LMIP LEARNING SESSION 6: REVIEW OF THE WORKPLACE SKILLS PLAN AND THE ANNUAL TRAINING REPORT

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
AgriSETA	Agricultural SETA
ATR	Annual Training Report
BBBBEE	Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment
BUSA	Business Unity South Africa
CESM	Classification of Educational Subject Matter
CHIETA	Chemical Industries Sector Education and Training Authority
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DPRU	Development Policy Research Unit, University of Cape Town
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
FASSET	Financial, Accounting, Management, Consulting and other Financial Services Sector Education and Training Authority
FPMSETA	Fibre Processing Manufacturing Sector Education and Training Authority
HETMIS	Higher Education and Training Management Information System
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
HTFV	Hard to Fill Vacancies
INSETA	Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority
LMIP	Labour Market Intelligence Partnership
MerSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services Sector Education and Training Authority
MG	Mandatory Grant
MQA	Mining Qualifications Authority Sector Education and Training Authority
NDP	National Development Plan
NEDLAC	National Economic Development and Labour Council
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NQA	National Qualification Authority
NSA	National Skills Authority
OFO	Organising Framework for Occupations

PoPI	Protection of Personal Information Act
PSET	Post-school Education and Training
PSETA	Public Service Sector Education and Training Authority
QCTO	Quality Council for Trade and Occupations
SARS	South African Revenue Service
SD	Skills Development
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SETMIS	Skills Education and Training Management Information System
SMME	Small, Medium and Micro-sized Enterprises
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
UIF	Unemployment Insurance Fund
W&RSETA	Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority
WSP	Work Place Skills Plans
WSS	Workplace Skills Survey

THE PROBLEM

The *Ministerial Task Team on SETA Performance,* as well as the *White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (PSET)* expressed concern about the quality of data received by SETAs from employers, and the limited potential for credible analysis of such data for skills planning. The *White Paper on Post-School Education and Training*[1] thus calls for the review of the Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and the Annual Training Report (ATR), both of which were replaced by *Annexure 2* of the SETA Grant Regulations in April 2013. The new instrument that is proposed (to collect data from employers through the mandatory grant process is referred to as the *Workplace Skills Plan (WSS))*.

Towards the successful transition, DHET, SETAs and various stakeholders met in the learning session to build consensus regarding the elements and content of the proposed survey, and the implementation path moving forward. This challenge framed the space for discussion and engagement in this dedicated two day learning session; which forms part of the LMIP Institutional Capacity Building series.

Presentations from DHET skills planners, DHET staff involved in data management, as well as a DPRU researcher and SETA representatives, over the two days provided the basis for discussion and engagement. The dialogue was aimed at achieving four outcomes:

- **Outcome one:** The development of a common understanding of the proposed WSS.
- **Outcome two:** The sharing of proposals on the kinds of analyses that can be undertaken from the employer skills survey.
- **Outcome three**: Reflections on the quality of current data.
- **Outcome four:** Proposals on how the findings from the employer survey can/should be used to inform planning nationally.

THE CONTEXT

The learning session was held at the Protea Capital Hotel in Pretoria from 14th – 15th of September 2017. It was attended by more than 60 participants[2] from a range of institutional backgrounds; mainly from the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), but also other government departments, Sector Education Training Authorities (SETA), universities and representatives from both public and private research entities. The following organisations were represented:

- Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)
- Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC)
- Council on Higher Education (CHE)
- Insurance SETA (INSETA)
- Local Government SETA (LGSETA)
- Services SETA (SSETA)

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[1] Department of Higher Education and Training. 2013. White paper on post-school education and training. DHET: Pretoria.

[2] Refer to Appendix 1 for the full list.

- Wholesale and Retail SETA (W&RSETA)
- Construction Education Training Authority (CETA)
- Education, Training and Development Practices SETA (ETDPSETA)
- Media, Information and Communication Technologies SETA (MICTSETA)
- Department of Trade and Industry (dti)
- Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (MerSETA)
- Energy and Water SETA (EWSETA)
- Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)
- Fibre Processing Manufacturing SETA (FPMSETA)
- Health and Welfare SETA (HWSETA)
- Mining Qualifications Authority SETA (MQA)
- Agricultural SETA
- Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality and Sports SETA (CATHSSETA)
- Finance and Accounting Services SETA (FASSET)
- Public Service SETA (PSETA)
- National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS)
- Food and Beverage SETA (FoodBev SETA)
- Chemical Industries SETA (CHIETA)
- Bank SETA
- University of Cape Town, Development Policy Research Unit (DPRU)

All participants had an interest in understanding and discussing the new proposed instrument that would replace the WSP and ATR reports.

KEY ACTION POINTS AND DECISIONS EMERGING FROM THE EVENT

Organised according to the four expected outcomes of the session, the sub-sections below summarise the key points of agreement that emerged, including the identification of areas for further discussion and action. For a more extensive outline of the proceedings and the content of the presentations, please refer to Sections One and Two.

OUTCOME 1 COMMON UNDERSTANDING OF THE PROPOSED WSS

The combination of the WSP/ATR and skills planning survey into the WSS is intended by DHET to support efficiency and improve the quality and credibility of employer data on the demand and supply of skills, to inform economy-wide planning. All stakeholders acknowledged that the White Paper provides the mandate for this change, and that this shift must be adopted.

The issue of the scope and core purpose of the survey is still in debate. The discussion led to a consensus that further clarification will be needed regarding Section 5 in the proposed instrument that sets out the purpose of the WSS. Many stakeholders were of the view that the ethos of the Skills Development Act and the link to training and skills development should be made clearer to maintain the social-, as well as the research value of the instrument. DHET invited the stakeholders to submit electronic feedback and suggestions to DHET by the end of September, to assist with the wording in key sections of the instrument to clarify these issues.

OUTCOME 2 PROPOSALS ON THE KINDS OF ANALYSES THAT CAN BE UNDERTAKEN FROM THE EMPLOYER SKILLS SURVEY

After some inputs and engagements amongst the participants, DHET recognised the need to further define the key research questions which the survey will aim answer.

The inputs by the DPRU clearly illustrated the kinds of analysis possible through the proposed instrument. Currently it will be possible to do a demographic profile of employees by industry, firm size and in aggregate. It is also possible to construct local-level profiles of employment, including salary distributions and changes in firm's size in terms of employment. Once the information is gathered over a longer period, it will be possible to track trends in employment, by industry, firm size and in aggregate. It is not yet possible to assess with this proposed tool, to what extent employment change over time is being held back by the supply of skills? The instrument also allows comparisons of occupations, education/qualification and field of study (mismatches).

With regards to the questions asked in Section C "hard to fill vacancies" it would allow one to look at the location and main reasons for vacancies by industry, firm size and in aggregate, as well as look at vacancies relative to current employment by industry, firm size and in aggregate. It is also possible to consider the salary distribution of current employees in high-vacancy occupations by industry, firm size and in aggregate, as well as spatial (only provincial) mismatches between employment and corresponding hard-to-fill vacancies. Lastly, it is possible to look at the profile of the current employees in terms of their age, race and gender for instance.

The 'Municipality of Employment' variable is data that we do not otherwise have, so constitutes a strong contribution to analytic potential of the proposed instrument.

A key insight that became evident is that the proposed survey allows us to move away from cross-sectional data, as we are able to identify individuals and connect individuals from one company to the next over long time periods. The survey has the potential to yield new detailed data on workers, vacancies and training at national level, on a regular and standardised basis. This represents a significant shift and will allow for good analysis

OUTCOME 3 REFLECTIONS ON THE QUALITY OF CURRENT DATA

The aim is that the WSS improves the quality of the data to better inform national skills planning. The standardisation of data reporting, a core aim of the WSS, was agreed as contributing to this goal.

It was also generally agreed that the narrative that SETAs have poor quality data must be addressed and changed. DHET presented a new Excel template for the SETAs to use in their reporting of data from employers. The aim is standardize the data received from SETAs to improve general data quality.

Also through an exploratory analysis of Mandatory Grant data, participants were shown the possibilities of analysis that lie in data currently available to them.

There was broad-scale agreement that the proposed WSS will address most of the issues with regards to valid data from employers. The drop down menu options are intended to improve the

consistency of the answers from employers, for example the OFO codes and the Edudex system was also presented to stakeholders as critical in the validation process.

OUTCOME 4 PROPOSALS ON HOW THE FINDINGS FROM THE EMPLOYER SURVEY CAN/SHOULD BE USED TO INFORM PLANNING NATIONALLY.

DHET stakeholders explained and discussed with participants a range of ways in which the proposed WSS will feed into the national skills planning processes. The data from the WSS will allow DHET to:

- develop indicators from the WSS
- prepare a general report from WSS findings
- prepare detailed reports on specific dimensions of WSS
- use information to inform the identification of occupations in high demand

There were also discussions around how the WSS will allow and feed into sectoral planning processes? The view was that SETAs could;

- develop additional indicators from WSS
- analyse data weighted to the specificities of their sector
- prepare reports on specific dimensions of the WSS
- use the DHET sector brief and occupations in high demand, and other reports, to identify sectoral skills needs.

The proposed WSS will help to ensure that DHET will have occupational shortage data and skills gap data – with common definitions – with common specifications – and contribute to identification of occupations in high demand. The limitations are that the WSS cannot help us understand the future.

The ability to link the survey to other datasets is valuable. Obvious links that could be made between the WSS and other databases include linking to the National Learners Records Database, UIF database, and Employers Tax Database.

GENERAL COMMENTS

Particular insights emerged over the two days. **Data weighting** was a core discussion point, as each SETA faces different challenges with regards to weighting. The survey is a non-random sample, this poses challenges in terms of weighting the data. A non-random sample means that the likelihood of a firm not responding to the survey, is linked to a characteristic of the firm (smaller firms respond less than larger firms, and/or profit level might influence company survey response). When we don't know what the underlying factor is, or how to measure it, then it's very hard to correct for this. There is also the uncertainty regarding what happens between rounds of the survey that might affect the sample. Across SETA stakeholders the learning session provided the space to share current practices with regards to data weighting, and many SETAs shared their approach. It was noted that the Labour Market Dynamics Survey can be used to inform data weighting.

The following **enabling actions on the part of SETAs** were discussed as having the **potential to support implementation:**

- Consulting with employers about the survey
- Workshopping the tangible survey system with employers
- Capacitation i.e. arranging the network and system set-up

DHET noted the following commitments:

- Further engagement towards the finalised survey and the implementation of the new interface
- To revisit and refine the purpose of survey (Lauren Derman will assist with this)
- Clarify the key research questions that the survey is intended to answer
- Include definitions of all words used in the survey
- Refine details of the survey
    - Change the reporting on training so that *Employee profile* is at unit record level (start with yes/no and later could consider including type of training)
    - Clarify whether to include a list of sites/satellite offices in the administrative section
    - Clarify the salary ranges that will be used (**Morne Oosthuizen**)
    - Clarify the categories of highest level of educational qualification for artisans

DHET consultations timeline:

- BUSA – September 2017
- NSA – October 2017
- NEDLAC - undecided

Transitional arrangements include:

- Engage with your own SETA system developers and stakeholders. Amend SETA systems this year in order for employers to submit in line with new form on 30 April 2018.
- Include question on HTFV as per discussion document in existing processes
- Include question on Skills gaps as per discussion document in existing processes
- DHET will continue to do analysis of existing WSP/ATR across SETAs
- SETAs to provide comments on template for data by end of October
- DHET circular 15 November 2017
- Guideline to implement current WSP/ATR (e.g. common definitions)

IN SUMMARY

The proposals which emerged from the Learning Session were in support of DHETs goal to reform the WSP/ATR into the WSS. The Department set out clear considerations and suggested concrete ways in which this WSS can be taken forward in short-medium term, as well as medium-long term. In the main the session contributed to building a greater consensus on the intentions of the proposed tool and a shared understanding of how it is intended to feed into national planning processes.

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Labour Market Intelligence Partnership (LMIP) is a unique undertaking designed to inform and support evidence-based skills development policy in South Africa. In addition to research collaboration and information sharing, this large-scale programme includes a component aimed at research and institutional capacity development in the country. This is a very ambitious goal, conceptualised to move beyond increasing the number of researchers working in this area (through a bursary and internship programme), to focus on strengthening and supporting the capacity of the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) and other stakeholders to manage a labour market intelligence system through structured learning sessions.

The capacity-building programme centres on structured learning sessions over the lifespan of the LMIP. The sessions aim to provide research teams, DHET staff and SETAs the opportunity to interact with each other, sharing and learning collectively, using the evidence base provided by the research as a new opportunity for engagement, reflection and capacity building in the area of skills planning. The sessions are not conceived as merely a one-way flow of knowledge. They are planned to be designed in consultation with DHET, as knowledge sharing workshops to build capacity around using the LMIP research results and skills planning more broadly.

This document discusses the concept underpinning the sixth learning session. The platform provided through this session will draw extensively from the process already underway and insights gathered up until this point, through the Review of Annexure 2 of the SETA Grant Regulations (Government Gazette N0 35940). This revision process essentially speaks to the improved and strengthened template that will be used by SETAs to gather data from employers for the purposes of skills planning.

1.2 PROBLEM STATEMENT

The *Ministerial Task Team on SETA Performance,* as well as the *White Paper on Post-School Education and Training (PSET)* expressed concern about the quality of data received by SETAs from employers, and the limited potential for credible analysis of such data for skills planning. These documents draw attention to the following obstacles with respect to the current process of collecting and analysing data from employers: 1) issues around the length of the instrument, 2) assertions around the lack of relevance of/missing indicators to support skills planning, 3) the low rate of WSP/ATR submissions or response rates, and finally, 4) differential treatment of public and private employers through different templates for completion.

The *White Paper on Post-School Education and Training*[3] thus calls for the review of the Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and the Annual Training Report (ATR), both of which were replaced by *Annexure 2* of the SETA Grant Regulations in April 2013. The new instrument that is proposed (to collect data

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[3] Department of Higher Education and Training. 2013. White paper on post-school education and training. DHET: Pretoria.

from employers through the mandatory grant process is referred to as the *Workplace Skills Plan (WSS)*.

The *White Paper* advises that the revised instrument should be *"an agreed upon national template"*, and should include *"information about all training that is taking place in the workplace; current levels of skills, experience and qualifications of employees; and skills priorities and gaps for the short and medium-term"*. According to the *White Paper,* the intention is to produce a *"user-friendly and accessible template"* that serves its intended purpose. In a similar vein, the *Ministerial Task Team Report on SETA Performance (DHET, 2013)*[4] recommends that *"the development of the new mandatory grant instrument should be to balance what data employers can reasonably provide, and by when, with the national imperative to collect useful and accurate information on the labour market"*.

These imperatives frame the space for discussion and engagement provided through this learning session.

1.3 PURPOSE

In line with the problem statement, it is proposed that this learning session:

a) engages with the *Discussion Document on the Review of Annexure 2 of the SETA Grant Regulations (Government Gazette N0 35940)*, which provides an amended Annexure 2, and outlines processes by which data collected by 21 SETAs can be integrated by the Department; and
b) provide guidance on opportunities for data analysis

1.4 EXPECTED OUTCOMES OF LEARNING SESSION

It is expected that the learning session will lead to the following learning outcomes:

a) Common understanding of the proposed WSS
b) Proposals on the kinds of analyses that can be undertaken from the employer skills survey
c) Reflections on the quality of current data
d) Proposals on how the findings from the employer survey can/should be used to inform planning nationally.

1.5 KEY QUESTIONS

There is a current review process which affects the way in which traditionally, scarce and priority skills need were identified by employers feeding through to SETAs, but how does/should this fit into the national process? Two key challenges for SETAs and the DHET, arising from this context is to reflect and engage on the revised instrument/tool and consider and engage on how this feeds into the sectoral and national process of skills needs identification, raising the following questions:

1. What is the thinking behind the new instrument?
2. How does this affect the data processing/value chain?

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[4] DHET. 2013. Report of Ministerial Task Team on SETA Performance. DHET: Pretoria.

3. What does the new data collection tool look like?
4. What does the new survey imply for Sector Skills Planning?
5. What kinds of analyses can be undertaken with the data generated by the employer survey?
6. How will this new process feed information into sectoral and national reporting and skills planning purposes?

2.1 ENGAGEMENT AND DISCUSSION: DAY 1 (14 SEPTEMBER 2017)

The facilitator, **Angelique Wildschut,** welcomed all participants and spoke to the core aim of the learning session: discussing and talking through the proposed survey instrument. She asked everyone to briefly introduce themselves, share their affiliations and their expectations for the learning session in terms of the broad purpose. The expectations in general related to learning about the proposed Workplace Skills Survey (WSS) and the process of implementation (mainly with regards to the associated timelines and progress towards final implementation). The participants' expectations included:

- Increasing understanding regarding the proposed instrument
- Understanding how the transitionary process/implementation will unfold, and to discuss related concerns in the context of existing SETA operations and data collection processes of SETAs
- Expectations that there would be discussions on how to enhance the quality of the data and information
- Understanding how this survey will feed into the national skills planning process and other systems
- Understanding the differences between the collection of this data and other surveys
- Greater understanding around how the data weighting and validation process will unfold, and the implications
- Understanding the proposed tool in terms of how it will enhance and improve the skills planning process

The participants showed interest in supporting the utilisation of the data for national purposes, and as an opportunity for SETAs to have a broader impact on skills planning. The facilitator then proceeded to set out the potential value of this session as a starting point for engagement on the practical implications of the planned implementation process. She added that the purpose of the learning session is to engage and ask questions, and encouraged the audience to treat this session as an interactive space.

FRAMING QUESTION

The Learning Session was initiated with a presentation of the framing question to guide the two days' engagements. **Melissa Erra** introduced the policy framework and legislative environment underpinning the review of the Annual Training Report (ATR) and Workplace Skills Plan (WSP)

templates (also referred to as *the Review of Annexure 2 of the SETA Grant Regulations)*. She argues that the shifted education and skills development landscape in 2009, characterised by the transition into DHET, must be seen as a major policy shift. The White Paper on Post-school Education and Training is the underlying framework, which offers the mandate for the revision of the template so that there is a nationally standardised and simplified tool for collecting data on skills. The reports on SETA performance, and the Ministerial Task Team Review on SETA performance (Government Gazette) both underpin the need for revision. She asserts that through these investigations concerns about the quality of the data coming from employers, as well as the limited potential for analysis coming from the SETAs, were brought to light, highlighting a need to reflect on the current policy environment. The SETA Grant regulations were revised in 2012, which heralded in a major revision – an introduction of national instruments and the review of the mandatory grant. The SETAs have a clear mandate to collect quality information, stemming directly from the Skills Development Act. In fact, since 2014 there has been a 5% increase in the submission rates (of WSPs) from employers – this is because SETAS instituted support to employers to submit WSPs, and DHET and social partners engaged and recognised the need to improve the quantity and quality of employer and employee data.

In 2011 the National Skills Development Strategy provided the basis for the type of information SETAs are required to collect. Historically SETAs were never given targets requiring them to collect employer information.

Melissa Erra discussed the current situation of data collection from employers, and provided some reflections from DHET. The narrative that SETAs have poor quality data must be addressed. She emphasised the importance of asking the question, how do we improve the data? Some of the interventions set in place is to build on the capacity to do analytical work based on the workplace skills plans. She noted the importance of focusing on the quality of information, in addition to the quantity of information collected. The system capacity for analysing the data and providing insight has only begun to sprout recently. Some of the currently employed coding systems impacts on the quality of information in general, as this may differ between SETAs in various ways (for example, occupational and geographical variables). The Sector Skills Plan (SSP) framework, to be further strengthened through a national level framework still to be determined, attempts to offer a process for standardisation through outlining the relations between data sources at a sectoral and national level.

Melissa Erra highlighted some challenges with the current tool: the lack of valid data from employers (e.g. Vacancies), lack of validation of data, the length of the instrument (20 tables to be completed), inconsistent application of the Oraganising Framework for Occupations (OFO), lack of diagnostic capacity, and different treatment of public and private employers. All this affects the utility of data for sectoral skills planning. The LMIP research has been drawn on to inform the review, and a working group was established in the department to assist in the process of review. She closed by reflecting that the learning session is about building capacity on the proposed tool and

to discuss the types of analytical work that is possible with the data that SETAs currently obtain and will need to collect in the future. The discussions from this learning session are also important as they will be used to inform and update the discussion document on the proposed tool.

DISCUSSION

Sylvia Tsunke noted that there are challenges with regards to getting data from companies. She asked whether it would be possible to receive data from SARS which might provide information on which companies should report to which SETAs. **Josie Singaram** supported the need for a new instrument saying that the standardization of the WSS is a positive. She said that SETAs agree that information at a national level is important, but challenges related to getting sector-specific information, as municipalities align their skills planning to the National Development Plan (NDP). Some municipalities are not clear as to why some vacancies are hard to fill – thus she reports in their sector they are doing one-to-one feedbacks with municipalities.

Melissa Erra indicated that the SARS data can provide insights with regards to levy paying employers but there is a need to collect data to respond to specific skills planning information requirements. Further the SARS data is collected at Standard Industrial Code (SIC) level but there is always a need to improve the quality of data from these sources while recognising that the labour market is not static. An example is when businesses change their core business thus affecting their SIC. She notes that it would be important to engage with whether to include sectoral specific data fields in the tool: will we make the WSS standardized in other words no sectoral specific data will be allowed for inclusion or allow for flexibility? Again she feels there is a need for alignment to bridge the requirements for both sector and national skills planning needs, as such these need to be expressed clearly in the discussion document in order to allow debate and agreed upon principles. These inputs are important considerations to be included in the discussion document.

The discussion thus raised the question of the key purpose of the WSS as well as the implication for the data gathering processes already underway at different SETAs. This discussion led into Session 1 where the concept and details of the proposed instrument was set out more comprehensively.

SESSION 1: WHAT IS BEING PROPOSED?

Hersheela Narsee introduced the proposed new instrument and asserted that it is aimed at providing credible sectoral skills data to inform economy-wide planning. The combination of the WSP/ATR and skills planning survey into the WSS is intended by DHET to support efficiency. The WSS is aimed at the formal sector, but she emphasises the need to do informal sector surveys periodically. She noted that DHET intends to consolidate the labour equity, BBBEE and this WSS, as there is information on training in the BBBEE reports also for example.

She shared that StatsSA is very excited about the collection of 6 digit level occupational data, and have agreed to assist DHET with the weighting of the data. StatsSA indicated that DHET should aim for a 30% return rate, but the returns from different subsectors need to be taken into account to inform the weighting process, as well as ensuring that the generalisability is adequate for large and medium companies for example.

Hersheela Narsee made some clarifications in terms of the proposed WSS;

- The survey requests information on 'workplaces' but interprets the term in a broad way, employers must submit one survey for the company regardless of whether the company has multiple offices or not.
- "Employer" refers to public and private employers

Hersheela Narsee also outlined the differences between the WSP/ATR and the new WSS (see page. 34 of the discussion document attached to this report). She also emphasised that the proposal of the WSS is not final, it will undergo further interactions with the National Skills Authority (NSA) and the National Economic Development and Labour Council (NEDLAC), and regulations may change before it is formalised.

DISCUSSION

Josie Singaram suggested the inclusion of the word 'discretionary' in the description of 'skills planning' to take into account both the mandatory and discretionary grants in the proposed document. She also noted that from the new instrument it is not possible to determine that the skills programmes implemented by the employer is actually addressing the company's skills needs. In her view this does not allow for analysis on the type and effectiveness of skills development interventions instituted or not by employers. In the LGSETA case they have made a distinction between identifying the skills need and identifying the relevant interventions to deal with the skills needs. **Hersheela Narsee** agreed that the survey does not enable the collection of information on the exact skills development interventions and their alignment to identified needs.

Melissa Erra clarified that there has been an increase in submission- the only reduction was 2013 when the grant regulations were introduced, and that the primary concern is to increase the quality of the data submitted by employers, as well as to as well as to increase the quantity of types of data requested. **Jocelyn Vass** spoke to issue of incentivising employers to submit quality data. She asked whether 20% return of the levy is enough incentive. She asked if the percentage of the grant could be increased.

Melissa Erra highlighted three points in the discussion that ensued: that the standardisation of data reporting is a core aim of the WSS, that the mandatory grant does aim at essentially incentivising employers to provide quantity and quality information, and lastly that even though it's a low submission rate (sometimes between 20-32%), we are still getting the largest amount of employee information from the WSP/ATR submissions. In essence, this is a sample of data, statistically with robust processes it is possible to build in assumptions and make credible analysis.

The session was then opened to a discussion of the drop down menu options per question.

- **Morne Oosthuizen** advised that in *Section B Employee Profile: Highest Level of Education Achievement* the education levels could be separated and not grouped as it is the current form, so that there is the flexibility to combine them in various scales, as it suits the purpose of the analysis, and allowing the scales to be aligned to the scales used by StatsSA (as these categories do change over time)
- **Josie Singaram** advised that the ABET levels 1, 2, 3 be included in the drop down menu for *Section B Employee Profile: Highest Level of Education Achievement.*

- It was noted that the name of the Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET) centres have changed to Community Education and Training Colleges, and that this should be reflected in *Section B Employee Profile: Highest Level of Education Achievement item.*
- **Josie Singaram** asked that it be noted that different types of internships have been classified, and could be included in the drop down menu to get more nuanced data in *Section B: Employee Profile – Employment Status*.
- **Morne Oosthuizen** made the point that the delimiters used in *Section B Employee Profile – Salary Bands* are not helpful, as most employees will fall into the first band. The SARS tax/salary bands were used, but more thought should go into the income ranges used, based on the questions one would want to answer with this data.
- It was noted that Asian/Indian be included as a category in *Section B: Employee Profile – Race/Population Group*. There was a related discussion regarding the inclusion of a category to signify 'foreign nationality' so as to cater for the identification of foreign nationals but consensus was not found regarding this issue.
- **Morne Oosthuizen** indicated that to reduce ambiguity in the *Section C: Reasons for Hard-to-Fill Vacancies* that the "other" category be considered for inclusion.
- There was a consensus that *Section D: Skills Gaps* be considered further as there were concerns that the categories were too broad, meaning that the level of disaggregation may present challenges to analysis and the practical use of the data for sectoral skills development needs.
- **Jocelyn Vass** asked that what is meant by 'permanent employment' be clarified, for example, there are sectors in which seasonal employment is more frequent, or the notion of permanent employment is not the same as it was in the past – now it can be seen as a 5 year contract, and **Hersheela Narsee** clarified that definitions will be provided for all the options to clarify for the person completing the survey.

Laura Crosby asked whether the WSS could be streamlined with other existing data gathering processes, so that employers would not have to provide data which can be accessed elsewhere already, for example, the education institution attended.

Lauren Derman described the shift in focus of the WSP to the WSS as a transition of WSP as a tool for skills planning, to a research instrument. The WSP was inherently linked to training and best practice but this has dropped, and it has become a research tool. The new tool has not captured the ethos of the Skills Development Act and the link to the Skills Development Act should be clearer to maintain the social value, as well as the research value of the instrument.

The White Paper clarifies that the aim of the mandatory grant is to provide the incentive to employers to provide information. The discussion led to a consensus that *Section 5 What is the purpose of the WSS* of the proposed document should be worded more clearly. The session ended with agreement that the purposes of the WSS needs to be clarified to guide clearer engagement on which aspects still need to be included or which could be excluded from the instrument.

SESSION 2: THE SYSTEMS FOR DATA COLLECTION, VALIDATION AND INTEGRATION

Brian Kanhanga opened up the second session by introducing the intended information management and validation system for the WSS. **Brian Kanhanga** affirmed that DHET is not changing systems. Higher Education and Training Management System (HETMIS) is an information system which integrates multiple datasets into one system. He introduced HETMIS, and explained that the WSS is going to be a module of the Skills Education and Training Management Information System (SETMIS), which is an already existing feeder system to the HETMIS system. This will be done to avoid complexity. SETMIS is a unit record based information system that stores and maintains unit records of SETA data related to skills education and training, including participating employers, providers, assessors, learners and skills education and training. Further SETMIS stores and maintains unit record of SETA data related to skills demand, including all employers, sector and occupations.
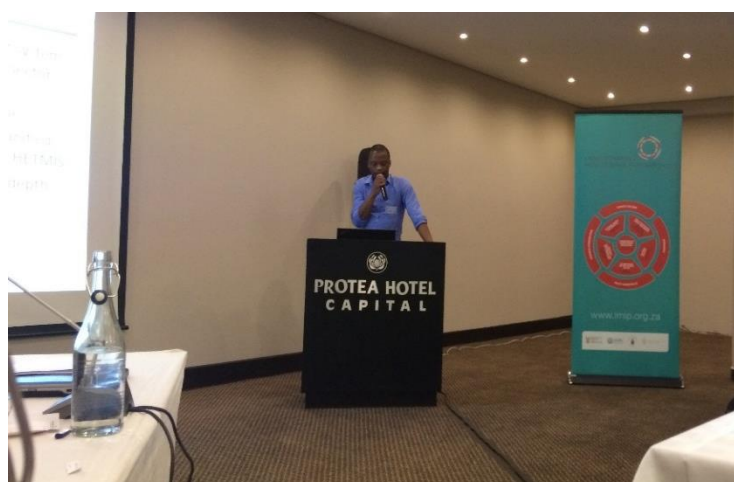
The Integrated Higher Education and Training Information System (insert graphic) shows how the information gets combined into HETMIS. He described the process by which the data is transferred and validated centrally in DHET. Edudex is the system which analyses the data and returns the invalid/unclean data to the SETA for cleaning. **Brian Kanhanga** noted that it is the intention of DHET to share/send the data back to SETAs after validation, but de-identified, so that there is no risk of releasing personal identifiable information.

DISCUSSION

The discussion centred on the DHET validation process. **Brian Kanhanga** clarified that, to protect the existing HEMIS database, the SETA data is validated prior to uploading it in the HETMIS database. SETAs will validate the data prior to submission to DHET, and DHET will validate prior to upload to HETMIS.

Hersheela Narsee confirmed that the validation rules will be discussed in partnership with the SETA data managers, and that the implementation will be planned in consultation. She noted that the instrument will be tested, and the information system will be tested at the same time. She noted that some of the SETAs had volunteered to participate in the pilot. After the pilot, these elements will be finalised.

Deriving from the discussion around the validation process, questions of data management and checking processes were raised. **Jocelyn Vass** noted that SETAs have differing data management capacity. She asked whether there is a possibility to test different options: whether SETAs receive and manage the data before sending to DHET, or whether the data should go directly to DHET for data cleaning. **Melissa Erra** noted that, according to the White Paper, the SETAs have a clear role as

the intermediaries between the workplace and the department, and that entails data quality verification.

In line with similar sentiments around the inability that is present in the current tool to measure the extent to which companies are addressing identified skills needs, there was a discussion about the potential for an indicator on company performance against their skills development goals. **Melissa Erra** noted that there is no clear answer yet regarding having an indicator of employer performance in terms of their skills development goals. **Josie Singaram** raised the issue of validation again, and it appeared clear that the term might be used differently by different stakeholders and this is possibly resulting in disagreement or the perception of lack of clarity regarding the notion of validation. This was tied to the issue of monitoring the performance of employers in skills plans. With regards to the performance of skills planning across the system, it is something that still needs to be finalised. Some understood the term to refer to the responsibility that rests with the employer/SETA to supply accurate data. It appeared as if DHET was speaking to the data validation programme/process more generally.

It was confirmed that the employer respondents would complete the survey on the SETA website, and that the data would be extracted from the SETA website to the DHET system from there.

SESSION 3: REFLECTIONS ON THE QUALITY OF EXISTING DATA

Lauren Derman presented an analysis of the quality of existing SETA data, particularly the mandatory grant (MG) data. She highlighted the value of the data and that it could feed into creating a detailed employee profile for South Africa, provide data for input into national skills planning, and to supplement the national forecasting tool. The vision is to have the following data variables: 5 digit SIC, 6 digit OFO, 9 provinces, geography, race, gender, disability, class, and time.

To support DHET to explore the possibilities inherent in using MG data in the future, **Lauren Derman** presented an illustrative analysis of the 2015 SETA MG data. She consolidated the data into a national dataset consisting of 39127 companies, with 5.4 million employees (1/3 of the total employees of SA). She presented an employment profile per SETA, disaggregated by race and employment type and province. She did this to give a sense of the potential scope of analysis that is currently possible and can be built on as the data quality is improved. While outlining the possibilities of using this data, current challenges were also outlined; data weighting (the consideration of non-SDL payers, and the informal sector which does not submit data), non-participating companies, data errors, the public sector, where learners should be recorded, and duplicate submissions which have yet to be identified.

Mamphoku Khuluvhe presented briefly on the 2016 data received by DHET from the SETAs. Her purpose was to share information about the process of analysing and consolidating data from the WSP/ATR across all SETAs. She presented an illustrative analysis of the employment summary data (Section B in the private sector form, and Section C in the public sector form). She asked for feedback from the participants. The specific issues raised included the concern about the quality of data SETAs received from employers, and the limited potential for credible analysis of such data.

While DHET received data from all SETAs, there was no uniformity to the information submitted. The data was submitted by the SETAs in three different formats. Four SETAs provided unit record data.

The reporting of the OFO code varied between the SETAs. Some provided the OFO code and occupational categories as the same thing. Some SETAS, did not label the spreadsheets and so the contents were unclear. Another issue that arose was that, at times, the data did not add up (e.g. race and gender totals differing). The terms used by the SETAs also differed with regards to "scarce skills", "critical skills", "priority skills", and "hard-to-fill vacancies".

In conclusion, **Mamphoku Khuluvhe** presented a draft template that DHET would like the SETAs to use in submitting the information to DHET.

DISCUSSION

Lauren Derman was congratulated on the achievement of bringing together the MG data, and her analysis of employment profile and summary across the SETA data. Questions were raised with regards to the template presented by **Mamphoku Khuluvhe**, and **Melissa Erra** clarified that DHET is using the Learning Session to seek comment from SETAs on the template, and later a circular will go out to formally inform SETAs of the new reporting template.

Angelique Wildschut closed the session by summarizing the core expectations for the day, in terms of the discussion which unfolded. She noted the willingness of SETAs to enhance the quality of the data, and the questions around the implementation process, and how flexible the transition processes will be.

Reflecting on the initial expectations, the day highlighted a range of other issues, including the issue that the scope and related key purpose of the survey is still in debate. The juxtaposition between individual and aggregate data in the WSS, was another issue arising during the day. Angelique noted that the first session of day two will begin and move on from the topics raised. She directed the participants to the document, (pg. 8) which details the purpose of the WSS, so that the participants should consider further and reflect on this in the following day's session. **Angelique Wildschut** thanked the audience for their participation, and concluded the session.

Angelique Wildschut opened the day by reflecting on the prior day's learning session. She noted the policy background, the reasons for the review of the instrument and the point at which DHET is currently in the process of the review. She spoke to the engagement on the dropdown menu options for the instrument, and noted the request that SETAs be allowed to submit suggestions for the dropdown options and what the process would be for them to do so.

Angelique Wildschut introduced the next presentation, which aimed to present an overview of the new data that would arise from the new proposed instrument and the kinds of questions it will answer.

SESSION 4: WHAT KINDS OF ANALYSES CAN BE UNDERTAKEN WITH THE DATA GENERATED BY THE EMPLOYER SURVEY?

Morne Oosthuizen introduced the research perspective on the kinds of analysis that can be done from the new proposed WSS instrument. He discussed the survey in terms of the qualitative and quantitative data. A key insight is that the proposed survey allows us to move away from cross-sectional data, as we are able to identify individuals and connect individuals from one company to the next over long time periods.

He posed some central questions: what is the unit of analysis? The individual? The firm? The skills gaps? To what extent is the data compatible with other data? To what extent can we link from this survey to other sources of data?

The challenge that he identified is that because the survey is a non-random sample, this poses challenges in terms of weighting the data. A non-random sample means that the likelihood of a firm not responding to the survey, is linked to a characteristic of the firm (smaller firms respond less than larger firms, and/or profit level might influence company survey response). When we don't know what the underlying factor is, or how to measure it, then it's very hard to correct for this through weighting. There is also the uncertainty regarding what happens between rounds of the survey that might affect the sample.

He then moved on to consider, what kind of data is the survey going to collect? All sections of the survey can be linked to firm ID. Section A – is about the firm. Section B – is about the individual. Section C – is about occupation. Section D – skills gaps is the unit of analysis. Section E – occupation (at the single digit level) (summary data), which means no real analysis of training can be done (reiterating insights from the previous day). **Morne Oosthuizen** described how the elements of the survey could be linked to other elements of the survey, and to other data sources. Obvious links that could be made between the WSS and other databases include linking to the National Learners Records Database, UIF database, and Employers Tax Database.

In terms of analysing the workforce, **Morne Oosthuizen** showed how it is possible to do a demographic profile of employees by industry, firm size and in aggregate. It is possible to see local-level profiles of employment, including salary distributions. It is also possible to see changes in firm's size in terms of employment. Furthermore it is possible to track trends in employment, by industry, firm size and in aggregate. To what extent is the employment change over time being held back by supply of skills? We could do comparisons of occupations, education/qualification and field of study (mismatches).

With regards to Section C "hard to fill vacancies" it is possible to start describing workers in the occupations that have hard to fill vacancies. It is also possible to look at the location and main reasons for vacancies by industry, firm size and in aggregate, as well as look at vacancies relative to current employment by industry, firm size and in aggregate. It is also possible to consider the salary distribution of current employees in high-vacancy occupations by industry, firm size and in aggregate, as well as spatial (only provincial) mismatches between employment and corresponding hard-to-fill vacancies. Lastly, it is possible to look at the profile of the current employees in terms of their age, race and gender for instance.

Morne Oosthuizen emphasised that the 'Municipality of Employment' variable will gather data that we do not otherwise have, so this constitutes a strong contribution to the research potential.

Towards analysing skills gaps, he noted that this potential instrument allows us to answer the question: what are the most commonly listed skills gaps across occupations, by industry, firm size and in aggregate? One thing that we cannot do is look at 'training intensity' in terms of high-vacancy occupations, by industry, firm size, and in aggregate. In other words, we cannot get a sense of the extent of training to address skills gaps. We can determine the average training (number, share of workforce, spend for example). We cannot go into questions of who receives and who doesn't receive training. Are there differences by races? Is there inequality within training? We cannot answer whether different groups receive different types of training. We cannot answer whether workers who receive training progress further, or gain further employment.

Important questions stemming from a purely analytical and research perspective:

1. What are the data collection goals?
2. What is the key research question?

The survey has the potential to yield new detailed data on workers, vacancies and training at national level, on a regular and standardised basis. This represents a significant shift and will allow for good analysis. The potential for significantly expanding our understanding of local labour markets is there, but some limits are also identified.

Morne Oosthuizen added some final observations; that it is important to consider this data within the context of existing datasets and data conventions. Consistent coding is important for triangulation with other sources. Delimiting salary bands can facilitate or significantly impede analysis. StatsSA codes are useful, but do also change, so we must be aware of this.

Angelique Wildschut opened the floor for comments. **Sylvia Tsunke** asked about *Section E*, as it requests information by occupation, does it give us sufficient scope to ask questions of who is being trained? **Morne Oosthuizen** clarified that there is no information on who is being trained. This can be considered a gap on the analysis side for this question. Skills gaps are not connected to workers in the survey.

It was noted that the skills gaps are very different for large companies and smaller companies, and SETAs do find that generalizing skills gaps for an entire sector can be challenging. **Morne Oosthuizen** contributed that one way to address this is to add a place where firms can document the proportion of their workers which have particular skills gaps. Another way would be to differentiate between gaps in different firms sizes, i.e., these are the skills gaps for bigger firms, and these are the gaps for smaller firms. **Laura Crosby** asked about the emerging occupations skills gaps, as the dynamics of emerging occupation gaps might be obscured by an overall sectoral skills gap analysis. **Morne Oosthuizen** clarified that this survey is not going to collect all the information needed, and that the survey cannot accommodate all of the questions that we would like to answer.

The survey asks employers to document three skills gaps per occupational level, and **Melissa Erra** opened the conversation for the participants to suggest alternative options and categories to add. **Melissa Erra** asked **Morne Oosthuizen** to talk to how the links between the data (internal and external) could be better made. **Morne Oosthuizen** said that from a firm's perspective, asking for three skills gaps per occupation can supply useful information, and if you break it down by firm size within sectors then SETAs can get useful information too. It can then be used as an indicator to focus the training efforts of SETAs. Asking firms to collect unit record level data on skills gaps is just not pragmatic to ask firms to do. He said that if you ask companies for the unit record training data then you can link it with workforce profile, or perhaps if SETAs have unit record training data and there could be a way to link it to this survey, then perhaps it could be possible to get that level of data. **Melissa Erra** suggested the addition of a field under the worker profile to ask, what training did this person undergo? **Morne Oosthuizen** said that one would have to make provision for the potential for multiple training, and costs per training.

Melissa Erra emphasised the need to reflect on the mandate of the White Paper, to ensure that we acquire the data that is required. While acknowledging the difficulties associated with weighting, she spoke to the question of weighting, by pointing to the innovative work that CHIETA has done to weight their data. **Hersheela Narsee** asked that the SETAs share their experiences on weighting. Angelique opened the floor to a focus on data weighting and encouraged all SETAs to share their experiences.

Osborne Mkize spoke to the CHIETA weighting process. They use SARS levy data, making five categories, then they take that and compare to the levy contributions/WSP data, they do a comparison, weight the data, and then apply those weights for employer and employee data. Some companies, such as SASOL, can throw off the weighting, so they apply the weighting for that organisation alone (ie. identifying outliers for singular weighting). They also do the weighting at an occupation/ subsector level. Osborne noted that they create 'T' numbers to identify the satellite offices. **Morne Oosthuizen** asked if they deal with geography, as sectors can be very spread out. **Osborne Mkize** noted that they do analysis based on provincial distribution, but do not weight data

based on geography. **Melissa Erra** noted that employers only have one levy number, by law, and only give one location, so will only put the main office, and so the different offices across the country is not data which can be captured. She noted that there may need to be a more detailed box under employer profile, or is this location difference going to be picked up in the unit profile? **Morne Oosthuizen** noted that in the survey, the data won't show whether the firm is multi-location or not.

Laura Crosby added that at MerSETA, in terms of weighting of the data, they weighted their data to their levy paying population and not all firms in the sector, and use it only for constructing the employer profile. A true representation of all firms in the sector is not possible.

The MQA is using a similar formula, but are able to triangulate based on MQA data. They weight at subsector and individual level.

Sylvia Tsunke said that SARS data is used for weighting at the firm level, and that for individuals the data is drawn from the subsectors in their province, and total number of sector employee. **Morne Oosthuizen** suggested that they use the Labour Market Dynamics Survey for their data weighting.

Services SETA noted that in the hair care industry, there are significant differences between Caucasian hairdresser's and African hairdresser's, and so presents a challenge on how to balance the qualitative and quantitative data. Services SETA only weights by size and geographic distribution. **Morne Oosthuizen** noted that if the SARS data (which documents the firms on record) is not representing the dynamics in the market, such as the distinction between hairdressers, then they should adjust for that, as a sound methodological choice. **Josie Singaram** made an important point about using total firms data (where extinct firms never get deleted) or total active firms, for weighting, as this has important implications for data quality.

PSETA, does its weighting by national and provincial department, and finds it has huge numbers for parliament, so the structure of the government gives them their structure for the data weighting.

Morne Oosthuizen suggested that SETAs may want to cater for the age of firms, as depending on the age of the firm they behave differently, younger firms maybe train less than older firms.

For the Insurance SETA the main challenge is getting the data cleaned, they are not confident enough in the data to progress to data weighting, thus they feel that implementing a new system may put them behind with regards to data quality.

AgriSETA noted that because small companies don't submit WSPs, there is a substantial amount of information that they aren't getting.

Health and Welfare Seta (HWSETA) have the same challenges in using the SARS data, many of the registered firms in the SARS data shouldn't be registered in the health and welfare sector. The majority of the big employers do submit plans. In their sector, there are many NGOs which don't necessary have permanent employees, as they get volunteers, which cannot be classified as employees. **Angelique Wildschut** commented that the public-private divide in the health care sector also has implications for weighting. The health and welfare sector is one of the biggest sectors.

It was noted that the QCTO is still establishing its research unit.

Jocelyn Vass noted that there has been an improvement in the statistical capacity within the SETAS but that the sources of data clearly pose challenges, so she proposed the need for a review of the technical capability at SETA level, and the need to better understand and document the nuances of specific sectors, e.g. African hair industry is not being represented adequately. She suggests the need to standardize the weighting of the specific sub sectors, based on the nuances. She notes that workforce training needs to be done at a very general level. The gathering of the experts of the strategic drivers of the sectors, is needed to truly figure out where the sector is going. She agrees with DHETs assertion that this survey is only one level of planning, and that there must be other complimentary planning activities.

Hersheela Narsee committed to holding further engagements to discuss the presentation of the finalised survey and the interface that employers will be using. **Sylvia Tsunke** suggested that they decide on a date for submission based on stakeholder consultations.

Morne Oosthuizen notes that small firm's response is a problem, and asked whether DHET has considered varying the amount of money that is returned to firms, giving small firms a larger percentage of the levy? SETAs have other mechanisms (voucher) for including SMMEs in reporting and skills development benefits.

Hersheela Narsee made a point about employer interventions in skills development (do we need to know what they are doing) and the SETA skills development interventions (this is what our focus should be). SETAs need to decide if they need more bursaries, learnerships, or whatever interventions the sector needs. SETAs need to continue to do demand and supply planning.

Jocelyn Vass noted that there is no variable in the survey that asks employers to think about skills needs for the future, in the next five years for example. The skills needs now may not be the same as those in five/ ten years. We should consider the need to forecast future needs.

Melissa Erra turned the discussion towards the potential enablers at the SETA level for the implementation of the WSS. Capacitating firms can be seen as an enabling action. In dealing with the transition, it was asked, what does it take to build capacity in a SETA sector? Will it take 12 months to build capacity, develop IT infrastructure etc.? What is it that SETAs really need to undertake this survey? Are IT and frameworks aligned for this? The purpose or function of the instrument will be agreed upon, and at that time, what is it that we need to consider in enabling the success of the uptake of the survey. Timelines to capacitate? What would be the key issue/ obstacle in terms of the capacitation of the firms in each sector by the relevant SETAs?

- INSETA noted that they are ready to work with their stakeholders. They require a timeframe to give the stakeholders information and timelines regarding the consultation. Employers

- need a decent amount of time, in INSETA sector a fair time for consultation might be about three months. **Sylvia Tsunke** agreed with this point.
- **Sylvia Tsunke** said that FPMSETA is ready, and asked about the look of the interface. It would be ideal to workshop the tangible system with the employers rather than the survey in a more abstract form.
- **Laura Crosby** agreed with the above points, and noted that the appearance and dynamic of the system does impact on timing with regards to the SETAs readying their systems to plug into the survey system.
- W&RSETA said that the implementation will happen in two phases: the capacitation within the SETA and the capacitation of the stakeholders. Consultations usually start in February – July. So they can be ready within six months.
- MQA says that the stakeholder consultations won't be a problem in terms of seeking advice at this point which shouldn't take more than 3 months. It is the capacitation of the stakeholders to understand the system-level requirements that may take longer.
- FASSET doesn't require time for consultations with stakeholders, in their sector system the stakeholders may not require capacity building to submit things on the online platform.
- Services SETA agreed that for them the issue is the system set-up, that the buy-in from stakeholders shouldn't be a problem. There may be a lack in terms of the in-house systems development capacity, and with the tendering processes it may take a while to get the capacity in to do it in 6 months.
- AgriSETA, says it may take a year to capacitate and get the buy-in from stakeholders.
- PSETA says that the main issue may be the use of ID numbers, there may be sensitivities with regards to getting Parliamentarians to agree to reveal their ID numbers.

Angelique Wildschut thanked the participants for their contributions, as they shed light on the unique challenges faced in each sector, and closed the session.

SESSION 6: HOW WILL THIS NEW PROCESS FEED INFORMATION INTO SECTORAL AND NATIONAL REPORTING AND SKILLS PLANNING PURPOSES? WHAT DOES THE NEW SURVEY IMPLY FOR SECTOR SKILLS PLANNING?

Mamphoku Khuluvhe presented on the new format for the WSP/ATR template, the summary data that SETAs submit to DHET from the employer submissions. She noted that the Excel document will include specifications to ensure that the definitions are clear. It will also include examples of how they would like the information to be reported. There has been an attempt to maintain many of the original categories, to not change the form too drastically from its current style. The new template is an attempt to standardise the data so that when DHET consolidates the data, it will be clearer which data describes which variable. The hope is that this new template will result in higher quality data submitted by the SETAs to DHET.

Melissa Erra (DHET) provided some reflections on the learning sessions over the last two days. She asked that we come back with a clearer purpose of the instrument in the future. She recognised the contribution of the participants with regards to them identifying enablers for the implementation of

the WSS. The survey only looks at the SETA environment, but QCTO may require the data for planning too.

She emphasized that the White Paper forms the DHET and SETA mandate, and this acknowledgement is crucial. The White Paper policy shift must be adopted, in terms of the purpose for the survey. There may yet be actions to increase the alignment to the national skills development plan proposals. which may include a review of the size and shape of the institutional skills landscape.

The linking of datasets, highlighted by **Morne Oosthuizen**, must be considered. Weighting the data, methodologies and definitions is a core issue, and require an upfront analysis across the system. Location of municipality is currently missing, and must be considered seriously as part of this survey. The linking of the ATR and skills gaps, we must see how to bring this in. This is a sensitive area, for example the reduction of apprenticeships in favour of learnerships, and subsequent renewal of apprenticeships was a recent transition. There will be transitions, and we must be sensitive to this. We might need to phase in changes over time, DHET has yet to speak with business interests, and the changes may not be easy.

Hersheela Narsee presented on skills planning. What do we mean by skills? Scarce occupations, scarce qualifications, scares competencies. She suggested we communicate specifically regarding these different categories. Skills planning includes, enrolment planning (what qualifications should be offered), career information (occupations in high demand), home affairs (occupational shortages), resource allocations (for SETAs – balance between funding allocations for bursaries, learnerships, internships and SD programmes – and which ones do we prioritize), and qualifications development (QCTO is developing occupations, so QCTO requires data on occupations in high demand).

How will the WSS feed into national skills planning processes? We will develop indicators from WSS, prepare a general report from WSS findings, prepare detailed reports on specific dimensions of WSS, use information to inform occupations in high demand, and use the information from WSS together with other sources to identify priority occupations. How will WSS feed into sectoral planning processes? You can develop additional indicators from WSS, analyse sectorally weighted data, and prepare reports on specific dimensions of the WSS, use DHET sector briefs and occupations in high demand, and other reports, to identify sectoral skills needs.

The proposed WSS, what problem does it solve? It will help to ensure that we will have occupational shortage data and skills gap data – with common definitions – with common specifications – and contribute to identification of occupations in high demand. What does it not solve? It can't help us understand the future.

Going forward on the WSS. DHET requests electronic feedback on the discussion document – by the end of September. Changes agreed upon:

- Salary ranges (**Morne Oosthuizen**)
- Purpose of survey should be revisited (**Lauren Derman** will assist with this)
- Key research questions that the survey aims to answer must be better defined upfront
- Reporting on training – will move question to unit record Employee profile (start with yes/no and later could consider including type of training)
- Definitions for all words used must be included
- Include list of sites/satellites in the administrative section
- Artisan highest level of educational qualification, will be clarified
- The official date of submissions and the reporting period will be agreed upon after consultation with stakeholders. In this regards stakeholders should provide feedback to DHET by end October 2017.
- Specifications – 1st draft will be provided next year April 2018. DHET will create a space for engagement at SSP forum.
- Interface – possible that each system may be different. DHET will provide assistance on this matter
- POPI act: DHET to obtain formal legal opinion on use of ID numbers

Hersheela Narsee requested that the stakeholders provide feedback on the classification of skills list.

DHET consultations timeline:

- BUSA – September 2017
- NSA – October 2017
- NEDLAC – will be determined in consultation with NEDLAC
- Specifications and validation tool – engagement with SETAs
- Piloting (of instrument?)

Transitional arrangements include:

- Engage with your own SETA system developers and stakeholders. Amend SETA systems this year in order for employers to submit in line with new form on 30 April 2018.
- Include question on HTFV as per discussion document in existing processes
- Include question on Skills gaps as per discussion document in existing processes
- DHET will continue to do analysis of existing WSP/ATR across SETAs
- SETAs to provide comments on template for data by end of October
- DHET circular 15 November 2017
- Guideline to implement current WSP/ATR (e.g. common definitions)

DISCUSSION

The new WSP/ATR format includes employer profile and employment summary. As many employers complete the form on the SETA systems, there were questions around the Excel document presented to the SETAs.

Lauren Derman noted that the Excel template could include "local municipality" as that information should be collected by the SETAs. **Mamphoku Khuluvhe** noted this suggestion. **Lauren Derman** again asked whether 'foreign national' should not be included.

Melissa Erra asked that the SETAs submit direct suggestions, after the issuing of a circular, so that they can make suggestions for the variables asked for by DHET. **Mamphoku Khuluvhe** suggested that it would be great if DHET could get comments on the Annexure 2 from SETAs by the 30th October. There will be an email circulated to all SETAs to confirm this timeline.

CLOSING DISCUSSION AND INSIGHTS

Angelique Wildschut thanked the participants for engaging and providing nuanced insights into the application of the instrument in their specific sector contexts. She thanked **Hersheela Narsee** for summarizing the key insights, and for communicating the key dates in the forthcoming process, which clarifies the process moving forward.

LEARNING SESSION 6: THE REVIEW OF THE WORKPLACE SKILLS PLAN AND THE ANNUAL TRAINING REPORT
14-15 Sept. 2017

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APPENDIX 2: PROGRAMME

		Day 1	
	9:00-9:30	Arrival and registration	
Welcome	9:30 – 9:45	Welcome and opening (Facilitator)	
		Framing question	**Presenter**
Background	9:45 – 10:15	Background (Current situation + Need for Review + Processes for Review)	Melissa Erra (DHET)
Session 1	10:15 – 10:45	What is being proposed?	Hersheela Narsee (DHET)
	10:45 - 12:30	Discussion	
	12:30 – 1:30	Lunch	
Session 2	13:30 – 15:00	The systems for data collection, validation and integration	Brian Kanhanga (DHET)
Session 3	15:00 – 16:00	Reflections on the quality of existing data	*Lauren Derman (FASSET)*
			Mamphoku Khuluve (DHET)
	16:00 – 16:15	Summative discussion and closing	*Angelique Wildschut (HSRC)*

		Day 2		
	08:30 – 09:00	Arrival and Tea		
Welcome:	9:00 – 9:15	(Facilitator)		
		Framing question	**Title of presentation**	**Presenter**
Session 4:	9:15 – 11:00	*What kinds of analyses can be undertaken with the data generated by the employer survey?*		Morne Oosthuizen (DPRU)
	11:00 – 11:30	Tea		
Session 5:	11:30 – 13:00	*Discussion*		
	13:00 – 14:00	Lunch		
Session 6:	14:00 – 15:00	*How will this new process feed information into sectoral and national reporting and skills planning purposes? What does the new survey imply for sector skills planning?* *Discussion*		Melissa Erra and Hersheela Narsee (DHET)
Closing session:	15:00 – 15:30	Audience discussion and closing		Angelique Wildschut (HSRC)