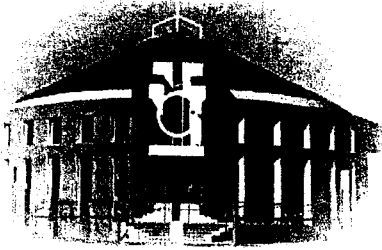


# **NORTH WEST PROVINCIAL LEGISLATURE**



**REPORT OF THE ASSESSMENT OF THE PUBLIC SECTOR  
EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY'S CONTRIBUTION  
TOWARDS THE DEVELOPMENT OF SKILLS AND CAREER  
PROGRESSION PROSPECTS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE FOR THE  
PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC SAFETY AND PROVINCIAL  
AFFAIRS.**

**CHAIRPERSON: HON. L. PELELE**

**APRIL 2010**

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### **1. INTRODUCTION**

Government agencies like the PSETA were established in terms of the Skills Development Act, 1998 to facilitate the improvement of the skills and advance competence of employees in the Public Service. This report is a result of a study on the effect PSETA has on skills development initiatives and was executed with the support from the German Technical Cooperation (GTZ). The study was conducted to assess how the PSETA performed programmatically and whether or not its institutional capacity was able to meet the desired objectives. The objectives of the assessment were to:

- determine the extent to which the PSETA delivered on its mandate of addressing the skills development needs of the Public Service.
- assess its institutional capacity to deliver on the mandate.
- establish the extent to which Public Service personnel have benefited from the PSETA facilitated training and skills development programme.
- establish the extent to which persons that have participated in the PSETA learnerships have accessed employment in the Public Service; and
- determine the extent to which the PSETA facilitated skills development programmes have influenced career progression of public servants.

### **2. KEY FINDINGS**

#### **2.1 Programme Performance**

The PSETA like all the other SETAs had to align its programmes to the National Skills Development Strategy I (NSDS I) which was effective until 31 March 2005. The period between 2004 and 2006 was a watershed for SETAs as the NSDS I was coming to an end and National

Skills Development Strategy II (NSDS II) was introduced. However, there were still several challenges confronting the SETAs, and the PSETA in particular.

The PSETA has proved that it is, to some extent, delivering on its mandate, as it achieved most of its goals and objectives against the Department of Labour's (DoL) indicators. The DoL had given the PSETA a 2.8 rating in 2006/07 financial year and raised this to 3.6 during the 2007/08 financial year, resulting in the PSETA being one of the well performing SETAs during this period. During this study, few respondents (provincial and service providers) indicated dissatisfaction with the PSETA's commitment to delivering on schedule. The dissatisfaction mentioned related to the institutional and organisational arrangement of the PSETA.

## **2.2 The effectiveness of PSETA**

In its Annual Report (2007/08), the PSETA reported a success on all the four selected NSDS II indicators which are the achievement of targets, equity principles, governance and funds management. During the 2006/07 period, the PSETA trained 215 Skills Development Facilitators (SDFs) and by the end 2007/08, another 225 SDFs had been trained in the use of Career Guides, Reporting Templates and Skills Development Facilitation, Information Road Shows and Capacity Building workshops. This was more than double the number of SDF trainees during NSDS (I). Seven provinces confirmed this achievement and were appreciative of the PSETA's role and facilitation. The Free State went further, stating that SDF management had been significantly improved in the last two years especially in the Department of Agriculture.

In terms of co-ordinating and facilitating learnerships, the PSETA certified 1,535 learners, facilitated the enrolment of 2,485 workers in learnerships and assisted 1,270 unemployed workers into learnerships. However, all respondents complained about the PSETA's delays in responding to their requests and in processing their applications for accreditations. In terms of effectiveness, the PSETA is regarded as slightly above average in promoting and enhancing the skills and competence of personnel in the Public Service by departments and service providers.

### **2.3 Career Progression for learnership participants**

The study examined career movement of learners over three financial years (2005/2006; 2006/2007 and 2007/2008). Of the 133 learners who completed training and were successfully followed up in this study, 76% were, by then employed by different departments, while 15% still remained unemployed. The telephonic followup showed that, of the remaining number of learners, 5% had found employment outside government (Vodacom, Makro and NGO), while 2% had ventured into self-employment and the other 2% had since changed jobs. Most of those unemployed indicated that their respective departments had not initially guaranteed them jobs upon completion of their learnerships and, were therefore still applying to different departments.

### **2.4. Institutional and organisational arrangements**

The PSETA board is composed of 8 government representatives, 8 organised labour representatives, and one expert from each of the PSETA constituencies and an independent chairperson, and the CEO as an ex-officio. The board reports to the Department of Labour on education, training and development aspects, and to the DPSA on administrative, management and financial matters. This dual reporting impacted negatively on its governance.

## **3. PSETA'S SUCCESSES**

- PSETA has improved on providing capacity building support to SDFs in national and provincial departments, legislatures and parastatals and assisting with the promotion of the career guide for the public service, producing ART templates and using other important instruments.

- In the Learnership sector, the PSETA increased its interactions with employer stakeholders and HR Departments. In the process, it surpassed its target to 30 skills programmes against a target of 20 for the year.
- The accreditation of training providers is the cornerstone of the ETQA Unit within the PSETA. In spite of mounting challenges, the Unit accredited programmes for 23 training providers, eight academies and one Further Education and Training (FET) College. At the same time, the Unit introduced a set of evaluators and inducted them on the evaluation of learning programmes submitted to the PSETA for approval and accreditation.
- Eastern Cape, Mpumalanga, Gauteng and North West provinces have commended the success rate of the PSETA in terms of employment of learners after completion, has been well above expectations. Mpumalanga, which has a consolidated model, was able to retrieve a database of learners for the last two years with latest information on their whereabouts. More than 76% of these are in employment.

#### **4. CHALLENGES**

The PSETA has also been faced with a host of challenges that have impacted negatively on it.

The challenges include *inter alia* the following:

- the PSETA's board is perceived to be weak and dysfunctional by the respondents;
- the high turnover of the executive, operating with five acting CEOs in three years;
- the lack of monitoring and feedback to its constituency;
- the small staff complement at 37% of the required total of fifty; and
- the poor strategy and delays in paying learnership allowances.

#### **5. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The following recommendations are made to improve the PSETA's performance in future:

- The PSETA should design a template for standard reporting so that stakeholders and departments' contribution for updates on progress and the PSETA's Annual Reports are captured in a uniform manner;

- The PSETA should play a more active ‘hands on’ approach in facilitating the employability of the 18.2 learners (unemployed), to urge and assist departments’ HRD personnel in identifying appropriate vacant positions in respective directorates;
- The PSETA should work closely with the Office of the Premier and provincial departments in Mpumalanga Province with a view to developing a broad Framework on the co-ordination, facilitation and follow-ups of learnerships. The Mpumalanga province has a working framework on the co-ordination, facilitation and follow-ups of learnerships;
- The Service Delivery Committee of the PSETA should be re-constituted to include new members of the board and be given its own terms of reference; and
- The PSETA board should be autonomous in order to be able to run its affairs as smoothly as possible.
- The PSETA should be formally institutionalised into a schedule 3A entity, in line with the legislative framework which provides for its independence.
- However, the Portfolio Committee emphasis the following recommendations:
  - ✚ The Portfolio Committee notes the report
  - ✚ That the department strengthen Human Resource Development Unit.
  - ✚ Government to look into best model / practices of implementation of learnership programmes.
  - ✚ Develop the exit strategy plan for learnerships.
  - ✚ Build capacity programme on critical scarce skills

## 6. CONCLUSION

The PSETA is to some extent carrying out its mandate, despite the challenges it faces. In terms of the documented information assessed, the PSETA has facilitated access to further education and training services for thousands of public servants and in the process, it has played a role, though not too significant, in the employability of learners (both 18.1 and 18.2 of its Annual report 2006/07 and 2007/09). Due to lack of a formalised tracking system and monitoring tools,

it has not been easy during this study to follow-up on the career progression of learners who have completed the programme. This is an area where the PSETA should play a role in initiating a mechanism that could be utilised across the board.



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**Hon. LP Pelele**

**Chairperson: PC - Public Safety and Provincial Affairs**