

Module 2

A Guide to improved

Workplace Skills Planning



Workplace Skills Plans

Workplace skills plans (WSP) document skills needs in an organisation and describe the range of skills development interventions that an organisation will use to address these needs.

A WSP is developed annually – for the period 01 April to 31 March - by a registered skills development facilitator (SDF) and is submitted to the SETA with which the organisation is registered. The WSP facilitates access to the SETAs mandatory grant for skills training. Organisations are required to report against their WSPs in an Annual Training Report (ATR) that shows how they have addressed the priority skills defined in the WSP.

An equally important purpose of the WSP is that it also provides important sector information to the SETA on employee profiles, skills needs and skills development interventions. This information in turn informs the development of the SETAs sector skills plan (SSP). The SSPs then further make a contribution to the national skills development agenda defined in the National Skills Development Strategy, now in its 3rd generation. Though developed at an organisation level to address in house skills development needs, the WSP has an important purpose in informing skills needs at a sector level and at a national level.

In response to a need identified by human resource development practitioners in the environment and conservation sectors, this module has been written to support organisations in strengthening the processes through which they develop WSPs. The ultimate aim being to support skills development at a sector and national level.

We start this module with an overview of some of the challenges that organisations and professionals experience in the process of developing WSPs. This section opens up for us the various aspects in human resource management and development that needs to be addressed to ensure more accurate and well informed WSPs.

It further takes you through a range of considerations in preparing your organisation for workplace skills planning. And then deals with some key processes to strengthen workplace skills planning in your organisation. Some of the considerations and processes dealt with include, amongst others registering a SDF, setting up a training committee, engaging stakeholders in identifying and addressing skills needs, skills audits and ultimately preparing and submitting the WSP.

Challenges in workplace skills planning

Many human resource management and development professionals agree on a number of challenges experienced during workplace skills planning. Some of these challenges occur at an organisational level and others at the sector skills planning level in the SETAs. Our human resource management and development practitioners however agree that, since the WSP feeds into the SSP we could potentially address the skills planning issues at a sector and SETA level if we start at the organisational level. Reflect on this list as a way of identifying and unblocking the constraints to workplace skills planning in your own organisation.

- Poor information management from which data is extrapolated for skills planning, for example employee qualifications, experience profile etc. and WSPs of former years are seldom used as baseline data to build up this information system.
- Poorly defined job descriptions which are seldom aligned to organisational strategy and strategic priorities.
- Skills needs often focus on immediate need with little consideration for change, organisational development and future anticipated skills needs.
- Skills development and training is sometimes not viewed as a strategic priority and at times lacks executive and broader management buy-in and support.
- The significance value and importance of skills planning and development is sometimes not fully understood in organisations and results in skills planning and development processes not enjoying full line management and employee support, representivity and engagement.
- Many WSPs reflect generic workplace-based skills needs, like computer training, financial management, report writing, amongst others, and critical and scarce skills related to key technical and functional areas in the organisation are seldom identified and addressed.
- Workplace skills planning is seldom aligned to the performance management and other human resources management systems, procedures and practices.
- Workplace skills planning is often approached from a compliance perspective and very often outsourced to consultants and not institutionalised in the organisation to strengthen this level of in-house capacity .
- Training and skills development is more often than not 'menu-driven' and priorities identified relative course offerings marketed by training providers.
- Few organisations have skills planning and development quality management systems and might result in poorer quality approaches to defining and addressing skills needs.

These are some – and probably not all - of the challenges at an organisational level. These are perhaps easier to address through change in internal systems, orientations and engagements. This module makes some suggestions for workplace skills planning to help you overcome and address these challenges.

Preparing the workplace for learning

Our colleagues who have trudged through developing a number of annual workplace skills plans over the years advise us to prepare the internal environment well for skills planning and development. This preparation would involve setting up the necessary structures, identifying and ensuring the appropriate capacity to lead the process of workplace skills planning, securing support and participation from the executive committee, line management and the broader staff complement and securing the necessary resources – both financial and human – to facilitate the timeous development and submissions of the WSP.

Registering a Skills Development Facilitator (SDF)

All SETAs require the nomination and registration of a Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) who acts as the link between the organisation and the SETA of registration around all matters relating to skills planning and development. Most SETAs have an online system for registration of the organisations SDF. The SDF could be an employee of the organisation or an external consultant, who represents more than one employer organisation.

Trish Persad from South African Weather Services, with experience in working with SETAs advises to register an SDF as soon as possible and to use the SETA training systems to ensure the development of capacity for the SDF to lead skills development in your organisation.

The SDF is responsible for providing strategic guidance, support and management to the organisation in developing and implementing a skills planning and development strategy. Key responsibilities of the SDF include:

- Facilitating the process of identifying key organisational skills needs to meet its mandate;
- Undertaking a skills audit in relation to these identified organisational needs to identify immediate, medium term and long term skills gaps in the organisation;
- Defining a range of skills development strategies to address skills needs in the immediate, medium and long term.
- From this pertinent information develop an annual WSP, ensure its endorsement in the organisation and submit this timeously to the SETA of registration.
- Oversee support and quality assure the implementation of skills development interventions to meet the immediate skills development needs as defined in the ESP.
- Monitor and evaluate skill development in the organisation relative to these needs and report in to the SETA through the annual training report
- Liaise with SETA around access to discretionary grant and facilitate the development and submission of appropriate proposals to access this grant.

From this description of responsibilities it is evident that the SDF needs to be someone with a knowledge, background and experience in skills development and training. It would also be useful for the person to have an extensive knowledge of the skills development policies and systems in South Africa. The ETDP SETA offers training for individuals to become accredited SDFs. They use 6 unit standards for identifying competence as an accredited SDF. These 6 unit standards provide a useful framework around which to profile the job definition of the SDF in your organisation and help you to identify the appropriate person to fulfil these responsibilities. It also provides a framework for developing the capacity of the SDF to meet the skills planning and development needs for the organisation.

Unit Standard Registration Number	Title of Unit Standard
114924	Demonstrate an understanding of outcomes-based education in the National Qualifications Framework
15217	Develop an organisational training and development plan
15218	Conduct an analysis to determine the outcome of skills development interventions
15227	Undertake skills development administration
15228	Advise on the establishment and implementation of a quality management system and skills development practices.
15232	Co-ordinate planned skills development interventions

The SAQA website
www.saqa.co.za
 has more details on these unit standards offered by the ETDP SETA

Alma Johnson, Deputy Director: Human Resource Development
for Mpumalanga Economic Development, Environment and Tourism

outlines the following additional responsibilities of the SDF in her organisation, that includes:

- Facilitate the career development amongst employees in the organisation ;
- Identify evaluate and advise employees and employer on external and internal skills development strategies;
- Set up and manage the skills development committee;
- Align human resource policy to skills development;
- Support the development and implementation of a developmental performance management system Facilitate processes of recognition of prior learning and enable formalising of qualifications ;
- Manage the uptake of learnerships, skills development programme and other skills development interventions initiated through the SETA;

Some of the personal and professional attributes that Alma suggests for the SDF includes:

- Organisational authority
- Maturity
- Credibility
- Assertiveness
- Flexibility
- Strong organisational skills
- Self motivated
- Problem solving skills
- Supportive
- Strong communications skills
- Strong leadership skills and
- A strong interest in people development

Setting up a Training Committee

The Skills Development Act requires that skills planning and development takes place with the broadest scope of representivity through extensive stakeholder consultation across the organisation. The mechanism to facilitate representivity and consultation in skills planning is the training committee, sometimes called the Skills Planning Committee (SPC) or the Workplace Training Committee (WTC), amongst others.

The training committee must represent both employer and employee interests. All SETAs suggest the inclusion of employee representative bodies on this training committee as well as a representative for non-unionised employees. CATHSSETA for example requires a training committee of at least 5 members in number with at least 2 representing management, at least 2 representing employees and the SDF as the 5th person.

The role of the training committee is to collectively and representatively determine training priorities and needs and agree on interventions that address these priorities and needs. Organisations that employ 50 or more employees are obliged under the Skills Development Act to constitute a training committee. They are also obliged to ensure that this committee meets regularly and that elected members have the necessary capacity to represent the stakeholder group in skills planning. The training committee is also required to keep detailed minutes of all meetings as well as attendance registers for these meetings. These documents could be called for in skills planning and development monitoring and auditing processes by the SETA.

For efficient functioning of representative bodies, the training committee often doubles up as the Employment Equity Committee

Because the nature, size and structure of organisations differ, it is difficult to define generic guidelines for constituting the training committee. A key guideline is however to ensure representation at all levels of management and staff. So for example, if you have a 5 tier hierarchy in your organisation, it would be good to have a representative from each level on the training committee. It is also useful to couple this representation across all key directorates and / or departments in the organisation. Ultimately the guiding principle is to give voice to all levels and functions of job profiles in the organisation.

Desiree English, Senior Manager for Human Resource Development and Utilization at Cape Nature

... tells us it is important to ensure representivity across management levels, including executive and senior management levels, to ensure credibility of the training committee.

Rene Du Toit, SANBI's Deputy Director for Training and Development

shares the following guidelines for constituting the training committee

- SANBI's training committee is coupled to its employment equity committee called the Employment Equity Training Committee (EETC);
- Guidelines for representation on the EETC, includes representation for:
 - different occupational levels, ie management and employee levels;
 - different occupational categories, ie, functional levels, eg. research, education, gardens, bioregional programmes, corporate services etc.;
 - employee union representative;
 - regional sites – SANBI has 9 gardens across provinces and requires representation from all these sites; regional site representation must be coupled to the previous 3 bullet points;
 - the Employment Equity Manager who serves as the chairperson for the committee;
 - the Employment Equity Co-ordinator;
 - The Skills Development Facilitator;
 - A secretary from the Human Resource Division
- The size of the EETC with these guidelines for representation is 13 members, with the EE Manager, EE Co-ordinator, SDF, secretary and 9 regional representatives across management and functional levels and employee unions;
- Attention should also be given amongst these 13 members to representation of gender, race groups and people with disabilities;
- Tenure of office for the EETC is 3 years from date of election, which seems a useful time frame to ensure continuity;
- Objectives of the EETC with respect to employment equity are:
 - to achieve and maintain effective EE Transformation at SANBI
 - to ensure compliance with all relevant Legislation
- Objectives of the EETC with respect to skills development and training are to consider and give input into:
 - the identification of strategic skills development priorities
 - the process to be followed in the development of the WSP
 - SANBI's proposed yearly WSP, and the need for it to -
 - comply with the requirements of the CATHSSETA
 - be based on a gap analysis between the competency requirements of the position (existing and future), and the assessed competency of every staff member;
 - be integrated with other Human Resource Development initiatives such as the Employment Equity Plan, career development plans and succession plans;
 - be fair and benefit all race, gender groups, categories and levels;
 - be aligned with national and sector skills targets
 - the proposed implementation, monitoring and review mechanisms of the WSP for each year.
 - the draft Annual Training Report and the requirements of the CATHSSETA in this regard for each year.
- These details of the composition and functioning of the EETC are contained in official terms of reference which also includes details of:
 - the number of and meeting procedures;
 - the code of conduct of members;
 - confidentiality and disclosure of information;
 - processing of decisions;
 - dispute resolution.

Making the case for workplace skills planning

One of the key challenges cited by our human resource development colleagues is the lack of strategic positioning, understanding and consequently significance afforded to training and skills planning in organisations. When budgets are cut, the training budget is normally the first to go. This is perhaps evidence of the generally held perception of training and skills development. Some anecdotal evidence also suggests that active training and skills development in organisations are almost always backed by support at an executive level.

We believe that a critical part of preparing the workplace for training and skills development is to secure support and endorsement at an executive management level as well as at a line management level. Workplace skills plans must be signed off in an organisation at executive management level and resources are also secured at this level for the process. Line management is equally important in informing the identification of skills needs, supporting interventions through which to address them and supporting an application of learning back in the work context.

Trish Persad, Senior Manager for Human Capital Development

at South African Weather Services

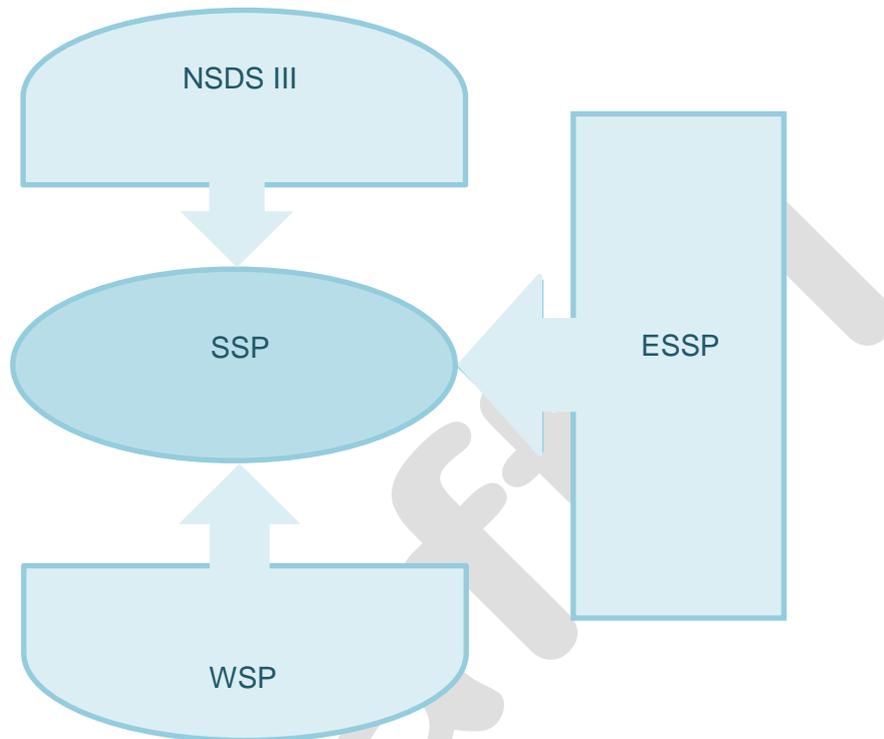
... shares a power point presentation which she presents to senior management in her organisation to secure support for skills planning and development, the outline includes:

- A statement on the importance of identifying and responding to training needs to meet the performance standards of the organisation;
- The level of potential skills training needs at individual, occupational and organisational level;
- The responsibility for skills training from the HRD Manager, in consultation with senior management and all employees;
- The training committee, its composition, competence requirements, roles and responsibilities;
- Internal processes of identifying needs and responding to these; and
- A flow diagram that shows the path of the WSP into the SSP and on to the NSDS III

SEE ALSO APPENDIX A

More on the ‘S’ in WSPs, SSPs, NSDS III and ESSP

As with Trish’s flow diagram, this section locates the WSP - its process and contents - into the broader context of skills development in South Africa, generally and environmental skills more specifically. It shows the link from the WSP to the SSP, informed by the ESSP and contributing towards the goals of the NSDS III.



Starting at the bottom with ...

➤ Workplace Skills Plans (WSPs)

WSPs show the skills needs of an individual organisation and the skills development interventions to meet these. WSPs are prepared annually and submitted on 30 June to the relevant SETA. This covers skills development for the period of 01 April to 30 March of the subsequent year. Skills needs and proposed skills development interventions in the WSPs are integrated into the SETA SSP. SSPs are developed for a 5 year period. SSPs being currently finalised are for the period 2011/2016.

WSPs therefore feed up into the SSPs. They make a significant contribution to identifying skills needs and skills development interventions to address these needs at a sector level. It would therefore make good sense, at an organisational level to integrate a five year projection of skills needs into the annual WSP to inform skills development for the coming five years of the SSP.

Another critical link between the WSP and the SSP is that spending on the SETA skills fund (see module 1) is determined by the SSP and the skills needs reflected in the WSP. Access to the mandatory grant is enabled through the WSP, and access to funds on the discretionary grant is enabled through the extent to which WSPs reflect the priorities defined in the SETA SSP. This is another reason to critically consider the link between the WSP and the SSP.

➤ Sector Skills Plans (SSPs)

SSPs can be seen as the epicentre of skills development. They are a collation of WSPs in an economic sector. For example, SANBI, SANParks, CapeNature, ECPTA, MPTB, KZN Wildlife, amongst others submit their WSSP to CATHSSETA representing the conservation sector.

SSPs are also informed by and required to work towards the objectives of the National Skills Development Strategy, now in its 3rd generation. The WSP therefore, via the SSP sandwiched in the middle makes a contribution to achieving the national skills development objectives. It therefore serves not only the organisation and the sector, but the broader South African labour market.



Thomas Mathiba, Director:
Sector Education and Training,
Department of Environment
says ...



DEA is the only
government
department to have
entered into systemic
engagement with
skills development at
a national level.

In the latter half of 2010 and early 2011 DEA entered into collaboration with DHET to inform the process of SETAs developing their respective SSPs. Drawing on the ESSP – see below – a resource was developed by a National Environmental Skills Planning Forum to guide SETAs in integrating the environmental driver and environmental scarce and critical skills into the SSPs.

An Enabling Document for all SETAs starts with an introduction of new opportunities and challenges associated with green growth and sustainability against the backdrop of climate change, energy shortages, natural resource degradation, amongst other environmental challenges. And the implications this has for developing new skills and reorienting existing skills to enable sustainable growth in the South African economy. It then contains a 5 page spread relevant to each of the SETAs:

Each individual SETA's name

Description of:

- the critical need to integrate the environmental driver into SSPs and into skills planning and development ;
- how a green growth path is relevant that particular SETA;
- how MTSF Goal 9, Sustainable Natural Resource Use and Management is relevant to the SETA.

Recommended:

- cross cutting programmes to address critical skills in that particular SETA;
- programmes to address scarce skills in that SETA;
- programmes for research and innovation relevant to that SETA.

And proposes some flagship skills development programmes.



This enabling document was shared with 18 SETAs at a meeting in 2010, to support them in further developing their SSPs. Various members of the National Environmental Skills Planning Forum also availed themselves to work directly with SETAs to ensure an integration of the environment into SSPs.

Various SETAs have dealt differently with the integration of environmental considerations in their SSPs. Appendix B provides a summary of the extent to which the

various SETAs have integrated the environmental driver and scarce and critical skills into their SSPs.

Even though the Enabling Document has been written with the aim of ...

... together with the SSP of the SETA with which you are registered, it can do the same for you and your organisation to inform the identification of scarce and critical environmental skills and defining specific interventions to address these, in the short, medium and long term.

'... assist[ing] SETAs to adopt a proactive approach to environmental skills development in order to address MTSF goal 9, and also to maximise new development opportunities and job creation possibilities ...

APPENDIX B TO FOLLOW ON FINALISATION REVIEW OF SSPS.

Through collaborative efforts between DEA and DHET, the final drafts of the SSP must be signed off by the Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa (HRDS-SA) task team and the Minister of the relevant government department, in this case the Minister of Environment. The Ministers signature is to ensure the environment is given adequate consideration and the implementation of quality skills training aligned to the Medium Term Strategic Framework's goal 9.

MTSF Strategic Priority 9: Sustainable Natural Resource Management and Use

... to encourage sustainable resource management and use through various interventions including, promoting energy efficiency, renewable energy alternatives, waste reduction practices, zero tolerance to illegal and unsustainable exploitation of natural resources, improved air and atmospheric quality, supporting local and sustainable food production, sustainable water use, enhancing biodiversity and preserving natural habitats.

... and from the side ...

➤ **The Environmental Sector Skills Plan (ESSP)**

Department of Environment's Directorate: Sector Education and Training commissioned the development of an ESSP in 2009, in partnership with Rhodes University. The final ESSP was released in 2010. It provides a comprehensive assessment of scarce and critical environmental skills – to meet immediate and long term needs - to ensure green growth and sustainability in the face of increasing environmental challenges such as climate change, increased energy demands, increased waste generation, water availability, increasingly degraded ecosystems and others.

Key findings in ESSP to guide our approaches to environmental skills development include:

- The need for a pro-active (rather than reactive), co-ordinated (rather than ad hoc) and systemically integrated (working collaboratively into the skills development systems, structures and institutions) approach to environmental skills development;
- The need to more effectively utilize the national system for skills development.
- Skills development is needed at all levels and in all environmental sub-focus areas, such as waste, water, air quality, biodiversity, climate change, coastal zone management, etc.
- Scarce environmental skills identified includes, amongst others:
 - environmental compliance an environmental management inspection skills;
 - Sustainable development and green economy leadership skills
 - Adaptive environmental management and sustainable development planning and implementation;
 - Climate change risk and opportunity assessment and monitoring
 - Environmental monitoring and modelling skills
 - Environmental / resource economics and green economy planning skills
 - Environmental scientific skills
 - Environmental technical skills.



As with the

Enabling Document above, the ESSP also provides a useful framework within which to define scarce and critical environmental skills in the short term framework of the WSP as well as the medium term framework of the SSP.

... and from the top ...

➤ The National Skills Development Strategy III (NSDS III)

The NSDS III provides a broad overarching framework for skills development. As above, it is considered in the development of SSPs. It should also be considered in the development of the WSP. Particularly if one makes the argument for the relevance of training in a broader national skills development context.

Page 10 of the NSDS III describes this strategy as being ‘... informed and guided by other overarching government programmes, especially the Human Resource Development Strategy of South Africa, requirements of the New Growth Path, the Industrial Policy Action Plan ... the Medium Term Strategic Framework, the rural development strategy as well as the new environment strategy ...’.

An outcome of the consultative process outlined above and in module 1 is the integration of environment as a key consideration in skills planning. As reflect in this abstract to the right, the new environment strategy, which refers to the ESSP, is up there amongst other key priorities of government, signifying greater consideration afforded the environment in skills planning.

The eight goals of the NSDS III define broad priorities that should inform skills development at an organisational, sector and national level. These do not cover economic sector specific content, but rather indicate critical means towards addressing skills shortages in South Africa.

These goals are unlikely to inform the identification of scarce and critical skills in any particular economic sector, other than local government as its mandate relates to service delivery. It would however, be particularly useful in defining means to addressing skills needs, particularly at an organisational level. For example, ‘better workplace based skills development’ can only be addressed at an organisational level, since organisations become the hosts of this kind of training. Youth and adult literacy and numeracy can also be improved at an organisational level to enable access to further training, for example through an ABET programme. Some of the credible institutional

NSDS III Goals

1. Establish credible institutional mechanisms for skills planning.
2. Increase access to occupationally directed programmes.
3. Promote the growth of public sector FET colleges.
4. Increase youth and adult language and numerical literacy to enable access further training.
5. Better use workplace based skills development.
6. Support co-operative, small enterprises, worker-initiated, NGO and community training.
7. Increase public sector capacity for improved service delivery.
8. Build career and vocational guidance.

mechanisms for skills development, with the strong emphasis on workplace based training in the NSDS III will require strong partnerships between work organisations and training institutions. This indicates a critical role for organisations in the landscape of skills development.

Ensuring adequate resources for workplace skills planning

One of the key requirements in the Skills Development Act of 1998, is broad stakeholder consultation in developing and implementing skills development and training. Stakeholder engagement is achieved through representation in the training committee, and engaging senior and line management as suggested above. This consultative process is likely to demand both time and financial resources.

Give yourself enough time ...

Ensuring adequate time for consultation demands careful planning for all processes involved in workplace skill planning. A guide to developing this plan should be the due date for submitting WSPs, which is the 30 June of each year. Some of the milestones to be considered backwards from this date, in getting the WSP ready for submission include:

- sign off by the executive committee of the organisation – consider when is the last executive committee meeting prior to the 30 June that would enable adequate discussion, timeous signing and submission of the WSP;
- sign off by the training committee – when should the training committee meet to sign off on the WSP, so that any changes can be integrated before being tabled at the executive committee meeting;
- compiling the WSP – most SDFs struggle with the big administrative load of compiling the WSP, which is often one of many other tasks that this person is responsible for, so ensure sufficient time to compile the WSP;
- collecting the organisation specific information – this is most likely the most time consuming process, especially through a consultative process; these processes of competence profiling, skills auditing, performance appraisals, skills needs identification, consultation and reaching agreement on priority skills needs must all be carefully considered in your plan;

our colleagues experienced in developing and submitting WSPs advise that we not wait until

30 June

Is looming just ahead of us, but to make a timeous start to the development of the WSP to ensure time for all necessary procedures ahead of submission.

Perhaps aim for 31 May and leave June for any unforeseen eventualities.

→ collecting necessary information outside of the organisation – collecting supporting documents like the NSDS II, the final SSP, the ESSP and other information that will ensure a good quality WSP is likely to also take time; be sure to factor in some good time for this in your plan.

From this list of activities in workplace skills planning it sounds as if an annual plan of activities might be appropriate to ensure timeous submission of the WSP.

... and money ...

Consultations are likely to require a budget. If your organisation is geographically dispersed you might require a travel, accommodation and subsistence budget for convening meetings in different regions amongst staff and the various meetings of the training committee. You might also require a budget for catering during the various meetings. You might also require travel to engage with other stakeholders in the sector or even beyond. You may even require a budget for training of the SDF and perhaps some of the other training committee members.

It might be useful to develop an annual budget relative to the WSP process plan as above.

Most importantly, it is necessary to identify a ring fenced training budget to implement the interventions necessary to address the skills needs in an organisation. It would be futile to identify skills needs without the means to addressing them.

In line with Trish Persad's suggestion from SAWS

it might be useful to couple the engagement with senior management on the significance of skills development and training to budget negotiations for implementing training interventions within a financial year.

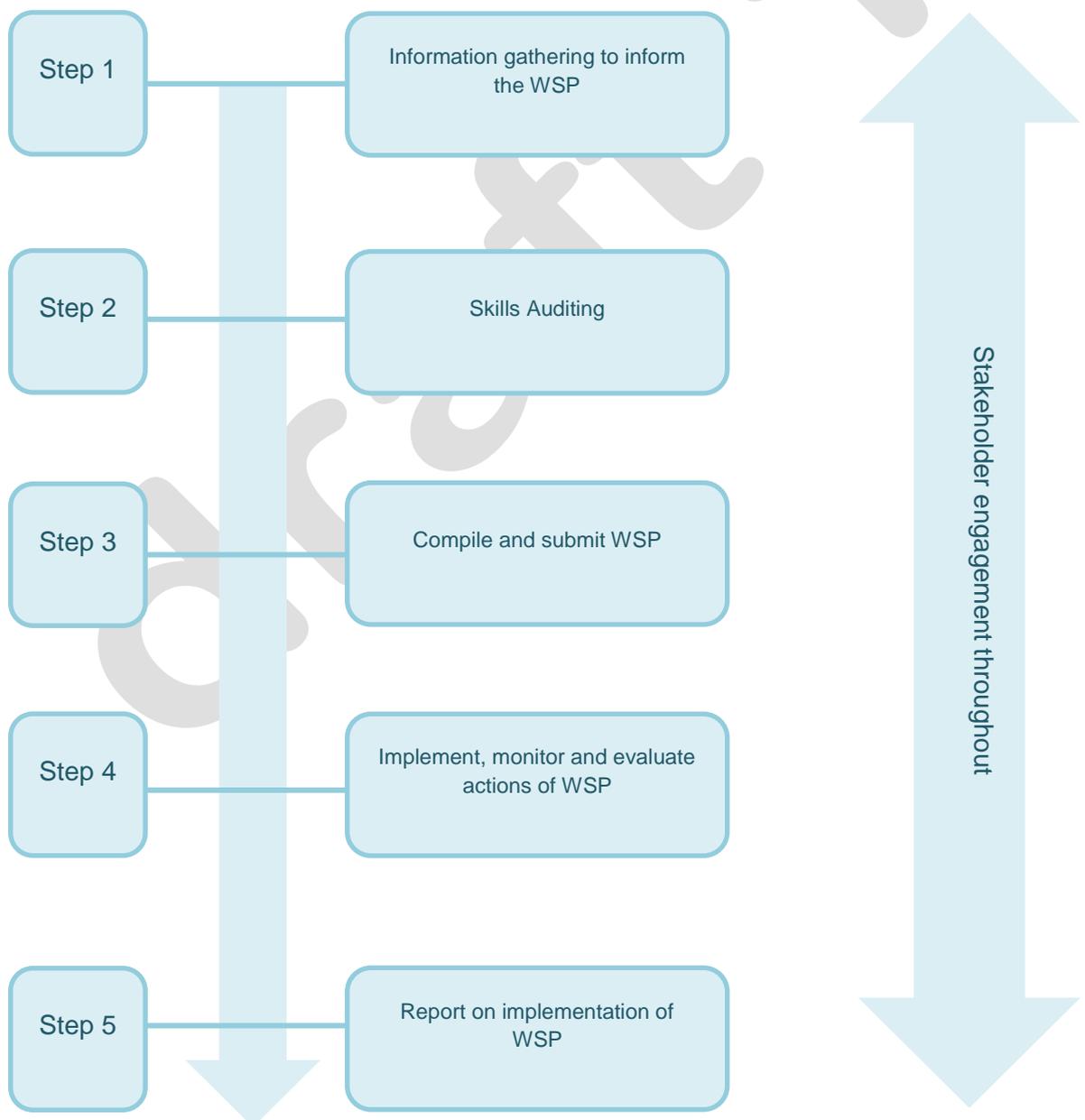
... and people

Ensure that you secure the availability of the necessary people in the organisation. You might for example require a significant amount of time from the HR Director to do competence profiling. You might require some administrative help in compiling the WSP or accessing necessary information. It might be useful to similarly match your human resource needs to the WSP process plan as above.

Workplace Skills Planning

Having prepared the workplace for learning we are ready to embark on the actual journey of workplace skills planning. This is not to say that preparing the workplace for learning falls outside of the ambit of workplace skills planning. It should be considered the preparatory phase. We start with a flow diagram and fill in the detail in the sections that follow.

This process flow has been suggested by a nominated task team on supporting WSPs led by Solly Mosidi (Independent Training Consultant) with key inputs from Rene Du Toit (SANBI) and Nwabisa Ntantiso (ECPTA)



Step 1

Gathering Information

Engagements

A WSP is only as good as the understanding that informs its development and implementation. Our task team suggests that a range of information is considered, processed and shared in workplace skills planning.

External information to be considered include:

- Broader skills planning and development that should shape the development and implementation of the WSP. Some of these information sources include:
 - The Human Resource Development for South Africa (HRD-SA) 2010 to 2030 which define a number of key goals to be addressed through skills planning at a national level and is a key informant of skills priorities in the SSPs.
 - The NSDS III (see part 1, above), which provides key guidelines on skills development and training strategies and methodologies that will be adopted and prioritised by SETAs in their SSPs.
 - The Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO) (see module III) around which national skills planning and development is organised;
 - DHET policies, strategies and structures on skills development and training (see module 1).
 - SAQA policies, strategies and structures on skills development and training (see module 1) and particularly the QCTO (see module 1) as the quality assurer of occupationally directed training and skills development
- Sector specific skills development, that include:
 - The ESSP (see part 1 above) which defines critical and scarce skills generally across the environment sector and could help you identify those scarce and critical skills in your organisation;
 - The Enabling documents (see part 1 above) which

External stakeholders

you are likely to engage in this process of information gathering include:

- SAQA
- DHET
- SETA
- DEA
- HRD Network

Engagement with external stakeholders might involve:

- gathering information;
- building up useful networks;
- lobbying support for developing and implementing the WSP.

Internal stakeholders

might include:

- Executive management to secure support and resource allocation for the process of planning and implementing the WSP; and
- Understanding strategic priorities in

draws on the ESSP and defines scarce and critical skills per economic sector and provides some guidelines for interventions to address these.

- SETA SSPs with which you are registered and associated (see module 1), for example CATHSSETA, AgriSETA, LG SETA, amongst others.

These sources of information should guide you in:

- Identifying scarce and critical skills for inclusion in your WSP (ESSP, Enabling document, SSPs);
- Identify strategic trends and patterns for skills development in the sector that will shape skills needs in your organisation (ESSP, SSPs);
- Help you understand the systems, structures and processes through which to address skills needs and support implementation of skills development strategies (HRD-SA, NSDS III).

Internal information to be considered in workplace skills planning include:

- Strategic organisational priorities over the short and medium term;
- Competence requirements to meet these strategic priorities over time;
- HR priorities over the short to medium term, that relate for example, planned changes to technology, employment equity strategies, transformation strategies, growth, change or retrenchment plans, vacancies that are difficult to fill, recruitment trends.

Employee information is another critical source of information which can be summarised from personal development plans. This would make explicit career development plans, skills development needs identified by the individual employee

the short and medium term;

- Line management to share national and sector priorities to take into account in defining job and competence profiles
- Human Resources to ensure an understanding of trends, patterns and developments likely to shape skills planning and training;
- HR priorities over the short and medium term that will shape skills planning and development
- Summary of employee personal development plans
- Training committee to ensure this group of representatives move in the same direction of workplace skills planning

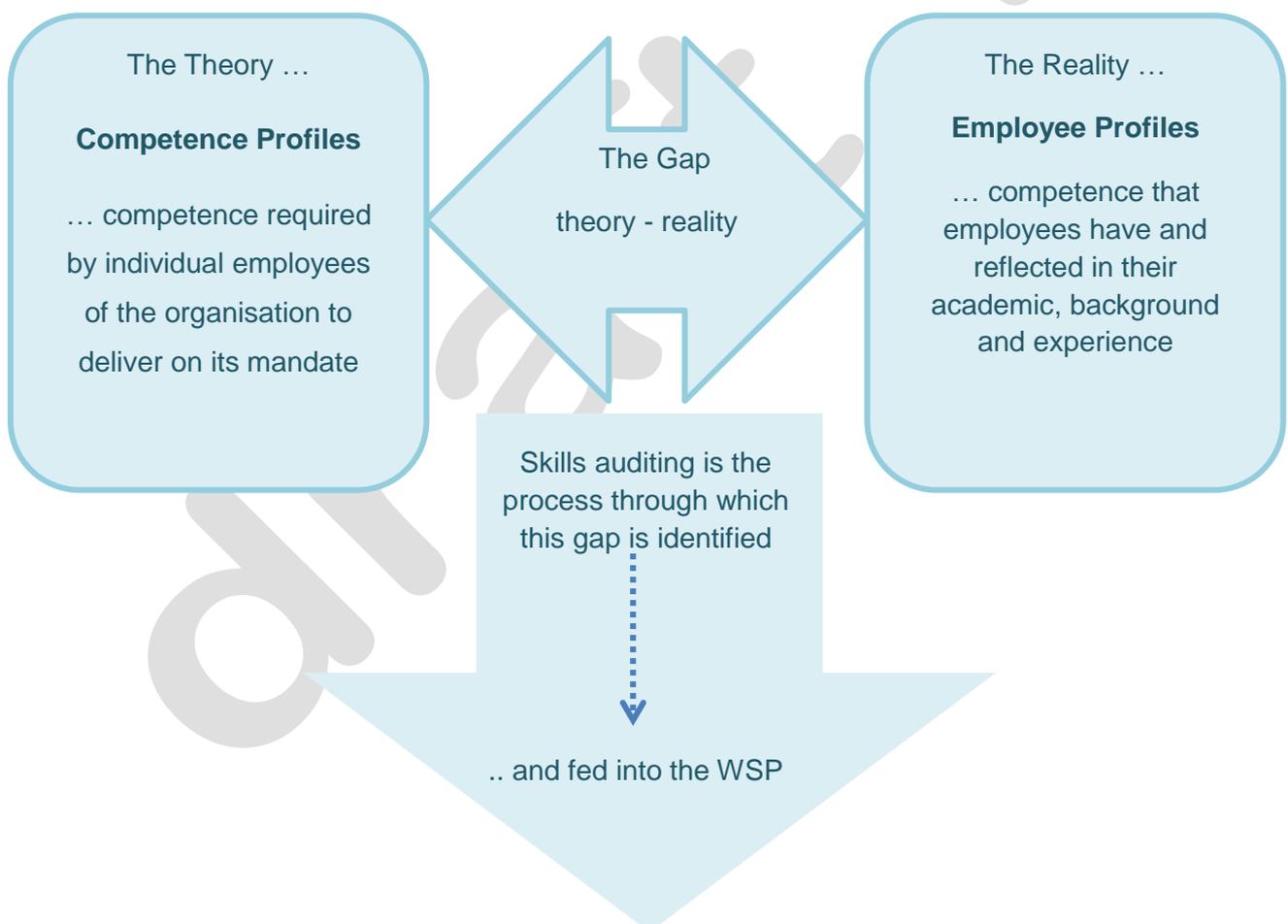
It is critical to link skills planning priorities to national, sector and organisational priorities

Step 2

Skills Auditing

Skills auditing is the process through which skills gaps in an organisation are identified. The difference between what we need in an organisation and what we have at any particular point in time.

To do an effective skills audit one must have a well-structured baseline of skills needs against which to compare the skills that the organisation already has. The baseline of skills needs we refer to as a competence profile. The skills audit also requires a clear profile of existing employees' skills. The difference between the two is the skills gaps to be addressed through skills development and training.



This section encourages you to consider your skills needs in relation to the competence requirements of your organisation.

Phase 1: Determine skills requirements

Analyse service delivery requirements

What are short, medium and long term objectives?

What products or services must be delivered to achieve these?



Identify skills requirements

What skills are needed to achieve goals and objectives?

In which occupations will you find these skills?



Develop Human Capital Development Strategy

What staff is needed to fulfil the skills requirements?

How will we acquire or retain these skills?



Develop Human Capital Development Plan

Including post establishment, restructuring, recruitment of new staff, succession management, retention strategy

Trish Persad, Senior Manager: Human Capital Development at South African Weather Services shares this process of competence profiling, employee profiling and identifying skills needs

Phase 2: Describe Competency Profiles

What post are required?



What roles must be performed by incumbents in these posts?



What competence requirements are required for all posts?

What should employees in these posts know, understand and be able to do?

What other competences should they have?

Phase 3: Identify skills needs

Measure individuals against competence requirements

Does the person demonstrate the competence requirements required by the post?

Identify performance gap and training needs

What is the gap between what performance should be and what the individual's performance currently is?

Where are the gaps in performance?

What competence is lacking or needs improvement?

Which new skills must be developed?

What is the cause of the performance gap?

Why is performance not what it should be?

Cause of the performance gap:
lack of skills

Cause of the performance gap:
not a lack of skills

Informed by
employee self-
assessment
and formal
performance
appraisal

Phase 4: Identify training and non training interventions to address skills gaps

In this case the person has the required skills and under performance is related to other factors, for example, inappropriate tools and equipment for the job, unsuitable disposition for current job, demotivated for example, due to remuneration, inappropriate supervision, amongst others.

This requires a non-training intervention to address the causes of underperformance and is not the focus of WSPs

Select the most appropriate intervention to address the skills need.

What type of formal or informal training or other form of development intervention is best suited to developing this skills need?

Formal or informal training is the most appropriate option

Identify the most appropriate learning route, eg.

- Full time study
- Part time studies
- Internship
- Learnership
- Short course
- Skills programme

Other Identify the most appropriate option, eg. workplace based development intervention is more appropriate

- Formal mentoring
- Coaching
- Demonstration
- Workplace-based training

Phase 1: Human resource planning

A well known saying in human resource circles is that ‘...people are our most valuable asset ...’. And though we all sometime feel that this is not the case, any organisation is only as strong as its human resource complement. The first step in identifying skills needs is to understand what the organisation actually needs to fulfil its mandate.

The example above provides some key questions to ask when establishing the human resource needs of an organisation. Short, medium and long term goals and objectives of an organisation are most commonly found in the strategic and business plan of an organisation. Most organisations translate these broader goals and objectives into departmental / directorate / unit goals and objectives. These are all critical sources to consult in defining the organisations needs in the short, medium and long term.

Organisations however do not operate in isolation and are often influenced by the external environment. DPSA’s Strategic Human Resource Planning: Guidelines and Toolkit (2008) encourage us to consider the external and internal environment in human resource planning. This is to help us identify factors that will influence our skills needs as the organisation grows and develops. They suggest the use of the PESTEL framework which SETAs are also using in their skills planning. The PESTEL framework identifies external factors likely to shape change in the internal organisational environment.

The DPSA Strategic Human Resource Planning: Guidelines and Toolkit of 2008 provide a detailed process for strategic human resource planning in an organisation.

This document is available on DPSA website
www.dpsa.gov.za

P	Political factors
E	Economic factors
S	Social factors
T	Technological developments
E	Environmental factors
L	Legislative factors

This PESTEL framework should be considered at both an international, regional and national level, as influences that shape what we do and how we do it in our organisations. In the context of WSPs they are likely to shape our organisational strategies and consequently our job and competence profiles.

Various factors in the internal environment also similarly affect the goals and objectives of an organisation. This could be a changing mandate, restructuring of an organisation, changes in systems and structures, staff turnover rates, challenges in finding the right skills sets, amongst others.

Strategic human resource planning requires a consideration of both these external and internal factors that shape the skills needs of an organisation. Consult the DPSA guidelines for a comprehensive list of factors to consider to identify the short, medium and long term skills needs of your organisation.

Phase 2: Job and competence profiling

Job profiles define the number and nature of positions required in an organisation to meet its short, medium and long term objectives as defined in phase 1. Job profiles define the number of employees in a range of different posts, organised into different directorates, departments, units and or programmes in an organisation. It also defines what each employee *should be able to do* to contribute to the organisation meeting its goals and objectives. A job profile is made up of the key work areas of an individual and is informed by the organisational strategy and business plan and the purpose of the job in achieving the objectives of the organisation. Most employees have a range of between 5 to 10 key work areas, also called key performance areas in some organisations and generally found in our employment contracts. These describe the work that employees should be able to do to fulfil their role in the organisation.

Competence profiles are developed from job profiles and define for each key work area, the:

- the knowledge - what people know and understand about their work, their organisation, the sector and broader environment in which they work;
- skills - what people are able to do with the knowledge and understanding in their workplace; and
- work orientation - the values and attitudes with which people approach their work, drawing on their knowledge and understanding and ability to translate this into what they are expected to do in the workplace

... that will allow the individual to perform his or her role in the organisation.

Competence profiles are not the same as job profiles. But they are developed from a job profile. One cannot do competence profiling without having done job profiling. One of the key challenges in many organisations are weak processes of job profiles which lead to weak processes of competence profiling. This in turn leads to poor skills auditing, and so has a significant knock on effect. Though time consuming, we believe that effective WSPs start with well defined job profiles, which inform competence profiles which then forms the basis for skills auditing.

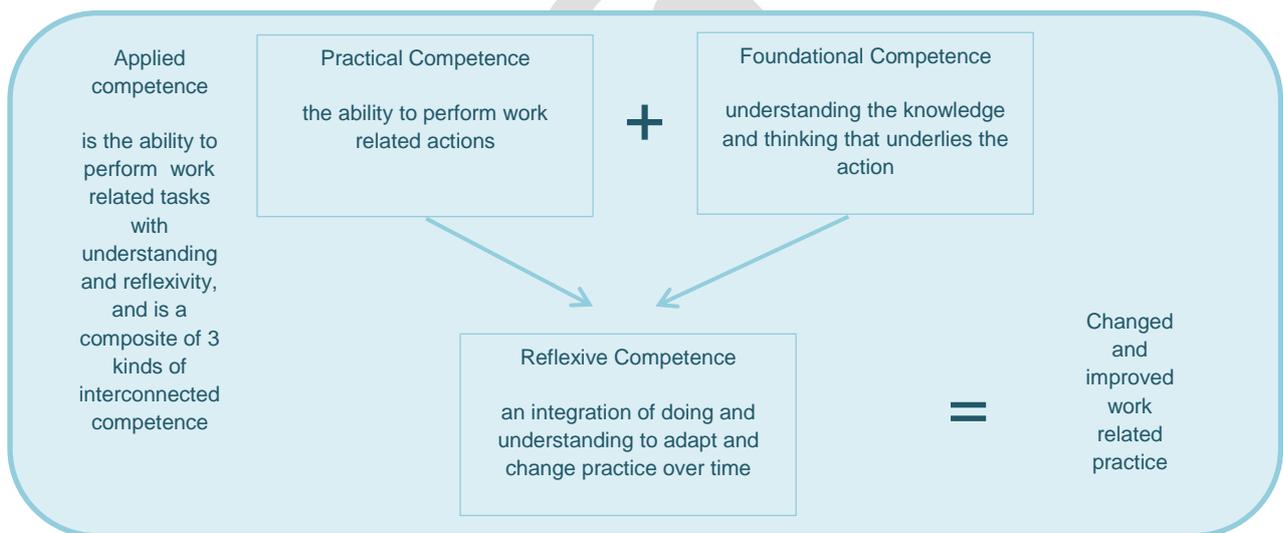


We have found methodologies for competence profiling to be significantly lacking. There does not appear to be a generic and agreed methodology for competence profiling and many professionals understand competence differently. From our experience we suggest two possible methodologies to help you define competence required for different job profiles in your organisation.

Which framework for competence works best in your organisation?

➤ **Applied competence in the National Qualifications Framework**

Way back in 1998, when the NQF was being developed and implemented, an applied competence framework was defined against which to develop qualifications and to assess competence. This was called the applied competence framework in the NQF. And though not generally used in defining competence these days, it continues to provide a useful framework for defining competence. Applied competence is a composite of practical, foundational and reflexive competence.



Below follows an example of the job profile and associated competences of a Field Ranger drawn from ECPTA. Note the relation between the organisation **mission**, the job **purpose** of the Field Ranger, the key work areas (**job profile**) and the associated **competences**.

Organisation Mission	Best practice conservation management and sustainable utilization of natural resources in the Eastern Cape, in partnership with communities and other stakeholders .		
Job purpose	Support conservation through conservation actions, monitoring and reporting on the condition of natural assets in the reserve.		
Key work areas (job profile) and associated competences	Practical Competence (actions to be performed)	Foundational Competence (knowledge underpinning actions)	Reflexive Competence (integrating doing and understanding)
1. Monitor and record condition of natural assets in the reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform routine patrols • Read and record animal movement and migration • Track animals • Identify and communicate conservation challenges, like overgrazing soil erosion, changes in water levels, fire patterns etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know what equipment and their purpose for patrols • Know the geography of reserve and location of natural and cultural assets • Know basic first aid procedures • Identify and know characteristics of animals and plants in the reserve 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify changes in patterns and trends of natural assets • Act immediately on critical threats • Contribute to the development of conservation actions to address these threats
2. Support conservation actions in the reserve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Perform minor repairs • Disarm snares • Fight fires • Maintain heritage sites • Support game capturing and moving 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know alien species • Know fighting procedures • Understand conservation threats and actions to address these 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Act immediately and efficiently to any conservation threats • Participate in developing and implementing longer term actions to conserve assets
3. Communicate with stakeholders and promote conservation and sustainable use of natural resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate information on natural assets; • Engage communities on sustainable and responsible use of resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know and understand uses and users of natural assets; • Know a range of options for communicating with stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop and implement partnership approaches with communities to conserve resources
4. Perform law enforcement duties related to transgressions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out an arrest; • Lay a charge • Provide expert witness 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Know all regulations and conditions of permits relating to natural assets • Know firearm regulations • Knowledge of legal procedures of arrest; • Knowledge of court proceedings • Understand ant-poaching measures; 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop proactive approaches to engage stakeholders in conservation and minimize transgressions

➤ **The Occupation Learning System**

INSERT FOLLOWING WORKSHOP IV WITH CHRIS VORWERK'S INPUT

draft ↗

One of the key challenges in job and competence profiling is that we often start with what we have. The job and competence profile should be based on where we are headed and what we will need in the future as our organisation develops. Job and competence profiling should have a futures focus, a theoretical focus, the vision, the dream. The reality is found in the employee profiles

Because the external and internal environments are always changing, we cannot assume that our job and competence profiles will remain the same indefinitely. It is advisable to review and reconsider the job and competence profile of your organisation at interim periods. A feasible time frame for job and competence profiling is perhaps 5 years, as most organisations develop strategic and business plans in this time frame. The job and competence profiles should ideally be developed in relation to the organisational strategy and business plan for a specified time period.

Phase 3: Finding the skills gap

The skills gap is the difference between the job and competence profiles defined through phase 2 and the current competence and resultant performance of employees. Current competence and performance is assessed through profiling current employees. This profile of employees provides insight into the reality of skills in the organisation, as opposed to the theory and vision of the job and competence profile.

A profile is undertaken for each individual employee relative to their job and competence profile and is informed by:

- academic qualification , which includes all forms of formal study;
- additional skills programmes, training and short courses, both formal and informal;
- work experience and competence gained through key work areas over time;
- personal and professional attributes;
- curriculum vitae;
- employee self-assessments; and
- performance appraisals.

Job and competence profiles are the theory of what we should look like.

Employee profiles are the reality of what we look like right here and now.

The difference being the skills gap to be addressed through WSPs

Bear in mind that knowing does not necessarily translate into applying this knowledge in context. It might be necessary to triangulate competence across academic qualification, short courses and training and accumulated work experience. This would provide a fuller picture of the employee's competence and performance at any given point in time.

In the process of workplace skills planning the gap is what we are most concerned with, the gap between expected performance and current performance. As per Trish's example in phase 3, the gap can be ascribed to a lack of skills or as a result of other factors in the workplace (see diagram for examples). A lack of skills is what must be captured in the WSP, with suggested formal training or other developmental interventions defined to respond to these skills needs.

An example of stakeholder engagement in skills auditing courtesy of ...

ADD EXAMPLE FROM CN AND / OR SAWS OR OTHER

Phase 1: Human resource planning

Phase 2: Job and competence profiling

Phase 3: Skills needs analysis

Phase 4: Workplace skills planning

Step 3

Compiling and submitting the WSP

Colleagues in our WSP task team suggests that once we have collected all the relevant information through the previous 2 steps, we consult widely on the skills development priorities identified. They further suggest the compilation of a draft WSP with interventions for addressing the needs and the associated budgets for implementing these interventions. The final step in preparing the workplace skills plan is getting it signed by the relevant authorities and submitting it to the relevant SETA.

Consult management and employees on needs identified

Up to this point much information has been gathered. In summary this includes:

- International, regional and national trends and factors shaping the work done in the organisation;
- National and sector specific skills priorities;
- Organisational priorities;
- Human resource priorities;
- Skills needs of all employees.

All this information will support you in making the case for scarce and critical skills to be addressed through training. It will also support you in securing the necessary resources for implementing skills development and training.

Our colleagues advise that we prepare this information in a clear and coherent manner to be communicated to executive management and employees through the training committee. This may take the form of a skills audit report and a power point presentation that summarises the key findings. A suggested format might include:

- The external environment and implications this has for the business strategy;
- The internal HR environment and its implications for staff, training and skills development;
- Sector trends and patterns and resultant skills priorities;
- Skills needs identified relative to job and competence profiles;
- Suggested training interventions to address these needs; and
- A suggested budget requirement.

You would ideally have engaged all levels of management and staff in the skills audit. The summary of priorities should not come as a surprise to them at this stage. These suggested engagements should be seen as confirming the scarce and critical skills needs in the organisation, through a strongly motivated case.

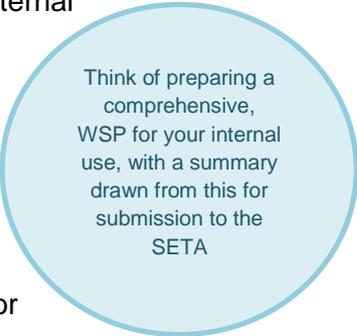
Compile the WSP for review

Preparing the information as above could be seen as a draft WSP. Most of us who have worked with the WSP format provided for by SETAs will however agree, that the amount of detail provided for in the proposed skills audit report bears is likely to bear very little resemblance to the prescribed WSP format.

All SETAs prescribe a particular format for the WSP. By and large these prescribed formats across SETAs provide for the more or less the same information. Administrative details of SDF and organisation, employee profiles, scarce and critical skills identified according to OFO codes (see module 3) and proposed training interventions to address the skills needs.

Many colleagues express with frustration that the prescribed format limits one to a fairly superficial presentation of organisational skills needs. Bear in mind however that the WSP has two purposes for the SETA: (1) to provide the SETA with pertinent employee information with which to profile the economic sector; and (2) to provide the SETA with a summary of skills needs for the coming financial year. With this twofold purpose in mind the prescribed format is perhaps not the worse, given that the SETA processes a good few of these WSPs depending on the size of the sector.

Our recommendation is to see the skills audit report as your internal working WSP document. And the WSP for submission to the SETA as a summary of your organisations employee profile and skills needs for the next financial year. This allows one the latitude to more comprehensively describe the skills needs in your organisation over both the short term (as required by the SETA), and also over the medium and long term as required for organisational growth and development.



Think of preparing a comprehensive, WSP for your internal use, with a summary drawn from this for submission to the SETA

When preparing the WSP in the prescribed SETA format ensure that you are familiar with the requirements for doing so. All SETAs provide detailed guidelines to support SDFs in preparing the prescribed WSP. If all information is collated through step 1 (gathering information) and step 2 (skills auditing) the process of completing the SETA prescribed WSP format will seem less daunting. It might then be useful to circulate a draft WSP for review to the training committee in preparation for final sign off.

The WSP must be signed off by the SDF, the training committee and a member of the executive committee of your organisation. If the comprehensive and internal WSP was

presented and approved by the executive committee and training committee, the final one for the SETA ought to similarly be endorsed, as it draws down a summary from the former.

Submit the WSP to your SETA

WSPs are submitted to the SETA of registration on 30 June of each year. Information from the WSPs, over a five year span is integrated into the SSPs. The WSP provides the primary source of information for profiling the sector in the SSP. Skills priorities identified in the WSP signal sector priorities to be addressed through the SSP.

INSERT MORE RESPONSES

It would seem that **quality assurance** for implementing the WSP in the organisation is the onus of the SDF. This is evident in the competence profile of the SDF presented in part 1.

WHAT MORE CAN ONE REASONABLY EXPECT FROM THE SETA?

· Ensuring quality WSP – a potential role for SETAs???

Follow up on implementation of the WSP is through the Annual Training Report, dealt with in more detail below.

· SETA accountability

Depending on the size of your organisation and the scope of skills needs identified, implementing the WSP could be a small and manageable or a mammoth task. Our WSP task team recommends developing an annual training schedule through which to plan and direct implementation of skills development interventions. Equally important would be to communicate this plan to all affected staff members to secure participation and support. Some of the affected staff include:

- The incumbent identified for skills development. It is important that participants in skills training do so willingly to ensure greatest return on the investment;
- The line manager of the incumbent who needs to approve participation, particularly in the event of the staff member being away from the workplace for an extended period of time.
- Support staff in the form of mentors or peer learners who avail themselves to support the incumbent in their skills development programme.

Stakeholder consultation is emphasised throughout the WSP development process and is equally important at this stage of implementing various skills development interventions.

The nature of skills needs, identified through the skills audit would define the range of interventions required to address these, as per phase 4 of the process. Ideally engagement with executive management around the outcomes of the skills audit would have a secured a reasonable budget with which to implement some of these interventions. Options for skills training and development include:

➤ **Formal training**

Formal training is often our first option in responding to skills needs. This could be through different forms of formal training, such as:

- Full time study in longer term degree, diploma or certificate course that supports intensive growth in a particular career direction. This however means that the incumbent steps out of the work space for an extended period of time;

In the past there has been an over-emphasis on skills training at NQF levels 1 – 3, predominantly through learnerships. The NSDS III argues for progression towards more intermediate and higher level skills. This becomes an important consideration in arguing for a range of skills development interventions across all levels of the NQF.

- Part time study in these longer term learning programmes, which perhaps best suits mid- and senior career professionals;
- Short courses that address a specific skills development needs;
- Learnerships that integrate a theoretical component with work integrated learning;
- Short skills programmes that address specific skills needs.

One of the key challenges with formal training continues to be its sometimes abstract nature, with little attention to the application of learning in work contexts. The NSDS III makes a strong argument for work integrated learning and stronger partnerships between training service providers like universities and colleges and work organisations where learning is taken up.

It introduces the concept of PIVOTAL programmes - professional, vocational, technical and academic programmes – that are occupationally directed and integrates formal learning in a university or college with supervised practical learning in the workplace. To enable this key objective of the NSDS III, provision has been made for the establishment of a PIVOTAL grant that ring fences 10% of a SETAs mandatory grant as a subsidy to employers who offer these integrated learning programmes.

➤ Workplace based learning

Some skills needs could be addressed through supervised learning in the workplace and could include:

- On the job coaching;
- Counselling around particular skills;
- Demonstrations;
- Mentoring;
- Peer learning.

Module ? has more on methodologies for workplace upskilling

The C.A.P.E. Bioregional Programme of SANBI has developed a source book on mentoring in the workplace that could provide ideas for support workplace-based learning. See

www.capeaction.org.za

Monitoring and evaluating skills development

KIRKPATRICKS' MODEL? TASK TEAM ?

QCTO QUALITY ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK TO ACCESS

QUALITY INDICATORS FOR TRAINING STILL TO COME: INCLUDE FOCUS ON QUALITY AND QUANTITY

Step 5

Reporting on skills development

Reporting to the SETA on skills development is done through the Annual Training Report (ATR). An ATR is submitted on 30 June, covering the previous skills development period from April of the previous year to March of the current year. The ATR of the previous skills development cycle is submitted together with the next WSP.

As in the case of the WSP, the ATR is completed in a specific SETA format. And as with the WSP prescribed format, most colleagues who have worked with the ATR will recognise its limitations in providing comprehensive quantitative and qualitative analysis of skills development. So, as with the WSP we recommend the completion of a comprehensive internal skills development report, and summarise these findings into the ATR as required.

FORMAT FOR SKILLS DEVELOPMENT REPORT TO FOLLOW FROM M&E.