-sector:

Person Interviewed:

Interviewee's Position:

2

PART A[1]

Section 1 General Overview, Employment Profile and Education and Training provided

1.1 Overview

1.1.1 Please describe the main business activity of your organisation (use list of SIC codes).

1.2 Employment Profile

1.2.1 Please complete the following excel spreadsheet, filling in details for each employee:

Unique Identifier for the individual (e.g. staff number)	DOB	Job Title	OFO Code (6 Digit)	OFO (6 digit) Description	Promotion in the last 3 years *(If yes, please answer by stating the year of the promotion)*	Gender	Population Group *(Black, Coloured, Asian, White, Prefer not to answer)*	Disability *(Yes / No)*	Municipal area in which the individual works *(Please provide postal code)*	Nature of the contract *(FT/PT)*	Actual salary (or if this is not possible the salary/pay scale)	Highest grade of schooling completed at the beginning of the financial year?	Post schooling qualification at the beginning of the financial year *(FET and Higher Education – National Certificate, Diploma, Degree, Honours)*	Occupational qualification or occupational award at the beginning of the financial year.

[1] Part A is to be administered electronically in the form of an Excel sheet, whereas Part B will be conducted telephonically. The sections have been combined here for simplicity.

1.2.2 What education and training was provided by your company to each employee in the previous financial year? (For each individual employee listed above, please complete the following Excel spreadsheet)

Unique Identifier for the individual *(If the individual has been on multiple training programmes, please use a different row for each training programme)*	Please indicate the employee's training status *(Answer options: 1. Completed a training programme in the last year; 2. Currently on a training programme; 3. Started but did not finish a training programme in the last year; 4. No training in the last year. For answers 1 – 3, complete the remaining columns along the row)*	What was/is the name of programme?	Select the programme type *(Please indicate On the job training, ABET, FET (NCV or Nated), Skills Programme, Occupational qualification (such as in a learnership, apprenticeship), Higher education (national certificate, diploma, degree, etc)*	Select the NQF Level *(Level 1 – 10 or non-accredited)*	What was/is the duration of the training programme? *(Less than 6 months, more than 6 months but less than a year, more than 1 year but less than 2 years, more than 2 years)*

1.2.3 What education and training was provided by your company to unemployed young persons or learners in the previous financial year? (For each unemployed young person/learner please complete the following Excel spreadsheet)

Note: This could be a learner not yet in your employ that receives a bursary, a person on a learnership that has not been in the employ of your company, or a person taken on for an internship

Unique Identifier for the individual *(If the individual has been on multiple training programmes, please use a different row for each training programme)*	Please indicate the individual's training status *(Answer options: 1. Completed a training programme in the last year; 2. Currently on a training programme; 3. Started but did not finish a training programme in the last year)*	What was/is the name of programme?	Select the programme type *(Please indicate ABET, FET (NCV or Nated), Skills Programme, Occupational qualification (such as in a learnership, apprenticeship), Higher education (national certificate, diploma, degree, etc)*	Select the NQF Level	What was/is the duration of the training programme? *(Less than 6 months, more than 6 months but less than a year, more than 1 year but less than 2 years, more than 2 years)*

Part B

Section 2 Rationale for education and training

2.1 Changes to the Organisation:

2.1.1 How has employment in your organisation changed over past 2 years?

Change	Number
a. New recruits	
b. Leavers	
c. Net change	

2.2 Vacancies

2.2.1 How many vacancies occurred in your organisation in the last financial year, and in which occupations? How long does it typically take to fill these vacancies and why? (Please complete the table below per occupation type).

(a) Occupation	(b) OFO Code (6 Digit)	(c) Number of vacancies	(d) Length of time taken to fill position *(Answer options: 1. 3-6 months; 2. 6-12 months; 3. 12-18 months; 4. More than 18 months; 5. Still vacant)*	(e) How many of these vacancies were filled by internal candidates?	(f) For vacancies that took longer than 6 months to fill or are currently still vacant, why do you think it has taken this long? *(Answer options: 1. Our recruitment process takes this long; 2. We could not find candidates with suitable skills; 3. Chosen candidates did not accept our offer of appointment; 4. Other (please specify))*

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2.3 Recruitment and retention

2.3.1 Is the organisation involved in any specific initiatives to recruit/retain individuals with scarce skills?

	(a) Recruit *(Please tick)*	(b) Retain *(Please tick)*
Yes		
No		

2.3.2 If you answered yes to 2.3.1, please choose the three most relevant ways in which your organisation does so:

	(a) Recruit (please tick 3)	(b) Retain (please tick 3)
1. We offer higher pay or more incentives than other firms in our sector		
2. We have introduced job enrichment		
3. We have introduced further training/development opportunities		
4. We have improved career progression		
5. We provide assistance with travel		
6. We provide assistance with childcare		
7. We have introduced flexible working hours		
8. We have changed the job specification by giving some of the tasks to other staff		
9. We have changed the job specification by automating some of the tasks		
10. Other, please specify		

2.3.3 Give the total number of persons trained in the year before the last financial year by NQF level?

	Number
1. NQF 1	
2. NQF 2	
3. NQF 3	

6

4. NQF 4	
5. NQF 5	
6. NQF 6	
7. NQF 7	
8. NQF 8	
9. NQF 9	
10. NQF 10	
11. Non-accredited training	

2.4 The decision to train [for the following questions, 1 is the highest or best rank]

2.4.1 How are employees selected for training?

	Please provide the ranking (1 - 3)
1. The line manager/supervisor indicates that the person requires training in a particular area due to poor performance	
2. The line manager/supervisor indicates that the person has been working well and deserves to go on this training	
3. There is a rotating system to ensure that everyone ultimately accesses training	
4. The training is linked to the employment equity plan of the company	
5. Each individual has a personal development plan and this determines what training the person attends	

2.4.2 What were the three most important reasons your firm provided training in the last year?

Reason	**Please provide the ranking (1 - 3)**
1. To maintain or improve productivity	
2. To ensure that the company can be internationally competitive	
3. To ensure that the company is competitive nationally	

4. When the company introduces new technology	
5. Changes in occupational profile	
6. Changes in skills required for particular occupations	
7. Social good (non-Corporate Social Responsibility related)	
8. Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)	
9. To meet employment equity targets	
10. Other, specify	
11. Other, specify	
12. Other, specify	
13. We don't do very much training at all	

2.4.3 In the last financial year, what are the three most important reasons for not training more workers than those that were actually trained?

Reason	**Please provide the ranking (1 - 3)**
1. Firm has sufficiently trained workers who do not require further training	
2. Employees are too busy to undertake training and development	
3. Formally trained workers get trained and leave	
4. No training available in relevant subject area	
5. Formal training programmes are expensive	
6. Formal training is not relevant because of the nature of the work that individuals undertake	
7. Present demand for products do not justify any further investment in training	
8. Many of the existing/new workers do not have the basic qualifications to be trained	
9. The quality of the courses or providers are not satisfactory	
10. Employees do not request or want to participate in training	
11. Insufficient information available about which courses are available	
12. Training programmes funded by the SETA do not meet our needs	
13. The start dates or times of the courses are inconvenient	
14. There is not enough money available for training in this current economic climate	
15. Other, please specify	

2.4.4 What do you consider to be the top three benefits of providing training in your organisation?

Benefits	**Please provide the ranking (1 - 3)**
1. Enables us to outperform competitors	
2. Supports improved business development activities	
3. Decreases running costs (for example decline in use of excess overtime subcontracting or use of temporary staff)	
4. Lessens strain on management of existing staff in covering shortages	
5. Decreases recruitment costs	
6. Improves quality of the products/services	
7. Increased efficiency or decreased wastage	
8. Enables us to introduce technological change	
9. Other, please specify	
10. Other, please specify	
11. Other, please specify	

2.5 Quality of training

2.5.1 At which type of institution is training taking place and why? *(Please indicate the estimated proportion of total training)*							
	(a) Comprehensive university	(b) University of technology	(c) Public FET colleges	(d) Other private training institution	(e) Other public training institution	(f) Internal Training	(g) Other (please specify)
Proportion of total training (%)							
2.5.2 For each of the institutions *at which training is taking place*, what are the 3 most important reasons for choosing each of these institutions (please provide the ranking: 1-3)							
1. The quality of training is better							
2. The reputation of the institution is better							
3. The training is cheaper							
4. The type of training is only offered here							
5. The length of the training is more suitable							
6. The start dates and timing of the courses are more convenient							
7. The location of the institution is more convenient							
8. Other, please specify							

2.5.3 What is your perception of the 3 main problems and the 3 main benefits of training that is accredited and funded through the SETA system?

Problems	Advantages
1.	1.
2.	2.
3.	3.

2.5.4 How does your organisation measure the impact of the training?

	Please tick 1
1. We get feedback from the individuals about the quality of the training	
2. We get feedback from the line manage/supervisor about the quality of training	
3. We measure the impact by the extent to which the training leads to improvements in productivity in the unit (section)	
4. We measure training by the level of job satisfaction that individuals express	
5. We do not measure the impact of training	
6. Other (please specify)	

Section 3 Financing education and training

3.1 What was the turnover for the last 2 financial years of your organisation?

2011/2012: **R**	2012/2013: **R**

3.2 What was the total payroll for your organisation in the last financial year? R ____________

3.3.1 What was the total amount spent on training by your organisation in the last financial year? R __________

If an accurate figure is unknown, please approximate using the ranges below

R		Please tick one
1. 0		
2. 1 – 10,000		
3. 10,001 – 40,000		
4. 40,000 – 100,000		
5. 100,001 – 200,000		
6. 200,001 – 500,000		
7. More than 500,000		

3.3.2 What was the total amount spent on training by your organisation in the financial year before the last one?
R __________

If an accurate figure is unknown, please approximate using the ranges below

R	Please tick one
1. 0	
2. 1 – 10,000	
3. 10,001 – 40,000	
4. 40,000 – 100,000	
5. 100,001 – 200,000	
6. 200,001 – 500,000	
7. More than 500,000	

3.3.3 Of that amount answered in 3.3.1, what percent is spent on existing employees and what percent on the unemployed (these may be people the company intends to recruit or training above the firm's needs)?

	%
1. Existing Employees	
2. Potential Employees	
3. Total	100%

3.3.4 Of the amount answered in 3.3.1, what percentage of this training spent is on:

	%
1 Managers	
2 Professionals	
3 Technicians and associated professionals	
4 Clerks	
5 Service and sales workers	
6 Craft and related trades workers	
7 Plant and machinery operators and assemblers	
8 Elementary occupations	
9 Armed forces, occupations unspecified elsewhere, not economically active	
10 Total	100%

3.4 What percentage of the skills development levy you paid did you get back as a Mandatory Grant in the last Financial Year?

3.5 How much did you receive as Discretionary Grants in the last Financial Year?

Section 4 Policy and Coordination Issues

4.1 How frequently do you engaged with your respective SETA? (Please tick 1)

1. Very often	2. Often	3. Sometimes	4. Rarely	5. Never

4.2 What is your opinion of the current SETA performance? (1 is very poor and 4 is excellent; please provide a ranking for each row item by placing a tick in the correct column)

	1	2	3	4	Do Not Know
a) The ability of the board to govern the SETA					
b) The SETA is meeting its objectives					
c) Accountability to stakeholders					
d) Whether the Sector Skills Plan reflects the priorities of the sector and the workplace					
e) The state of financial management within the SETA					
f) Efficiency with which mandatory grants are paid					
g) Discretionary grants are consistent with your priorities (for the workplace)					
h) SETAs enable the provision of quality training					
i) SETAs enable young people to access workplace experience					
j) Learners are awarded the certificates through the SETA system on time					
k) The SETA ensures that you have access to qualifications that make sense for your business					
l) The SETA takes feedback from the sector					

seriously and uses this to improve the way in which it carries out its functions					

4.3 What do you think are the objectives of your respective SETA? (Please tick the 3 most relevant)

	Please tick 3
1. To provide training	
2. To facilitate the training process	
3. To provide grants for training	
4. Accredit training providers	
5. To certify learners	
6. Other (please specify)	

4.4 If you are concerned about the availability of skills, what do you think would be the best way of signalling this to the SETA and the State so that they can provide you with the skills?

____

____

____

____

Glossary

Pay-scale	Bracket into which the individual's monthly salary falls.
Promotion	A broad understanding of a promotion is used here. It can either be an upgrade in title, a salary increase above normal increase levels, or an expansion of work tasks.
Salary	Monthly gross remuneration.
Scarce skills	Scarce skills refer to a situation in which there is a lack of adequately qualified and/or skilled individuals in the accessible labour market currently or in the future. This situation exists when employer finds it difficult to find people with the skills required.
Turnover	Total firm revenue over the time period specified.

LABOUR MARKET
INTELLIGENCE PARTNERSHIP

SETA Labour Market Survey: Case studies of firms' experiences

The purpose of the SETA Labour Market Survey was to collect firm-level information to assist DHET to address a key mandate of skills planning. The survey is one of the new tools proposed by the LMIP, to create new datasets towards building a credible skills planning mechanism. The merSETA was chosen as the first SETA to pilot the survey, from July to September 2014. While the response rate to the survey was adequate, one of the major challenges associated with the analysis of the survey data is that firms did not always answer all parts of the questionnaire. Therefore, the purpose of these case studies is to gain a deeper understanding of the systems, human resources, and time required for each firm to answer the questionnaire fully. This exercise allows us to uncover the main reasons why some firms were able to answer the questionnaire with ease, whilst others experienced difficulties. Future iterations of the survey can be adjusted to address the issues highlighted, to create reliable labour market datasets on skills needs and training offered at firm-level.

About the LMIP

The Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) is a collaboration between the Department of Higher Education and Training, and a Human Sciences Research Council-led national research consortium. It aims to provide research to support the development of a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning in South Africa. For further information and resources on skills planning and the South African post-school sector and labour market, visit http://www.lmip.org.za.

WWW.LMIP.ORG.ZA