



Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority

End Term Evaluation of the ETDP SETA Five Years Strategy (2020-2025)

Report

AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF SKILLS DEVELOPMENT

Contents

1. Acknowledgements.....	0
2. Disclaimer.....	0
3. Acronyms.....	1
4. Foreword by the Accounting Authority	3
5. Executive Summary	5
6. Executive Authority Statement	13
Part A: Our mandate	15
7. Constitutional mandate	16
8. Legislative mandates.....	16
9. Policy mandates	16
10. Institutional policies and strategies governing the five-year planning period	17
Part B: Our Strategic focus.....	18
Part C: Measuring our Performance	20
11. Impact Statement.....	21
12. High-level outline the impact statement	21
13. Narrative on progress made towards the achievement of the impact statement	22
14. Progress on the achievement of Outcomes.....	23
15. Official sign off by the Executives:	41
16. Bibliography	43

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2. Disclaimer

Please note that this report is based on the review and findings of the data collected by the S24 Evaluation team on behalf of **the ETDP SETA**. However, the views, claims and conclusions made in the report are those of the evaluators and are not binding in any way or form on **the ETDP SETA** and its partners and/or stakeholders.

3. Acronyms

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ACE	Advanced Certificate in Education
AET	Adult Education and Training
ANA	Annual National Assessments
APP	Annual Performance Plan
APPETD	Association of Private Providers of Education, Training & Development
ATR	Annual Training Report
CBO	Community Based Organisation
CET	Continuing Education and Training
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
ETD	Education, Training and Development
ETDP	Education, Training & Development Practices
ETQA	Education and Training Quality Assurance
FET	Further Education and Training
HEIs	Higher Education Institutions
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
ISPFTED	Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
NAISA	National Alliance of Independent Schools Association
NATED	National Technical Education
NC	National Certificate (Vocational)
NDP	National Development Plan
NEET	Not in Employment, Education and Training
NLPE	Non-Levy Paying Enterprises
NLRD	National Learner Record Database
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

NPDE	National Professional Diploma in Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSA	National Skills Authority
NSDS III	the Third National Skills Development Strategy
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SDA	Skills Development Act
SDFs	Skills Development Facilitators
SDL	Skills Development Levy
SDLA	Skills Development Levies Act No.9 of 1990
SETA	Sector Education Training Authority
SSP	Sector Skills Plan
TVET	Technical, Vocational Education and Training
UoTs	Universities of Technology
WBL	Work Integrated Learning
WPE	Workplace Experience
WP-PSET	White Paper for Post School Education and Training
WSP	Workplace Skills Plan
WSPRs	Work Skills Plans and Reports

4. Foreword by the Accounting Authority

In terms of Section 49, Subsection 2(b) of the Public Finance Management Act, as the designated Accounting Authority of the Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA), I am pleased to present the End-Term Evaluation Report of our Five-Year Strategic Plan (2020-2025). This report encapsulates our collective efforts to advance skills development within the Education, Training and Development (ETD) sector, aligning with national priorities to foster an educated, capable and skilled workforce.

Over the past five years, the ETDP SETA has navigated significant challenges, including the disruptions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and a constrained South African macroeconomic environment. Despite these obstacles, we have achieved notable successes, as evidenced by the consistent attainment of 83% to 94% of our Annual Performance Plan targets and the delivery of impactful skills development programmes to over 30,000 beneficiaries during the five-year period. Our commitment to equity and inclusion has ensured that youth, women and disadvantaged groups have been prioritised, contributing to social transformation and employability.

This evaluation highlights the ETDP SETA's strategic alignment with key national frameworks, such as the National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 and the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030. It underscores our efforts to strengthen partnerships with higher education institutions, TVET colleges and other skills development implementing partners in the ETD sector, while embracing digital transformation to prepare the sector for the demands of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. However, the report also identifies areas for improvement, such as streamlining procurement processes, enhancing digital monitoring systems and ensuring more equitable provincial coverage, which will guide our planning for the next strategic cycle.

I extend my gratitude to our dedicated staff, the Project Steering Committee, our partners at S24 Business Group (Pty) Ltd and all stakeholders who have contributed to this evaluation and the implementation of our strategic plan. Their insights and collaboration have been instrumental in shaping our achievements and informing our future direction.

As we move forward, the ETDP SETA remains committed to fostering a skilled and inclusive workforce that drives transformation in the ETD sector. This report serves as both a reflection of our progress and a roadmap for continuous improvement, ensuring that we continue to deliver on our skills development mandate and contribute meaningfully to South Africa's developmental agenda.

Ms Sesi Nombulelo Nxesi

ETDP SETA Accounting Authority

10 July 2025

5. Executive Summary

The Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) (hereinafter referred to as ETDP SETA) partnered with S24 Business Group (Pty) Ltd, a business and research company based in South Africa, to conduct an End-of-Term Review of the ETDP SETA Strategic Plan 2020-2025. The purpose of the End-of-Term Review was to systematically assess the extent to which the ETDP SETA has achieved its strategic objectives and contributed to national skills development priorities.

Objectives of the Review

Specifically, the evaluation sought to:

- Evaluate the effectiveness of ETDP SETA programmes in addressing sector skills gaps and enhancing workforce capabilities.
- Examine the efficiency of resource utilisation, implementation processes and stakeholder engagement.
- Assess the sustainability of programme outcomes beyond the 2020-2025 strategic period.
- Identify key lessons learnt, best practices, and areas for improvement in future programme planning.

Scope of the Evaluation

The evaluation covered the entire five-year implementation period (2020-2025) and examined a range of strategic outcomes and interventions implemented during this time. The outcomes included:

NSDP outcomes articulated as follows:

- Increasing the production of occupations in high demand.
- Strengthening the link between education and the workplace.
- Improving the skill levels of the South African workforce.
- Expanding access to occupationally directed programmes.
- Supporting the growth of public colleges and strengthening technical and vocational education and training (TVET).
- Providing skills development support for entrepreneurship and co-operation development.
- Encouraging worker-initiated training.
- Enhancing career development services.

SSP cross-cutting priorities:

- Ensuring quality teaching and learning in various educational institutions.
- Enhancing service delivery in both public and private education institutions.
- Supporting the transformation of post-school education and training systems.
- Preparing the workforce for the Fourth Industrial Revolution (4IR) and ensuring skills adaptability.

Evaluation methods

To achieve the evaluation objectives, a two-pronged methodology was used.

- A desktop review was utilised to analyse programme performance and to identify progress towards the achievement of outcomes.
- Fieldwork, using key informant interviews, stakeholder interviews and beneficiary surveys, was also utilised to augment the desktop review, to capture real-life views and experiences of the stakeholders and participants within the education sector.

Key findings of the evaluation

Below are findings of the evaluation organised according to the evaluation criteria:

Appropriateness of Design

- The ETDP SETA's Strategic and Annual Performance Plans are well aligned with key national priorities such as the NSDP 2030, MTSF 2019–2024 and the NDP 2030. This alignment ensures that its interventions are relevant to the country's development agenda.
- The design of programmes reflects a broad and inclusive approach, engaging stakeholders from TVET colleges, higher education institutions, NGOs and unions, which enhances the relevance and reach of skills development.
- The ability to revise APPs and targets in response to external disruptions, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrates a flexible and responsive organisational design. However, this must not develop into a practice of "chopping and changing" targets due to poor performance.
- The incorporation of digital transformation and 4IR-related skills development into strategy shows that the SETA is forward looking and adapting to the technological needs of the sector.
- The programme structure prioritises critical areas such as Early Childhood Development, teacher development, and workplace learning, ensuring that key gaps in the ETD sector are addressed systematically.
- Further, the design includes a Theory of Change that has clear pathways linking inputs, outputs, outcomes and impacts.
- While the ToC may be plausible, it is important that the ETDP SETA recognises that, execution is just as important as planning. A well-designed strategy can still fail due to poor execution.

Relevance

- The ETDP SETA prioritises interventions targeting youth, women and people with disabilities, ensuring that vulnerable and high-need populations are the focus of skills development efforts.
- There has been a deliberate effort to introduce digital and ICT-related skills in response to the changing demands of the economy and the rise of the Fourth Industrial Revolution.
- The planning process is grounded in stakeholder input and labour market research, ensuring that programmes reflect actual sectoral needs.
- The Programme objectives are aligned with the goals of the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP), demonstrating the SETA's responsiveness to broader macroeconomic challenges.
- The Programmes are implemented nationally across all provinces, extending benefits to rural and under-resourced communities and improving geographic equity in skills development.

Effectiveness

- Over the review period, the SETA consistently achieved between 83% and 94% of its APP targets, indicating a high level of goal attainment, where several outcome indicator targets were either achieved or exceeded.
- Audit outcomes improved significantly, with the SETA receiving an unqualified audit, showing enhanced control and performance reporting.
- Strong partnerships with higher education institutions, unions and public entities have enabled effective delivery of various training programmes.
- More than 30 000 beneficiaries were supported in 2023/24 alone, showing the reach and capacity of the SETA's implementation.
- Discretionary grant spending has improved steadily, reflecting better planning and faster project execution.
- The review noted that the ETDP SETA's calendar is not well synchronised with the education sector's academic calendar, thereby making it difficult to coordinate and implement certain programmes on time.
- The review also noted that the ETDP SETA achieved most of its targets in Q4, which seems to suggest inefficiencies in planning processes.
- Late allocation of targets was also identified as an impediment to the effective implementation of projects and programmes.

Efficiency

- The SETA has consistently maintained administration costs within the legislated 10.5% cap, indicating disciplined financial management.
- Savings during the pandemic, particularly on travel and accommodation, were effectively redirected, improving operational efficiency.

- There has been a positive trend in increased grant disbursement, with discretionary grants showing a 15% year-on-year increase by 2023/24.
- However, inefficiencies persist in procurement, leading to delays in project implementation and affecting delivery timeliness.
- The organisation's revenue has grown from R777 million in 2020/21 to R1.28 billion in 2023/24, providing more resources to support programme growth.
- The use of paper-based systems does not support efficiencies in task execution.
- Respondents mentioned an absence of standard operating procedures, which impedes consistency in implementing organisational policies and procedures.

Sustainability

- The SETA benefits from stable and predictable funding sources, primarily employer levies and Department of Education contributions.
- Treasury-approved roll-overs (e.g. R1.3 billion in 2023/24) need to demonstrate more prudent fiscal management and forward planning.
- Despite financial stability, the organisation has struggled to fill critical vacancies on time, which could undermine long-term capacity.
- No core programmes were discontinued over the four-year period, underscoring programme sustainability and continuity.
- Investments in research and planning continue to support evidence-based decision-making, helping the SETA adapt to sector trends.

Impact

- The ETDP SETA has expanded access to education and training for thousands of individuals, particularly among the unemployed and disadvantaged groups.
- Support provided to TVETs and HEIs has helped improve the institutional capacity of these key partners in delivering quality education.
- Feedback from beneficiaries surveyed in this evaluation shows not only a high level of satisfaction with their experience of participating in the various ETDP SETA skills development programmes and projects, but also an appreciation of the impact this has had on their growth and career development.
- The deliberate inclusion of women and people with disabilities in programmes has helped promote social equity and inclusion.
- The ETDP SETA contributes to systemic transformation in the education and training landscape, particularly through its focus on quality and relevance.

Conclusions

Given the findings above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

Relevance:

Drawing from the findings of the evaluation, one can conclude that the ETDP SETA's strategic plan and its programmes were relevant to contributing to skills development in the sector in general, and to the beneficiaries who participated in the programmes in particular. Relevance was measured by assessing the alignment of programme interventions with the ETDP SETA's strategic intent and national developmental agenda on skills development, increased employability and job creation in the sector as well as enhancing workforce capabilities. Feedback from the beneficiaries indicates that the programmes equipped them with relevant skills that will allow them to seek employment or improve their competence at work.

Effectiveness:

In assessing the effectiveness of the strategy and its programmes, despite some challenges such as delayed allocation of targets and late delivery in the Q4, over the five-year period, the SETA has consistently achieved between 83% and 94% of its APP targets. This can be deemed a satisfactory achievement, as some of the outcome indicator targets were either achieved or exceeded.

Efficiency:

Strategy and programme efficiency were measured in several ways. In terms of the utilisation and prioritisation of financial resources, the programmes were noted to have been delivered efficiently. The outputs from these funded programmes contributed to the many benefits that accrued to employment for unemployed learners and career progression for employed learners. However, inefficiencies in the internal manual system implementation were viewed negatively. Overall, one can conclude that the strategy and its programmes were moderately efficient in delivering their interventions.

Impact:

Regarding the impact of the ETDP SETA's strategic plan and its programmes, it can be concluded that the ETDP SETA's strategic plan and its programmes are impactful. Feedback from beneficiaries indicated, and stakeholders attest, to the significant achievements and changes that can be attributed to the ETDP SETA's contribution. An in-depth tracer study is required to assess the true strategic impact.

Sustainability:

The review established that the ETDP SETA's strategic plan and its programmes are sustainable in terms of providing skills programmes that support future use after completion. However, the review team did not assess a deliberately recorded exit strategy, especially for unemployed learners, that links to support future destinations.

Key Recommendations

To improve strategy implementation going forward, the following recommendations are provided:

Appropriateness of Design

- Maintain the practice of designing a comprehensive theory of change or results framework that clearly maps the causal pathways from inputs to long-term impact. This will continue to enhance strategic coherence and performance monitoring.
- Enhance scenario planning and the use of risk-based planning tools to improve agility and resilience in future APP and strategy design.

Relevance

- Conduct regular tracer studies and beneficiary follow-ups to determine how relevant training has been in improving employment outcomes.
- Increase collaboration with provincial governments to align the ETDP SETA's interventions with provincial growth and skills development strategies.

Effectiveness

- Introduce digital performance dashboards and automated M&E tools to enable real-time tracking and better performance management.
- Strengthen communication with stakeholders, as the current communication strategy was reported by stakeholders to be deficient. The SETA could consider developing a mailing list that is updated at the beginning of the year so that notifications or adverts on opportunities are easily accessed, or make use of WSP applications to identify scarce skills required in the sector or industry.
- In addition, using modern methods such as posting on appropriate social media platforms (LinkedIn and Facebook) would ensure stakeholders receive the latest updates on developments related to the ETDP SETA. Introducing a periodic newsletter (similar to those of other entities such as SAQA and CHE) would be useful as stakeholders could subscribe and be always informed.
- Engage other SETAs for best practice in managing and utilising discretionary grants so that no funds are returned as unspent funds, as was the case during the 2023/24 Financial Year.
- Strengthen strategy communication across the organisation and with stakeholders to secure buy-in.

- Break the silo mentality among business units and foster a synergistic ethos that supports shared commitment to interdependence in achieving organisational goals as opposed to driving individual performance scorecards.
- Ensure deliberate and strict adherence to SMART principles in target setting and programme implementation
- Implement tripartite MoAs, which should include the ETDP SETA, training providers and employers, to create a shared understanding of programme implementation and expected outcomes, including roles and responsibilities to support programme roll-out.

Efficiency

- Review and streamline procurement processes to reduce administrative bottlenecks and improve delivery timelines.
- Develop and apply a cost-efficiency index to assess return on investment across various programme types.
- Consider commissioning a business process re-engineering (BPR) exercise to reduce or eliminate waste in all organisational processes to improve delivery times.
- The BPR will support automation of systems to transition from paper-based to electronic systems, to improve efficiency
- Develop policies, standard operating procedures and standardised templates to ensure consistency in workflow interpretations.
- Capacitate the strategy design office or process to ensure sufficient resources to undertake an in-depth skills needs diagnosis.

Monitoring and evaluation

- Strengthen data validation protocols to avoid audit findings related to inconsistencies in performance reports.
- The ETDP SETA should, in consultation with other relevant key stakeholders, and particularly sector departments such as Labour and Education, reflect on and agree on the kinds of outcomes and impacts that specific programmes should contribute to, and importantly, when and how these will be measured.
- Establish a permanent impact evaluation panel that includes relevant stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the added value and impact of the ETDP SETA's programmes.
- The MoA and SLA between the ETDP SETA and its various stakeholders should, as a corollary, then define the outcomes and the impacts based on the implemented programmes
- Issues of ease of contact and communication between ETDP SETA and its stakeholders should be addressed through the establishment of standards relating to the timing and frequency of contact from ETDP SETA to stakeholders and vice versa. These must be communicated well in advance to manage expectations.
- Standards should also be set for turnaround times for such matters as responses to requests, resolution of bottlenecks, disbursements, and processing of certificates after inspections

- Commitments to the standards referred to above should be made at MoU stage. This should also be used to manage stakeholder expectations regarding the services provided by the ETDP SETA.

Sustainability

- Accelerate the filling of critical vacancies, particularly in areas that impact programme implementation and reporting.
- Draft and adopt a formal sustainability framework that integrates financial, operational and environmental risk management strategies.
- Draft and adopt a formal and deliberate exit strategy that supports lifelong learning and links learners with possible destinations, especially for unemployed learners
- Use the ETDP SETA and the higher education sector's convening power to garner support to continue facilitating sectoral engagements that encourage discussions on the skills revolution.

Impact

- Commission independent longitudinal evaluations to understand the long-term impact of interventions on employment, income and productivity.
- Collaborate with academic institutions to design impact assessment methodologies and tools to institutionalise regular impact evaluations, which include the collection and collation of stories of change.
- Involve stakeholders more in the design and implementation of programmes, as this improves relevance and alignment to programmes.
- Customise offerings to suit provincial needs to take care of the different provincial skills needs (there is no one-size-fits-all solution).
- Diagnose and implement an employee value proposition that recognises employees as strategy drivers in the organisation. "Your employees are your first clients". When employees feel valued, respected and supported, they are more likely to be loyal to the organisation and remain motivated to deliver high-quality work.

6. Executive Authority Statement

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Ms Nombulelo Sesi Nxesi

ETDP SETA

Part A:

Our mandate

7. Constitutional mandate

The Education, Training and Development Practices Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP SETA) derives its constitutional mandate from the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. This mandate compels the ETDP SETA to support the right of access to education by facilitating skills development and training opportunities within the education, training and development (ETD) sector. It implements this through the skills development levy system, providing financial support for skills programmes and promoting cooperative governance, transparency and accountability in line with constitutional values.

Through the levy-grant system enabled by the Skills Development Levies Act, the ETDP SETA supports equitable access to education and training in the education, training and development (ETD) sector, upholding the values of transparency and cooperative governance.

8. Legislative mandates

The ETDP SETA operates under several critical pieces of legislation that define its role, structure and operations:

- Skills Development Act (No. 97 of 1998): Establishes SETAs and mandates the ETDP SETA to develop and implement a Sector Skills Plan (SSP), establish learning programmes, allocate grants and monitor education provision.
- Skills Development Levies Act (No. 9 of 1999): Governs levy collection and disbursement to fund sector-specific training.
- Public Finance Management Act (No. 1 of 1999): Requires efficient financial management, risk controls, and transparency.
- SETA Grant Regulations (2012): Provides a framework for the transparent and equitable disbursement of mandatory and discretionary grants.

9. Policy mandates

There are several key policy instruments that underpin the operations of the ETDP SETA. The SETA's strategic plan is informed by multiple national policy frameworks, including the following:

- National Development Plan (NDP) 2030: Focuses on improving education outcomes and addressing youth unemployment.

- National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) 2030: Sets out eight priority outcomes, including high-demand occupations and work-based learning. It provides a 10-year policy horizon aligned with the NDP 2030 and underpins the ETDP SETA's strategic focus on occupations in high demand, linking education to workplace training, and supporting entrepreneurship and career development.
- White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013): Promotes the integration of the PSET system and guides the ETDP SETA's focus on strengthening capacity in TVETs, community colleges, and HEIs through initiatives such as lecturer development and work-integrated learning (WIL).
- Medium-Term Strategic Framework (2019–2024): ETDP SETA aligns with Priority 2: Education, Skills and Health.
- HRD Strategy for South Africa (2010–2030) and the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP): Guide workforce development.
- SETA Standard Constitution: prescribes functions such as implementing the Sector Skills Plan (SSP), promoting occupation-based learning and managing levy disbursement.

10. Institutional policies and strategies governing the five-year planning period

The ETDP SETA has developed all relevant policies that guide its operations. These include:

- Human Resource Development
- Finance and Accounting
- Information and Communication Technology (ICT)
- Education, Training and Development Quality Assurance (ETDQA)
- Learning Programme Implementation
- Risk and Governance
- Protection of Personal Information Act (POPIA)
- Supply Chain Management
- Grant Disbursement and
- Performance Information Management, Monitoring, Evaluation and Reporting
- Five-Year Sector Skills Plan

Part B: Our Strategic focus

Vision

To promote and facilitate the development and improvement of the skills profile of the sector's workforce, benefitting employers, workers and employees in the sector.

Mission

To support its vision, the ETDP SETA is committed to:

- Raising the skill levels of workers
- Achieving a supply-demand balance in the labour market
- Providing flexible, diverse education and training routes
- Enhancing the quality of training
- Efficiently administering levy grants
- Supporting collaboration with stakeholders (e.g. DHET, SAQA, NSA)
- Promoting effective communication and engagement in human resource development
- Encouraging employer-employee partnerships in skills transfer and productivity enhancement.

ETDP SETA Core Values

- Transparency
- Fairness
- Courtesy and Caring
- Honouring Deadlines
- Promotion of Quality
- Co-operative Governance
- Developmental Work Ethic
- Continuous Improvement
- Commitment to Sustainability

Part C:

Measuring our Performance

11. Impact Statement

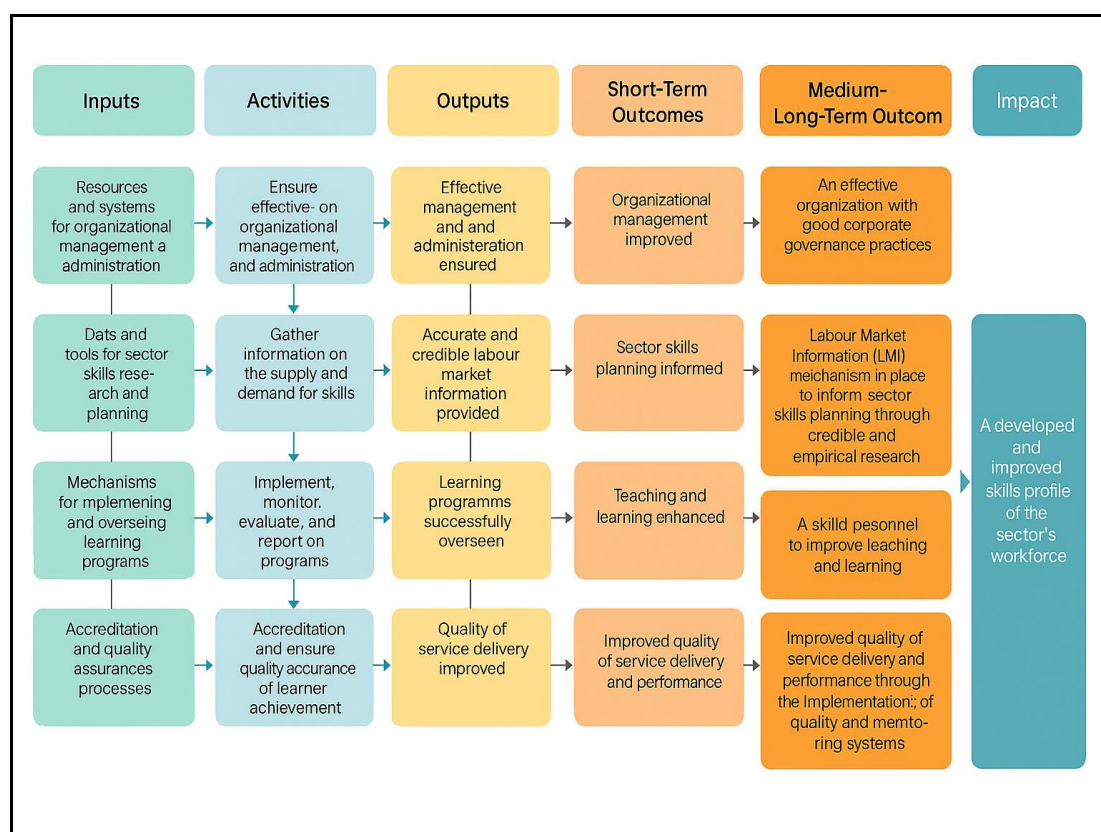
A developed and improved skills profile of the sector's workforce.

12. High-level outline the impact statement

The above impact statement is informed by a Theory of Change embedded in the ETDP SETA strategic plan, which outlines the results chain and key policy outcomes that link its mandate to national development goals. The elements of the ETDP SETA results chain are summarised below:

- Inputs: financial resources from levies, stakeholder partnerships, policy instruments.
- Activities: skills planning, grant allocations, programme implementation (e.g., WIL, lecturer development).
- Outputs: number of funded programmes, trained individuals, supported institutions.
- Outcomes: improved sectoral capacity, higher employability, enhanced institutional effectiveness.
- Impact: a skilled, competitive and inclusive education and training workforce.

The diagrammatic illustration of the ETDP SETA's theory of change and results chain is shown below:



13. Narrative on progress made towards the achievement of the impact statement

This section provides a narrative on the progress made towards achieving the impact statement. It includes an overview of various outcomes and initiatives that contributed to this progress. Overall, the ETDP SETA has made substantial progress in advancing its mandate of equitable skills development and workforce readiness. This progress is summarised across the following areas:

Skills Development and Employment Outcomes

The ETDP SETA facilitated work-based learning and skills development programmes that supported both unemployed youth and current sector employees. Over five years:

- 18 369 youth accessed work-based learning opportunities (target: 20 205 by 2025).
- 18 277 students received financial assistance through bursaries and programmes (target: 20 105).

A tracer study reported that 48% of programme beneficiaries found employment, 39% of whom were in full-time positions. Notably, 80% of those employed were in decent work with UIF registration and benefits.

Equity and Inclusion

The SETA consistently met equity targets by prioritising black women and youth beneficiaries. However, it did not meet its target for persons with disabilities. In addition, only 1% of programme participants transitioned into self-employment, indicating the need for stronger support for entrepreneurship.

Strategic Partnerships

The ETDP SETA fostered strong institutional partnerships with TVET colleges, the DHET and public universities. Achievements included:

- Training of over 20 000 teachers in critical subjects (e.g. maths and science).
- Deploying Career Development Officers in TVET colleges.
- Conducting collaborative research with universities that informed the Sector Skills Plan.

Programme Implementation and Governance

While many project targets were met, challenges such as delayed levy payments and slow project initiation by education departments affected overall implementation. Performance ranged from 50% to 100% across programmes. The ETDP SETA recognised the need to enhance programme management and adopted a Theory of Change approach to improve monitoring and evaluation.

Digital Transformation and Organisational Efficiency

To enhance efficiency, the ETDP SETA digitised key internal processes and trained staff to improve service delivery. It aimed to automate five internal business processes annually, and conducted internal training and evaluation studies to guide continuous improvement.

14. Progress on the achievement of Outcomes

This section of the report summarises the ETDP SETA programmes as outlined in the strategic plan 2020-2025, along with their respective outcomes, outcome indicators, baselines, five-year targets, and brief narrative descriptions. The information is structured to provide a clear overview of each programme and its intended contribution to the education and skills development sector.

14.1. Programme 1 - Administration

The programme focuses on building a robust and efficient administrative backbone for the ETDP SETA to ensure high-quality governance, performance management, and compliance with legal and regulatory frameworks. It incorporates functions such as corporate services, ICT, risk management, financial management, supply chain management, and human resources. The programme prioritises modernising internal systems through automation, enhancing audit outcomes, and ensuring effective oversight through sound governance. A major thrust is on improving turnaround times for payments and implementing audit recommendations to achieve unqualified audit opinions consistently. It focuses on enhancing internal capacity and modernising operations through training and digital transformation. It supports the organisation's strategic goals of efficient service delivery and improved organisational performance. The outcomes, indicators and targets reported under Programme 1 are defined in the five-year strategy, as shown below:

Table of Outcomes, Indicators and Targets

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	2019/20 Baseline	2024/25 Target	Actual achievement as at 31March 2025	Reasons for deviation	Corrective action to be taken in the next planning cycle
Capable human capital for improved service delivery	Number of employees and governance structure members trained and professionally capacitated	-	133	169		None
Digitalised business environment for improved performance	Number of automated business processes implemented	-	15	15		None
Sound corporate governance for improved compliance with Regulatory and DHET requirements	Percentage implementation of audit action plans for improved audit outcomes	-	85%	33%	Due to poor follow-through on corrective actions.	Regular follow ups on corrective actions assigned to specific officials.
Timeous payment of service providers in order to comply with the national treasury regulations	Percentage of SETA creditors' invoices paid within 30 days of receipt	-	100%	87%	Due to inefficiencies in processing and tracking.	Regular reconciliations, applying appropriate solutions inclusive of process automation, regular reconciliations, and capacity building for relevant officials.

Explanation of Achieved Performance Over the Five-Year Period

a) Progress Toward the Impact Statement

Programme 1 contributes to the impact of “an educated, capable and skilled workforce in the ETD sector” by enhancing internal capacity, governance, systems and stakeholder support. Over the five-year period, Programme 1 helped to build a more digitally enabled, efficient and compliant SETA, with progress in implementing automated systems, improving audit outcomes and capacitating the organisation through training and development. These administrative improvements created an enabling environment for the SETA's core programmes.

b) Progress on Five-Year Targets for Outcome Indicators

Programme 1 had multiple outcome indicators, including:

- Number of employees and governance structure members trained
- Number of automated business processes implemented
- Implementation rate of audit action plans
- Percentage of invoices paid within 30 days

Across the plan period, the SETA made significant progress:

- Employee and board member training targets were consistently met or exceeded.
- Several business processes were successfully automated, improving operational efficiency.
- The audit action implementation rate improved, contributing to the achievement of unqualified audits.

However, invoice payment within 30 days occasionally fell short due to inefficiencies, for example, it was 87% in 2023/24, against a target of 100%.

c) Challenges Affecting Performance

Programme 1 faced several challenges in the plan period, including the following:

- Delays in procurement and internal process bottlenecks contributed to late supplier payments.
- Inconsistent performance reporting and misalignment between APPs and implementation hindered performance audits.

- Vacancies and capacity constraints, especially in provincial offices, occasionally impacted HR planning and responsiveness.
- Dependence on manual processes in the early years delayed automation milestones.

d) Recommended Corrective Actions

The interventions or actions recommended to address challenges, as well as optimise performance against set targets, are the following:

- Improve internal controls and process mapping for procurement and payments to meet the 30-day processing turnaround target.
- Capacitate provincial offices to ensure more responsive and uniform HR delivery.
- Consolidate monitoring and evaluation (M&E) frameworks to strengthen alignment between indicators, APPs, and execution.
- Strengthen automation roll-out with dedicated ICT support and change management interventions.

e) Contribution of Government and Non-Government Partners

The contributions noted, with respect to both government and non-state partners, included the following:

- The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) provided policy direction and oversight, influencing governance practices.
- The National Treasury and the AGSA influenced improvements through audits and compliance standards.
- Service providers and consultants supported training, ICT automation, and legal reviews.
- Trade unions and board structures helped in capacitating governance members.

f) Contribution of Outputs to Outcomes

The following are some of the key outputs applicable to Programme 1:

- Training workshops for staff and board members
- Automated finance and HR systems
- Audit committee and board governance sessions
- Revised internal policies and SOPs

These outputs directly contributed to improved organisational compliance, financial management, risk reduction, and enhanced decision-making efficiency, ultimately leading to a more agile and accountable SETA.

g) Findings from the Evaluation of the Programme

Both the Midterm Evaluation and the current End-Term Evaluation affirm that:

- Programme 1 was efficient with a strong cost-to-output ratio.
- It had positive effects on enabling other programmes, especially through digital transformation and governance support.

However, weaknesses in procurement turnaround and ICT implementation were flagged as areas for improvement.

h) Findings from Internal and External Research

External evaluations (mid-term and previous end-of-term reviews) highlighted:

- Positive stakeholder views on the ETDP SETA responsiveness due to improvements under Programme 1.
- Beneficiary survey feedback indicating improved service experience linked to internal efficiencies.
- Internal research reports cited better information flows and stakeholder communication arising from automated processes.

However, some research flagged that:

- HR systems lagged ICT in other areas, with inconsistent performance management across units.
- Inadequate real-time data for decision-making remained a limitation for strategic planning.

It is important to note that, while Programme 1 (Administration) may have shown reasonable performance, the 2021/22 and 2022/23 annual reports show persistent challenges with procurement delays and how the failure to fill key vacancies affected momentum in automation. Thus, despite overall high target achievement, performance information continued to reflect ongoing internal challenges.

14.2. Programme 2 - Research and Skills Planning

This programme aims to enhance the quality of sectoral skills planning through evidence-based research and updated Sector Skills Plans (SSP). It focuses on tracking skills demand and supply trends, particularly in support of the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP) and the National Development Plan (NDP). Research outputs guide strategic decisions across the ETDP SETA's initiatives and inform policy responses to labour market shifts.

The programme emphasises collaborative research with stakeholders, addressing priority skills gaps, and aligning planning processes with national goals. Its success is measured through the quality and utility of research outputs, and their integration into decision-making processes. The outcomes, indicators and targets for Programme 2 were defined as follows:

Table of Outcomes, Indicators and Targets

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	2019/20 Baseline	2024/25 Target	Actual achievement as at 31 March 2025	Reasons for deviation	Corrective action to be taken in the next planning cycle
Increased production of occupations in high demand	Number of occupations in high demand identified and reported through Sector Skills Plans process	20	30	32	N/A	None
	Number of research studies conducted to inform skills planning	-	15	20	N/A	None
	Percentage of WSPs and ATRs evaluated, and feedback provided to employers	100%	100%	100%	N/A	None
Effectiveness of implementation of skills programmes and projects	Number of evaluation studies conducted	5	5	5		

Explanation of Achieved Performance Over the Five-Year Period

a) Progress Toward the Programme Impact Statement

Programme 2 contributed meaningfully to the impact of “an educated, capable and skilled workforce in the ETD sector” by generating data-driven insights, identifying sectoral skills needs, and facilitating evidence-based planning. The programme improved the institutional understanding of current and future occupational demands, ensuring that planning and funding decisions were informed by labour market intelligence and stakeholder engagement.

b) Progress on Five-Year Targets for Outcome Indicators

Key outcome indicators for Programme 2 included:

- Number of research reports produced and disseminated
- Number of Sector Skills Plans (SSPs) updated
- Number of partnerships established for research

By 2023/24, the ETDP SETA had exceeded its cumulative target for research reports, producing in-depth studies on priority skills, youth unemployment and teacher development.

- Annual updates of the SSPs were completed on schedule, aligned with the NSDP and the DHET guidelines.
- Collaborative partnerships, including those with universities and research councils (e.g. the HSRC), were formed, although some planned MoUs experienced delays in execution.

c) Challenges Affecting Performance

The challenges reported included the following:

- Delays in contracting researchers and finalising MoUs with academic institutions hindered timely project start-up.
- Quality inconsistencies in research outputs due, in part, to varied capacity among research partners.
- Limited stakeholder participation in consultations and verification workshops for the SSP process.
- Skills data gaps in emerging sectors and provinces made planning uneven and less responsive in certain contexts.

d) Recommended Corrective Actions

To strengthen delivery and address any underperformance, the following actions are recommended:

- Streamline procurement and contracting processes for research services to reduce delays.
- Develop a quality assurance framework for research outputs, with peer-review mechanisms.
- Broaden and deepen stakeholder engagement, particularly with community colleges and TVETs, in the skills planning cycle.
- Invest in provincial-level labour market research to close spatial data gaps and enhance the inclusiveness of the SSPs.

e) Contribution of Government and Non-Government Partners

Partner contributions, with respect to both state and non-state actors, are summarised below:

- The DHET provided strategic direction and validated SSP submissions.
- Public research institutions (e.g. the HSRC and universities) conducted critical studies on ETD trends and labour markets.
- SETAs and NSDS-aligned forums facilitated collaboration on cross-sectoral skills issues.
- Employers, NGOs and unions enriched the research process by offering field-based insights during data collection and validation sessions.

f) Contribution of Programme Outputs to Outcomes

The observations on the contribution of outputs to programme outcomes are as follows:

- SSP updates directly informed discretionary grant allocations and programme design under other ETDP SETA programmes.
- Research reports guided curriculum development, workplace learning policy, and strategies for youth employability.
- Partnerships with academic institutions enabled access to expertise, improved data integrity, and embedded research into strategic planning.
- Skills forecasting models supported long-term planning and responsiveness to changing national and global trends.

g) Findings from the Evaluation

The Midterm Review rated Programme 2 as moderately effective and relevant, while the End-Term Evaluation rated the programme's performance as satisfactory. Other observations included the following:

- It was highly aligned with national priorities (NSDP, NDP) and stakeholder needs.
- Research uptake was uneven — limited integration of findings into programme execution was noted.
- The SSP was widely viewed as a credible document but needed better dissemination and practical translation into operational targets.

h) Findings from Internal and External Research

Key observations made with respect to research findings include the following:

- External reviews affirmed the value of evidence-based planning but noted capacity gaps in translating insights into performance frameworks.
- Internal assessments showed that research influenced strategic decisions, such as new learning programmes targeting youth and ECD practitioners.
- Beneficiary feedback called for more frequent dissemination of findings and greater provincial granularity in skills data.

14.3. Programme 3 - Learning Programmes and Projects

Programme 3 is the SETA's core service delivery arm, facilitating access to skills development interventions such as learnerships, internships, bursaries, and workplace-based learning. It targets both employed and unemployed individuals, with a strong emphasis on youth, women, and people with disabilities.

The programme supports capacity development for educators and public sector employees, and promotes rural and community development. Strategic alignment with government priorities ensures relevance, while performance is gauged through enrolment and completion rates. The programme also fosters partnerships with TVET colleges, universities, and employers to improve placement and employability outcomes. The outcomes, indicators, and targets for Programme 3 were defined as follows:

Table of Outcomes, Indicators and Targets

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	2019/20 Baseline	2024/25 Target	Actual achievement as at 31 March 2025	Reasons for deviation	Corrective action to be taken in the next planning cycle
Linking education and the workplace	Number of young people accessing work-based learning opportunities to enhance employability	15 566	20 205	17 551	Some youth-focused initiatives like internship completions and bursary renewals underperformed due to delayed implementation and external funding changes.	Early finalisation of funding arrangements and timely project implementation starts.
	Increased number of students receiving financial assistance from the ETDP SETA bursary scheme and/or ETDP SETA funded skills development initiatives	13 837	20 105	15 364	Some youth-focused initiatives like internship completions and bursary renewals underperformed due to delayed implementation and external funding changes.	Early finalisation of funding arrangements and timely project implementation starts.
Improving the level of skills in the South African workforce	Increased number of teachers, government officials and RPL candidates who are competent in digital skills to facilitate digital learning, e-learning, blended learning and other new digital skills transfer to learners	48 700	51 844	28 998	Partnership formation with private FETs also lagged due to qualification compliance issues. Delayed registration and certification, and regulatory limitations in private HEIs	Capacity building for partners, including FETs and HEIs
	Constituent organisations supported, through skills development,	-	14	18	N/A	None

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	2019/20 Baseline	2024/25 Target	Actual achievement as at 31 March 2025	Reasons for deviation	Corrective action to be taken in the next planning cycle
	to enhance employees' capabilities on digital skills					
Support the growth of the public college system	CET Colleges funded to implement digital learning platforms	-	9	9	N/A	None
	Increased number of TVET and CET College lecturers, managers, practitioners, and council members trained in specialised fields and lecturers exposed to relevant industries	4 039	5 000	5 045	N/A	None
Skills development support for entrepreneurship and cooperative development	Increased number of emerging cooperatives especially in rural areas to acquire the new skills required in the 4IR	42	100 cooperatives	45		
Encourage and support worker-initiated training	Increased number of worker-initiated training supported	-	10	11	N/A	None
Support career development services	Increase in the number of career development practitioners trained	-	300	545	N/A	None

2.2. Explanation of Achieved Performance Over the Five-Year Period

a) Progress Towards Impact

Programme 3 made significant contributions in expanding workplace learning and occupational training. However, completion rates were impacted by pandemic-related disruptions. While most of the programme's targets were either achieved or exceeded, significant underperformance was recorded for some targets in the 2024/2025 period, namely:

- Number of unemployed graduates who completed internship programmes – 60% achievement.
- Number of bursaries awarded to students (renewals) – 68% achievement.
- Number of partnerships established with private FET colleges – 60% achievement.

b) Progress on Five-Year Targets

Some enrolments exceeded targets, but completions (especially in learnerships and internships) recorded significant negative variances due to COVID-19 and require continued attention to meet overall outcomes.

c) Challenges Experienced

COVID-19 impacts, learner dropouts, delayed registration and certification, and regulatory limitations in private HEIs reportedly challenged full delivery.

d) Corrective Actions Taken or Recommended

Some of the reported adjustments were the following:

- Targets were revised through APP re-tabling.
- Project management processes were improved.
- Partnerships were enhanced.
- Investments were made in digital training.

e) Contributions from State and Non-State Actors

- Some of the reported contributions and partnerships included provincial Departments of Education, universities, NGOs, private HEIs, labour unions and employers who supported implementation, funding, and programme success.
- The programme targeted unemployed youth, educators, and ETD practitioners to improve employability and service delivery within the sector.

f) Progress on Five-Year Targets for Outcome Indicators

Key outcome indicators under Programme 3 included:

- Number of learners enrolled in occupationally directed programmes
- Number of bursary recipients and interns supported
- Number of ECD and TVET practitioners trained

Progress summary:

By 2023/24, Programme 3 had achieved approximately 85% of its 27 outcome indicators.

Learnerships, bursaries, and workplace-based learning enrolments saw consistent growth, although the 2024/25 draft indicated shortfalls in internship completions and some renewal targets for bursaries.

The number of trained educators and support staff aligned with capacity-building goals in ECD and TVET subsectors.

Despite overall good achievement in 2024/25, the five-year actual for "Number of students receiving financial assistance" was 1 707 below target, and "Number of unemployed graduates who completed internship programmes" for 2024/25 was only 60% of its annual target. These specific underperformances should be highlighted more clearly in the "Progress Towards Impact" narrative.

c) Challenges Affecting Performance

The challenges experienced under this programme were as follows:

- Delays in the implementation of some youth-focused initiatives, including internships and bursaries.
- External funding constraints affected the renewals and expansion of bursary schemes.
- Qualification compliance issues delayed partnerships with private FET providers.
- Inequities in provincial coverage, with some rural or under-resourced areas underrepresented in programme reach.

d) Recommended Corrective Actions

The recommendations for improvement include the following:

- Improve planning and monitoring mechanisms to reduce delays in internship deployment and ensure timely processing of bursary renewals.
- Diversify funding partnerships with the private sector and donor agencies to expand youth support.
- Strengthen accreditation and compliance support for new private FET partners.
- Enhance provincial programme targeting, with a special focus on underperforming and rural districts.

e) Contribution of Government and Non-Government Partners

Government and non-government partners who contributed include the following:

- The DHET provided regulatory alignment for bursaries and occupational programmes.
- TVET and HEI institutions were key implementation partners for placements and training.
- Private and public employers offered workplace-based learning and internships.
- NGOs and NPOs participated in facilitating community-based skills initiatives, especially in the ECD and AET sectors.

f) Contribution of Programme Outputs to Outcomes

The outputs that contributed to programme outcomes included the following:

- Workplace learning programmes
- Targeted bursary and internship schemes
- Capacity building of educators and officials

These outputs directly led to improved access to skills development and increased employment opportunities, especially for youth and education practitioners. They supported medium-term outcomes such as improved employability, enhanced service delivery, and strengthened ETD practitioner networks.

g) Findings from the Evaluation

The evaluations conducted to date found Programme 3 to be highly relevant and impactful, especially in increasing skills access for youth and unemployed graduates.

However, there was inconsistent performance in certain indicators due to funding gaps, rollout delays, and weak provincial coordination.

The evaluation praised the alignment with the NSDP priorities but noted the need to improve beneficiary tracking and data quality for outcome measurement.

h) Findings from Internal and External Research

The following observations have been made with respect to external research:

- Research reports validated the importance of sectoral learning interventions for employment and transformation goals.
- Internal reviews highlighted positive feedback from beneficiaries on internships but raised concerns about delayed placements.
- Stakeholder surveys underscored the need for better post-training support and employer engagement to improve absorption rates.
- Research recommended enhanced learner support systems and tracking mechanisms after programme completion.

Programme 4 – Quality Assurance

Programme 4 ensures the integrity and effectiveness of learning programmes through robust quality assurance mechanisms. It oversees provider accreditation, learner certification, assessment moderation, and capacity building for ETD practitioners. The strategy focuses on aligning quality assurance practices with QCTO standards while streamlining certification

processes to reduce delays. Monitoring and evaluation are key features, ensuring that delivery meets national standards and the learner achievements are recognised promptly.

This programme plays a pivotal role in maintaining public confidence in ETDP SETA-accredited training.

The outcomes, indicators and targets for Programme 4 were specified as follows:

Outcome	Outcome Indicator	2019/20 Baseline	2024/25 Target	Actual achievement as at 31 March 2025	Reasons for deviation	Corrective action to be taken in the next planning cycle
Increase access to occupationally directed programmes	Occupational qualifications that promote Occupations in High Demand to increase employability are developed	8	17	17 (100%)	N/A	None
	Increase in the number of work-integrated learning sites promoted and supported for Occupations in High Demand to increase employability	10	300	310 (103%)	N/A	None

Explanation of Achieved Performance Over the Five-Year Period

a) Progress Toward the Programme Impact Statement

Programme 4 supported the ETDP SETA's overarching impact of "an educated, capable, and skilled workforce" by ensuring the quality and credibility of education and training provisioning across the sector. It focused on quality assurance systems, accreditation, learner certification, and institutional capacity building to maintain standards across ETD learning programmes.

b) Progress on Five-Year Targets for Outcome Indicators

The programme achieved or exceeded most of its annual and cumulative targets for provider accreditation, monitoring, and certification activities.

Notable successes included faster turnaround times for learner certification and improved compliance by training providers with QCTO and SAQA standards.

However, some quality assurance interventions lagged due to backlogs from previous years and the slow adoption of digital systems.

c) Challenges Affecting Performance

- Slow uptake of digitised quality assurance systems, particularly among legacy providers, delayed reporting and verification processes.
- Accreditation bottlenecks arose due to increased applications and limited internal capacity for site visits and evaluations.
- Misalignment between legacy qualifications and the QCTO framework created transitional issues in quality assurance processes.
- Variability in provider compliance, especially among rural and newly accredited institutions, affected consistency in learner achievements.

d) Recommended Corrective Actions

- Expand digital QA platforms and intensify capacity building for providers to use them effectively.
- Increase quality assurance staffing or make use of outsourced evaluators to address backlogs in provider evaluations and site visits.
- Provide transition support and clear guidelines for providers moving from legacy to QCTO qualifications.
- Strengthen regional QA support to improve coverage and compliance across provinces.

e) Contribution of Government and Non-Government Partners

- QCTO and SAQA provided regulatory guidance and support on accreditation and certification matters.
- Training providers and ETDP practitioners were key partners in implementing quality standards and participating in monitoring processes.
- External moderation and verification specialists contributed to the rigorous assessment of learner achievements and institutional practices.
- DHET offered strategic policy alignment for SETA QA activities, particularly in the context of the NSDP and PSET frameworks.

f) Contribution of Programme Outputs to Outcomes

- Provider accreditation and monitoring reports
- Verified learner achievement records
- Capacity-building workshops on quality standards

g) Findings from the Evaluation

Both the Midterm and End-Term Evaluations established the following:

- Programme 4 was efficient and well aligned to regulatory and sectoral needs.
- Moderation and verification processes were rated positively but required improvements in tracking systems and feedback turnaround times.
- Evaluation findings emphasised the need for better integration of digital tools and more rigorous provider compliance enforcement.

h) Findings from Internal and External Research

Research conducted in the end-term evaluation and earlier research projects pointed to the following:

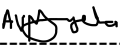
- internal research confirmed a steady increase in provider compliance but flagged challenges in maintaining consistency in verification outcomes.
- stakeholder interviews highlighted the positive impact of QA processes on learner credibility, although they requested simpler guidelines and faster certification timelines.
- external reviews (Redflank) suggested more structured feedback loops between QA and programme design to enhance relevance and responsiveness.

Adjustment of indicators and or targets in some years over the 5-year period

As noted elsewhere, the ETDP SETA has been able to consider environmental factors beyond its control in the planning and execution of interventions across the plan period. These include pandemics - COVID-19 had a significant and direct impact on targets during the first two years of implementation of the strategic plan - as well as the constrained macroeconomic environment, which also influenced performance and target setting. Such agility is essential in strategy design and execution.

While the ETDP SETA responded adaptively by revising APPs and shifting strategies, clearer documentation of target evolution and justifications is essential for future planning and evaluation credibility. For example, any discontinuation, addition or movement of outcome indicators and targets across programmes needs to be fully documented to avoid stakeholders misinterpreting progress or assuming performance gaps, and to prevent oversight bodies (e.g. Parliament, DPME, AGSA) flagging inconsistencies or suspecting manipulation of reported results.

15. Official sign off by the Executives:

Programme Managers (for each programme):
 ----- Programme 1: Mr Vusi Monyela (Corporate Services Manager) ----- Programme 2: Mr Mabu Raphotle (Research & Skills Planning)  ----- Programme 3: Mr Mabu Raphotle (Acting COO)  ----- Programme 4: Mr Bhekamaswazi Shabalala (ETQA Manager) 

Acting Chief Financial Officer: Ngaledzani khawedzo


Chief Executive Office/Chairperson of the Board:

Director- General:

Approved by Minister:

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