

rf REDFLANK



Final Report

The Training Providers from the Previously Disadvantaged Groups

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APPROVALS

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Acronyms

B-BBEE	Black Broad-Based Economic Empowerment
CET	Community Education and Training
GET	General Education and Training
HDI	Historically Disadvantaged Individuals
HEQSF	Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework
HET	Higher Education and Training
ITP	Independent Training Providers
NADB	National Artisan Development Body
NCV	National Certificate (Vocational)
NCHE	National Commission on Higher Education
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades and Occupations
PSET	Post School Education and Training
SAIVCET	South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SDA	Skills Development Act
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation
TVET	Technical and Vocational Education and Training
W&RSETA	Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority
WIL	Work-Integrated Learning

1 Introduction

This document is produced as part of the three Impact Studies commissioned by the W&RSETA (the “SETA”), viz.:

1. Impact study of the W&RSETA programmes on persons with disabilities, for the period from 2016/17 to 2020/21.
2. A comprehensive impact study on the W&RSETA bursary and placement funding model/grants, for the period from 2016/17 to 2020/21.
3. Training Providers from Previously Disadvantaged Groups

Compiled through desktop-based research and fieldwork, this document details the findings from the research study for Topic 3: Training Providers from Previously Disadvantaged Groups (“the Study”). The document outlines trends and insights identified through the literature, case studies, surveys and interviews.

The following table provides an outline of the sections contained in this document.

Table 1: Document Outline

Section	Contents	Description
1	Introduction	This section covers the document purpose, introduction to the W&RSETA and background to the Project.
2	Methodology	This section covers the project methodology, including the research objectives and questions, approach and literature review method.
3	Literature Review: Training providers from previously disadvantaged groups	Review of documents and literature relevant to the topic. This review provides context to the study through background information study, policy analysis, performance assessment and case study analysis.
4	Research Findings	Findings relating to each of core research questions, including analysis from consultations undertaken
5	Delivery and Support Model	A potential model to cater for the full life-cycle of training providers and to address the challenges identified
6	Conclusion	A conclusion of this document, based on fieldwork and literature review.
7	References	A list of references consulted in the production of this report.

1.1 W&RSETA Overview

The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (“W&RSETA”) was established in 2000 in terms of the Skills Development Act. The public entity aims to facilitate the skills development needs of the Wholesale and Retail (“W&R”) sector through the implementation of learning programmes, disbursement of grants and monitoring of education and training as outlined in the National Skills Development Strategy (“NSDS”).

1.2 Redflank Overview

Redflank is a specialist management consultancy, assisting clients with the delivery of research, evaluations, strategy, diagnostic, implementation, and assurance projects. The specialist nature of our consultancy relates to the inclusion of deep management consulting and sector expertise in our project teams. Our client base includes public sector organisations (e.g., merSETA, National Treasury, DPSA) and private sector companies (e.g., Absa, Old Mutual, BMW). We have offices in Sandown, Gauteng, and Umhlanga. Redflank has a Level 1 B-BBEE rating and a 135% recognition level and is an accredited member of the South African Supplier Diversity Council.

1.3 Project Background

The W&RSETA has the responsibility of conducting research, impact, and tracer studies which should inform the strategic orientation of the organisation in terms of skills planning, sector priorities, interventions, and management thereof, to continuously improve upon skills development across the wholesale and retail sector.

In light of the above, the W&RSETA has been tasked with the responsibility of researching to develop efficient and effective reports outlining key outcomes, findings, and recommendations, whilst gaining deeper further insight for the SETA to be better positioned as an authoritative institution for the labour market intelligence.

2 Methodology

The approach for this project is based on Redflank's defined research methodologies, customised for this engagement. Our methodology is supported by relevant practical experience on numerous impact studies, including for W&RSETA, SEDA, JDA, MICT SETA, FASSET, CATHSSETA, TETA, WWF, DHET and so forth.

The project approach is focused on ensuring a high-quality research study in a short timeframe within a contained budget. This is enabled by the conceptual approach described in Section 2.2 below.

The methodology includes, but is not limited to the following:

- Identifying key objectives of the study
- Identifying key research questions to be addressed by the study
- Reviewing stakeholder databases and relevant literature
- Formulating primary and secondary research approaches
- Use of telephonic interviews
- Mixed methods of both quantitative and qualitative approaches

The methodology is a mixed-methods approach, leveraging both existing literature as well as fieldwork.

2.1 Research Objectives and Questions

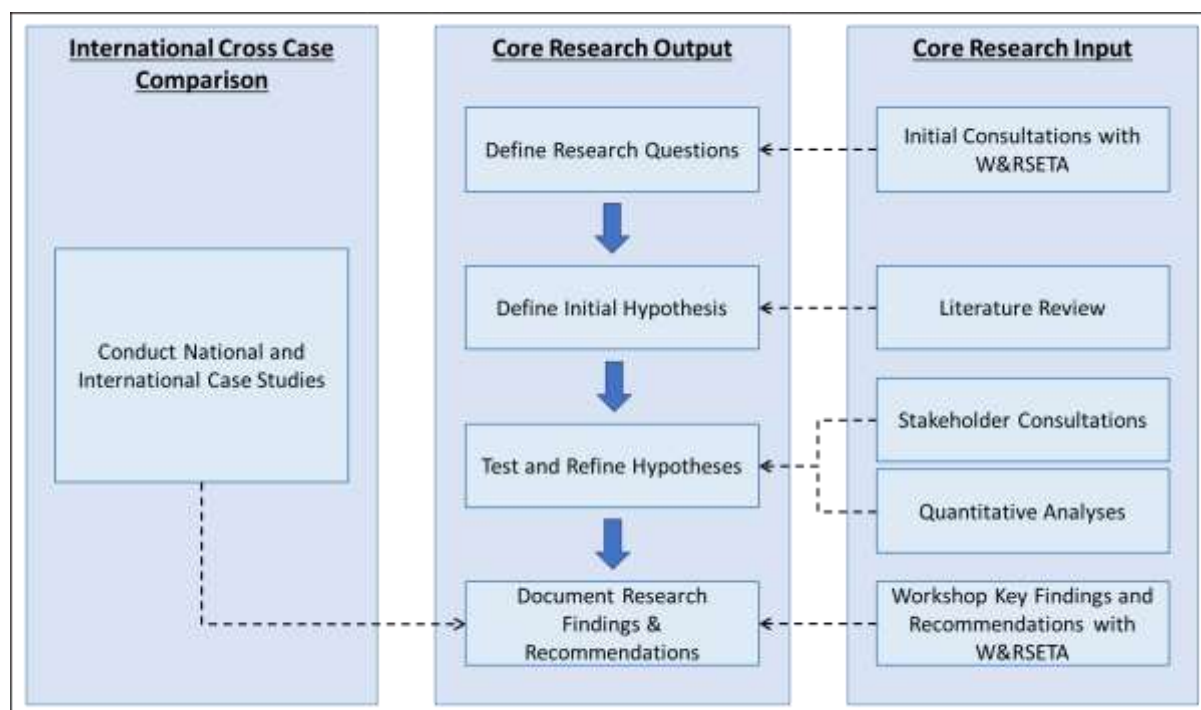
The following objectives are recorded as they are reflected in the Terms of Reference.

- Where they have been able to access the PSET ecosystem successfully
- How they have fared over the years (Any stumbling blocks or challenges)
- Is there any support required by them to gain access?

The report will outline key outcomes, findings, and recommendations. Furthermore, the purpose is to outline the strategic intent of the research piece undertaken by the SETA.

2.2 Research Approach

The literature review was produced by analysing various publicly available documents that were found in the literature and those provided by W&RSETA, as seen in the diagram below:

Figure 1: Research Approach

2.3 Literature Review Method

Some of the documents reviewed in this study are listed below. .

Table 2: Literature Review Summary – Training providers from the previously disadvantaged groups

#	Document	About	Use in Impact Study
1	Strategic Plans (2015 -2025)	The strategic plan outlines what the W&RSETA intend to implement over a five-year period for the purposes of improving the W&R sectors.	Redflank will use this as the key documents that will inform the evaluation of the progress (outcomes and outputs) made by the SETA against set targets.
2	Annual report (2019/20 – 2020/21)	Outlines the performance information on W&RSETA Programmes.	Redflank will use this data to assess how well the programmes have done compared to their initial targets set in the proposal.
3	Black Economic Empowerment, Barriers to Entry, and Economic Transformation in South Africa (2021)	This report outlines the barriers that existing in gaining access into the economy as a previously disadvantaged individual.	Redflank will use the findings in this report to better understand the challenges that training providers from previously disadvantaged backgrounds face in gaining access into the economy and into the PSET ecosystem.
4	Overcoming The Biggest Challenges Facing Training Providers (2021)	This article outlines the top four challenges faced by training professionals in 2020. It also sets out recommendations to tackling these challenges.	Redflank will use the insights from this article to determine the challenges that may be relevant to previously disadvantaged training providers and propose interventions, based on the recommendations in the article, that will help in overcoming said challenges.
5	Constraints and Enablers to Growth of Female-Owned	This research report gathers insights from literature focusing on enablers and constraints to growth	Redflank will use this literature to determine the challenges that female training providers in particular may face in growing and sustaining their skills

#	Document	About	Use in Impact Study
	Businesses: Empirical Review	on the entrepreneurial journey for females in particular.	training and development business. This will assist in ascertaining the type of support that they may need to ensure the sustainability of the businesses.

2.4 Research Challenges

The core research challenge in this Study is the availability of correct contact details for Training Providers who completed the capacitation programmes.

28 email addresses (with an additional 10 email addresses cited as “alternates”) and only 9 telephone numbers were provided. Of the 8 telephone numbers, 3 numbers were invalid, and 3 individuals agreed to telephonic consultations.

The maintenance of accurate contact databases remains a significant challenge to the research agenda.

3 Literature Review: Training Providers from Previously Disadvantaged Groups

3.1 Overview of State of Training

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation's (UNESCO) definition of inclusion includes all marginalised groups. UNESCO's definition includes the "inequity of education quality and of effective learning amounts to unequal development" (University World News, 2020).

There are still many inequalities to higher education and training access especially for minorities, and these are exacerbated by such issues as poverty, crisis and emergency situations, high tuition fees, entrance examinations, geographical mobility, and discrimination (UNESCO IESALC, 2020). Furthermore, once that barrier has been broken through, training providers are faced with additional challenges like lack of access to funding to establish and maintain their training institutions, in addition to a perceived mistrust of minority-run or owned training institutions, which poses another barrier for historically disadvantaged individuals (HDIs) to break through. The challenges embedded in the Post School Education and Training (PSET) ecosystem are thus systematic problems which will require a holistic problem-solving approach.

This section explores the types of training providers in South Africa, the number of training providers in South Africa over the period under assessment, i.e., 2016/17 – 2020/21, the number of training providers who are accredited to offer W&RSETA qualifications under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), and the number of Training Providers based in Rural Areas who were supported to obtain accreditation for sector responsive programmes—support of which is undertaken to achieve transformation within skills development. Challenges faced by training providers are also highlighted, and the impact of COVID-19 on training providers and the South African economy is outlined.

3.2 Types of Training Providers

Training providers are the organisations who provide or make arrangements for the provision of training services.

South Africa's public education system is organised into three large clusters: General Education and Training (GET), Further Education and Training (FET/TVET) and Higher Education and Training (HET). These clusters are then further distributed into levels (pre-primary, primary, secondary, and higher education) and sectors (public ordinary school, independent school, special schools, technical colleges, teacher training, universities of technology, and university training colleges (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2014).

TVET fulfils levels two, three and four of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). While grades 10-12 are not compulsory, students are required to complete a minimum number of years in order to receive a National Senior Certificate (NSC) or a National Certificate (Vocational) I, II or III (NCV I/NCV II/NCVIII). After reaching this level of education, students can either continue with further academic schooling or enrol in intermediate vocational education at technical colleges, community colleges or private colleges. HET represents all forms of formal education beyond the fourth level of NQF. Universities of technology offer one, two, three and four-year certificates or diplomas; colleges and universities offer diplomas in education and nursing after three and four years, respectively. With each increasing level (five, six, seven, eight, nine and ten), a student has the opportunity to receive a higher certificate, an advanced diploma or non-professional bachelor's, bachelor's honours, postgraduate diplomas, masters or a doctorate (UNESCO-UNEVOC, 2014).

For the purpose of this study, the focus will be on the second and third clusters of training providers, i.e., Further Education and Training (FET/TVET) and Higher Education and Training (HET) Providers, as they are located within the SETA environment.

Within the SETA context, training providers are those organisations who provide learning programmes, including apprenticeships, learnerships, WIL (Work-integrated learning) programmes, skills

programmes, short programmes, and various NQF-rated certificates, including diplomas and degrees. They are generally a separate organisation from the employer, although larger employers sometimes also function as training providers.

In South Africa, training providers include Public Higher Education Institutions such as universities and universities of technology; Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) colleges; Community Education and Training (CET) colleges; Private Higher Education Institutions; Private FET Colleges and Training Academies.

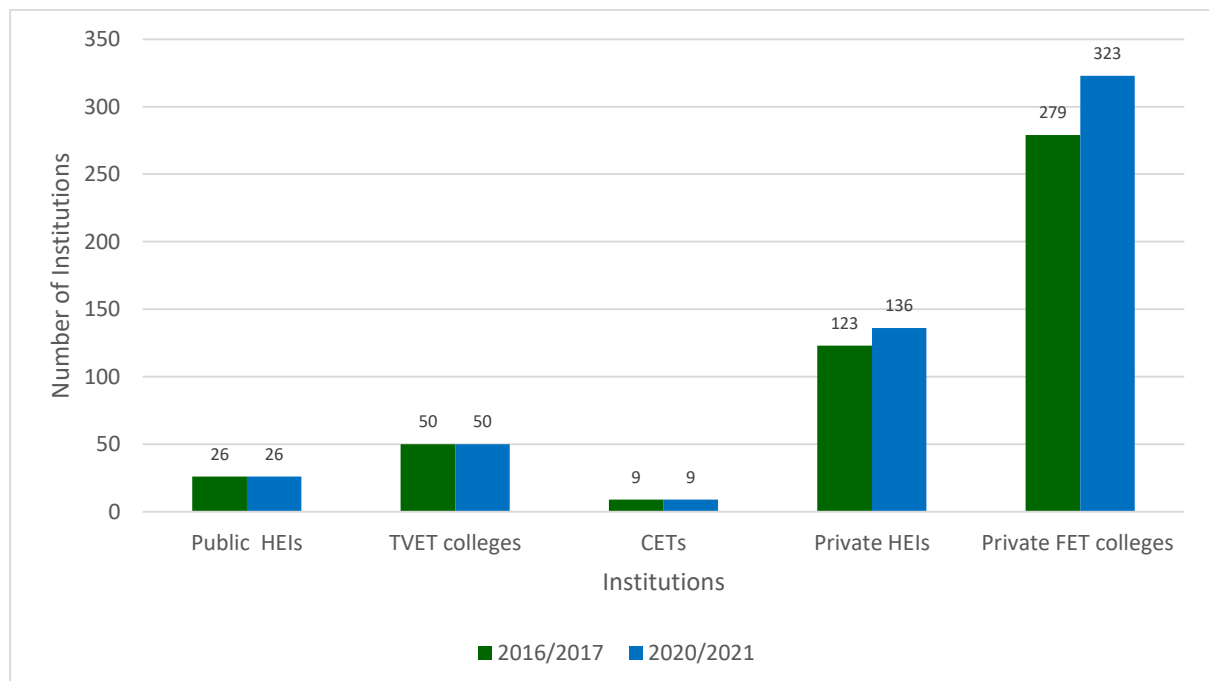
3.3 Number of Training Providers

For the period under review, i.e., 2016/17 – 2020/21, the number of public higher education institutions, TVET colleges and CET colleges remained constant at 26, 50, and 9, respectively.

Unlike the abovementioned institutions, Private Higher Education Institutions saw an increase of 13 new institutions, from 123 in 2016/17, to 136 in 2020/21. Private FET colleges also saw an increase, from 279 in 2016/17, to 323 in 2020/21.

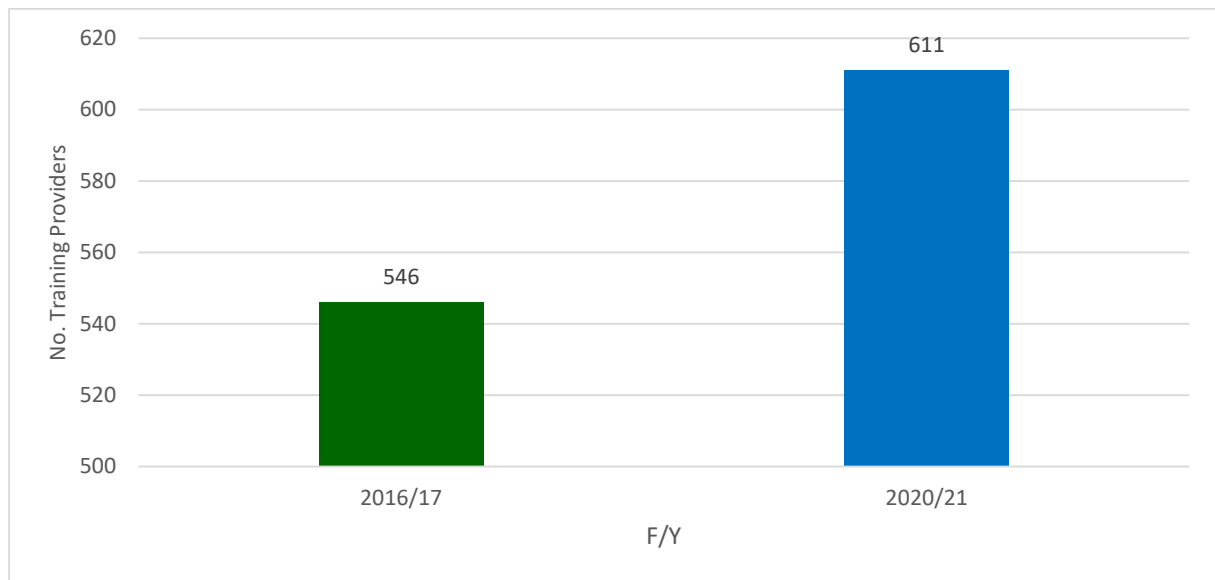
The graph below indicates the number of training providers as described above, over the 5-year period ranging from 2016/17 to 2020/21.

Figure 2: Number of Training Providers



Sources: (W&RSETA, 2020)

Furthermore, the number of accredited training providers that offer W&RSETA qualifications under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) increased from 546 to 611 over the period under review. This is depicted in the graph below.

Figure 3: No. W&RSETA Accredited Training Providers

Sources: (W&RSETA, 2020)

The increase in the number of accredited training providers is due in part to the efforts made by the SETA, which supported and capacitated a targeted number of training providers who fall under the category of historically disadvantaged individuals, to obtain accreditation for sector responsive programmes.

The table below indicates the number of Historically Disadvantaged Training Providers capacitated for accreditation between 2016/17 and 2019/20 financial years.

Table 3: Number of Historically Disadvantaged Training Providers Capacitated for Accreditation between 2016/17 and 2019/20 Financial Years

Programme Performance Indicator	2016/17	2017/18		2018/19		2019/20	
	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual	Target	Actual
Number of practitioners from small and HDI owned W&RSETA accredited providers capacitated on practitioner development programmes	New Target	10	10	10	0	15	23
Number of rural HDI providers supported and recommended to obtain accreditation for W&RSETA qualifications	New Target	2	2	4	4	5	5
Number of W&RSETA accredited providers of which 8 are HDI owned providers are supported to facilitate RPL for W&RSETA qualifications				New Target	2	12	13
Number of practitioners from small and HDI owned W&RSETA accredited providers certified on practitioner development programmes				New Target	5	10	23

Sources: (W&RSETA, 2016/17-2020/21)

The W&RSETA has been able to meet most of the targets set for HDI training provider programmes, however, it was unable to meet the targets set for the first programme, “practitioners from small and HDI owned W&RSETA accredited providers capacitated on practitioner development programmes”, in the 2018/19 financial year with the following reason stated (W&RSETA, 2019):

“This target was not met due to delays with the project approval process, which resulted in delays with procurement of a training provider to deliver training. The SETA has revised its planning schedule to ensure project approvals before the commencement of each implementation period. This will give the SETA enough time for procurement, contracting and delivery in 2019/20.”

The target for the abovementioned programme was surpassed in the 2019/20 financial year targets, which could possibly be due to the W&RSETA revising its planning schedule.

In the 2019/2020 the W&RSETA was also able to surpass the targets which were set for the following:

- Facilitate RPL for W&RSETA qualifications for HDI providers, and
- To certify small and HDI owned W&RSETA accredited providers on practitioner development programmes for the below programmes.

The 2020/21 Annual Report does not indicate any of the targets that were set for previously disadvantaged training providers.

3.4 Policies and Legislation on Training Providers

Since proclamation of the Freedom Charter, successive post-apartheid governments have committed to transforming unjust and discriminatory institutional practices (Pattman & Carolissen, 2018). Titled “A Framework for Transformation”, the National Commission on Higher Education (NCHE) (established in 1995) developed a policy framework for transformation. The Green Paper on Higher Education Transformation and the Education White Paper 3: A programme for the Transformation of the Higher Education System followed in 1996 and 1997, respectively. This marked the start of formally legislating higher education transformation, giving adoption to the Higher Education act of 1997.

Four ministers of education have since proposed several policies over the past 20 years. These include seven white papers, three green papers, 25 bills (of which 17 were amendment bills), 35 acts, 11 regulations, 52 government notices, and 26 calls for comments (Sayed & Kanjee, 2013). Constitutional aspirations include addressing inequality and creating a non-sexist society that benefits all citizens. This is supported by the National Development Plan (NDP) that sets out priorities to reduce inequality and eliminate poverty by 2030 and the Post-School Education and Training (PSET) system as set out in the White Paper for PSET. Furthermore, South Africa’s international obligations include the African Union’s Continental Education Strategy, and the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals, in particular Goals 4 and 5 which promote education and equality and empowerment of all females. These are all intended to promote equality, affordability, and accessibility of opportunities to the entire population. International obligations bound by policies also prohibit discrimination and call for quality and inclusive education for all (Khuluvhe & Negogogo, 2021).

This section outlines the various policies and legislation that have been developed that pertain to education and skills development in South Africa.

I. South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act No. 58 of 1995:

- Provides for the development and implementation of NQF; establishment of SAQA.

II. National Education Policy Act No 27 of 1996:

- Articulates the policy, legislative and monitoring responsibilities of the Minister and formalises the relations between national and provincial education authorities.

III. Higher Education Act No. 101 of 1997:

- Provides a unified system of higher education; established the Council of Higher Education.

IV. Education White Paper 4 on Further Education and Training (1998) and the Further Education and Training Act No 98 of 1998:

- Provides for the governance and funding of FET colleges.
- Key purpose of the FET Act was to establish a nationally coordinated further education and training system, cooperative governance, and programme-based education and training.
- Intention was to restructure and transform programmes and institutions to better respond to the human resource, economic and development needs of South Africa and its people.

V. The Skills Development (SDA) Act No 98 of 1998

- Creates the National Skills Agency, established Quality Council for Trades and Occupations, regulates skills development apprenticeships and learnerships.
- Replaced apprenticeships with learnerships, as a combination of unit standard-based structured learning and practical work experience that leads to a qualification on one of the levels of the NQF.

VI. General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act No. 58 of 2001:

- According to the NQF Act No. 67 of 2008, there are three quality assurance bodies looking after the National Qualifications Sub Frameworks and those are: Umalusi for GENFETSF, Council for Higher Education (CHE) responsible for Higher Education Qualifications Sub-Framework (HEQSF) and Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) responsible for trades and occupations in the workplace.

VII. The Further Education and Training Colleges (FETC) Act No 16 of 2006 (also known as Continuous Education and Training (CET) Act No 16 of 2006); the National Certificate Vocational Certificate (NCV) Policy (2006) and the National Plan for FET colleges (2008):

- Provides regulation of FET, establishment, governance, funding, and employment of staff for public FET and registration of private FET colleges.
- In 2007, the national certificate vocational policy embarked on an internationally benchmarked curricula, consisting of nine different fields of qualifications, covering key economic sectors, underpinned by integration of theory and practice in a simulated environment.

VIII. The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No 95 of 1995 and The National Qualifications Framework (NQF) Act No 67 of 2008:

- Manages the NQF, its qualifications and quality assurance.
- The current NQF 2008 covers all qualifications and consists of ten levels (1-10).
- NQF level 1 represents the General Education and Training band, which is the equivalent of Grade 9, while
- NQF levels 2 to 4 represent the Further Education and Training band, the equivalent of Grade 10 to 12.
- NQF levels 5 to 10 represent the Higher Education and Training band, with national certificates and diplomas, higher diplomas and first degrees, honours degrees, master's, and doctorates.

IX. The Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO) (2010):

- QCTO is to develop, and quality assure occupational qualifications that are responsive to labour market needs and developmental state initiatives. With the focus on artisan training in all national strategic documents, the National Artisan Development Body (NAMB) was established in 2011 and became the first assessment quality partner (AQP) of the QCTO.

X. FET Colleges (FETC) Amendment Bill (2012):

- The ultimate policy imperative that consolidates all previous legislation. It has the potential to strengthen and reposition colleges to become the centre of skills development in the country.
- The administration, powers and functions entrusted by the FET Colleges Act (Act No. 16 of 2006), was transferred in terms of section 97 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, to the Minister of Higher Education and Training by proclamation no. 44 of 2009, published in Government Gazette No. 32367 of 1 July 2009.

XI. The Green Paper on Post-school Education and Training of (2012) and the White Paper for Post-School Education and Training (2013):

- The primary aim of the Green Paper was to create a policy framework that enables the DHET to shape its strategies and plans for the post-school system and training system that includes higher education institutions, TVET colleges, adult education, and skills levy institutions.
- The White Paper for post-school education and training was promulgated by the DHET on 20 November 2013 post-school system that can achieve a single, coordinated PSET system; stronger and more cooperative partnerships between education and training institutions and the workplace; and a PSET system that is responsive to the needs of individual citizens and employers and the broader societal objectives and the policy intentions include the expansion of access to education and training by 2030 to increase the student intake.
- Focused on the improving of quality of TVET colleges.

XII. FET Colleges (FETC) Amendment Act, (2013) (Act no. 1 of 2013):

- Restructure and transform programmes and colleges to respond better to the human resources and the economic and development needs of the Republic of South Africa, as well as to ensure optimal opportunities for learning, the creation of knowledge and the development of intermediate to high level skills that are in touch with international standards of academic and technical quality.
- This act includes four prominent features: the name changed from “FET” to “TVET”;
- Closing the gap between universities, colleges, SETAs, and industry, as well as expanding the TVET sector;
- TVET colleges became a national DHET responsibility, and all colleges migrated to DHET away from the provincial education departments on 1 April 2015;
- The establishment of the South African Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training (SAIVCET), through which DHET plans to achieve most of the curriculum related challenges, including staff development, leadership training, the promotion of research into TVET college issues, as well as promoting dialogue between colleges and employers.

3.5 Challenges Facing Training Providers

Training providers face a wide range of challenges, many of which are influenced by the environment within which they operate, such as geographical location. Other challenges arise from a lack of access to resources, amongst other things, such as access to quality teachers.

Many challenges faced by South African training providers are universal problems shared by other countries. Regions such as Australia and Alaska, like South Africa, have the challenge of attracting and retaining quality staff members in rural colleges. Moreover, underqualified, unqualified, and beginner teachers are commonly found in rural colleges (Van Wyk, 2009).

In South Africa, a Portfolio Committee on Education oversight visit to colleges in the rural areas of the Eastern Cape found the following challenges faced by the colleges, which are shared experiences faced by many throughout the country:

- Some FET campuses were situated far away from residential areas, which made it a challenge for students to reach the institution due to the lack of transport in these areas.
- Some colleges did not have relevant teaching equipment suitable to realise effective learning.

- There was an observed high turnover of staff in rural colleges, due to the insecurity caused by the college's lack of staffing norms and guidelines for the appointment of temporary staff.
- Recognition of prior learning appeared to not be given serious attention in rural colleges, which might give a perception within surrounding communities that FET colleges are not providing a service they require (Van Wyk, 2009).

Some of the challenges facing training providers who are previously disadvantaged, specifically in rural areas are the lack of industry and resources in the rural setting. The lack of funds, other resources and industry in rural areas means that even when training institutions are established by HDIs within this setting, they struggle to survive. The areas within which HDI-owned training institutions are situated are generally characterised by high unemployment due to the lack of industries in the area. Prospective students cannot afford tuition fees and for those who do manage to complete qualifications, work opportunities are scarce – this further discourages prospective students from enrolling with the training providers.

Another key challenge facing HDI-owned training institutions is the lack of appropriate management and leadership skills, particularly in management, which inevitably leads to the failure of the institutions.

When inexperienced people assume management positions, this results in the organisation being run in crisis mode due to their inexperience.

As a result of the abovementioned challenges, there is a lack of training providers in the rural areas of South Africa, and a lack of HDI-owned training providers in general.

The biggest challenge which, if addressed, could see an increase in quality HDI-owned training institutions, is capacitation – both from a skills perspective and from a financial perspective. Conducting more “train the trainer” programmes would assist the training providers in providing better quality services. Such training would be intended for all persons who need to facilitate learning using a variety of given methodologies.

3.6 COVID-19 and Training Providers

In March 2020, the worldwide response to COVID-19 was to impose lockdowns in an effort to limit the spread of the virus, and South Africa's response was no different. Many training providers and schools were forced to shut down their operations during this period, while other training providers were able to continue their academic programmes through online platforms (Ndindwa, 2020). The pandemic has undoubtedly presented a test of adaptability and flexibility for training providers with regard to developing alternative means to continue set curriculums for students. The required behavioural changes to limit the spread of COVID-19 forced training providers to think differently and to come up with innovative responses to the pandemic (Moleketi, 2021). Furthermore, the pandemic has compelled training providers to think of alternative ways to provide access to education.

With many training providers in South Africa migrating to online learning platforms, a digital divide became evident - this highlighted the pervasive inequalities that exist, not only amongst training providers, but also amongst learners (Moleketi, 2021). Some of the challenges that were highlighted as the result of online learning included a lack of access to internet and devices like laptops, and these challenges were not only faced by learners, but by the training providers themselves who did not have the necessary means to adapt to online learning, given the added costs that would be required (Ndindwa, 2020). These findings are further supported by the results of the survey conducted by the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) on the *Social impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on Youth in the Post School Education and Training (PSET) Sector in South Africa*, which found that half of the learners who participated in the study reported having difficulty communicating with their institutions during lockdown, with learners in TVET colleges reporting more difficulties (DHET, 2020).

It is worth noting that institutions of higher learning across the African continent, made collaborative efforts to partner with local telecommunications companies in their local countries to aid in the shift to online learning. In addition, broad-based partnerships were established to draw in assistance from civil society, communities, and businesses (Moleketi, 2021).

Furthermore, training providers face short-term crises relating to the continuity of their academic enterprise and finances, such as the diminishing of several income streams (Universities South Africa, n.d.).

Large investments were required for the shift to online teaching/learning and the preparation for the safe return of learners, which are both significantly capital intensive.

In addition, South Africa has longer-term sustainability issues relating to possible cuts in government subsidy funding. The impact of the economic downturn on how training providers, and more specifically HDI-owned training providers navigate their options have serious implications on how they will manage their medium to longer term budgetary requirements (Universities South Africa, n.d.).

3.7 Case Study Analysis

The case studies below present the experiences of training providers in the United Kingdom (a developed nation) and Botswana (a developing nation). The practices will present ways in which training providers can overcome the challenges they face, how they can access the PSET ecosystem successfully and also provide ways in which they can supported to gain access into the PSET system.

3.7.1 United Kingdom

With a population of more than 68 million in 2021 and a gross domestic product of (GDP) \$2,63 trillion in 2020, the United Kingdom (UK) has the sixth-largest economy, after the United States, China, Japan, Germany, and India (Research FDI, 2021) (Worldometer, 2021). The sectors that contribute most to the UK's GDP are services, manufacturing, construction, and tourism (UK Parliament, 2019). The government priority policies, and funding have been shifted to focus on “skills for productivity” as the government aims to “strengthen the foundations of productivity – the fundamentals that support a skilled, innovative, geographically-balanced economy” (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019).

The UK has around 2500 independent training providers (ITP) ¹ with 78% of these having been judged as good or outstanding by the Office for Standards in Education, government quality inspectors and Children's Services and Skills. This is in line with the equivalent figure of 76% for general further education (FE) colleges (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019). ITPs are best known for delivering work-based learning programmes, but also undertake a wide variety of government-funded (and sometimes also privately funded) Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) along with basic skills (for example, literacy and numeracy) and life skills (for example, self-reflection and problem solving).

The ITPs in the UK usually deliver training at lower levels of qualification (although this is changing as the employer market increasingly demands higher-level skills), and therefore predominately work with relatively more disadvantaged social cohorts of learners. Consequently, ITPs have a significant role to play in enhancing the social inclusion and social mobility of disadvantaged people and often do this through ‘roll-on roll-off’ outreach or community-based work rather than relying on formal academic models of three terms a year.

¹ ITPs are private providers of technical training provision

ITPs in the UK contribute to the UK's policy objectives of social inclusion and mobility of disadvantage people and economic growth by doing the following²:

Market Mediation³

Engagements between employers and ITPs have been noted as having contributed greatly towards the UK's policy objectives. Collaborating closely with employers helps solve staffing problems as these engagements allow ITPs to understand employers' business needs. In doing so, ITPs are able to use their expert knowledge of the FE and skills system to identify solutions and explain how to access and administer government-funded programmes.

Delivering High-Tech, High-Value Skills

In the UK, policy and practice previously emphasised widening participation and achievement at the level widely considered the minimum for employability. Now, the policy agenda and funding system has changed to higher-level apprenticeships and other programmes considered high value, especially in sectors in which the UK is a global leader (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019). This may not be a feasible idea in South Africa given the low education levels and high unemployment rates. However, training providers need to provide learning programmes that are considered high-value to ensure that they are sustainable in the long-run. Policies favouring "high-value" programmes have led to ITPs increasingly gaining expertise at delivering high-tech, high value programmes, seeking out suitable employers and tailoring their programmes to meet detailed demands from employers. Unlike generalist providers, they are able to develop the specialist knowledge and technical skills required.

Public-Private Partnerships

Public-private partnerships can provide greater access into the PSET ecosystem for training providers that lack the necessary resources to provide quality education and training. Partnerships between public and private training providers are common in the UK. The system has accepted that these exist and that they are needed and regulates all providers in to ensure that outputs are in line with overall economic, social, and political needs. This relates to an overall view that regulation should concentrate on formulating the outputs of learning rather than controlling the means by which those outputs are gained (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019). In all these cases it is noticeably clear that the deliberate linking of private provision with the public system and the removal of obstacles to this happening, can produce greater learning outputs than if such partnerships did not exist.

Continuous Funding Model

A hinderance to accessing the PSET system for training providers is a lack of funds. While time-allocated funding for ITPs provides certainty in the short term, they have been noted as one of the challenges that can possibly impede the sustainability of ITPs. In South Africa, the short nature of funding, which is usually one-year contracts of public funding from SETAs can hinder the ability of private providers to plan ahead (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019). If a TVET system is designed to produce outputs and results over a longer period of time, then there should be some extent to which the providers of that system can expect a degree of continuity in their funding, rather than just hoping it will be covered by a succession of short-term contracts. In the UK, there has been a shift away from time-limited financial allocations to ITPs. In instances where allocations are time limited, there is

² (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019)

³ Market mediation refers to when providers help employers to navigate government-funded systems to achieve skills solutions

normally a strong indication of how they may be extended under certain conditions. This allows training providers to plan to try and achieve these conditions with a degree of certainty that the funding will remain available if they do so (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019).

Training

The *Association of Employment and Learning Providers* recommended establishing workforce support strategies for ITPs . A recent survey found that 96% of ITP trainers had received training on topics relating to keeping up with policy changes and how to deliver training to quality standards that are set by regulators and shared as good practice across the sector (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019).

3.7.2 Botswana

Botswana is a sparsely populated country with a population of 2,4 million people (Worldometer, 2021). It has become an important exporter of diamonds and other mineral with diamond mining accounting for a third of the nation's gross domestic product (Koobonye, 2020). As an upper-middle income country, Botswana relies on domestic resources and no longer receives external funds (Koobonye, 2020). It allocates about 8% of its gross domestic product toward education (Koobonye, 2020). However, despite its high investment in education 90% of the education budget is spent on salaries and other recurrent items (Koobonye, 2020). While the country performs well in various areas of gender equality and equity, more needs to be done to achieve wage equality between men and women and more women need to be represented in management positions (Koobonye, 2020). Despite many positive aspects in the development of Botswana, the country is still riddled with poverty, inequality, unemployment, HIV, and AIDS (Koobonye, 2020).

The *Education and Training Strategic Plan* (ETSSP) places great emphasis on increasing the role of the private sector in tertiary education so as to strengthen the match between qualifications and labour market requirements (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019).

Post-secondary education in Botswana is made up of technical colleges, brigades⁴ (in the TVET system) and universities. Given that the country no longer attracts significant donor funding, independent training providers (ITP) have had to contribute a significant amount of the overall TVET provision. There has been a significant growth of ITPs which includes the development of 35 brigades in the country (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019). Prior to this, the brigades faced multiple challenges including (Akoojee, 2005):

- Low quality of facilities
- A narrow range of course offerings
- Rapid staff turnover and poor staff morale
- Relatively young staff who required upskilling

In 2014, the government approved a number of partnerships with private providers, including brigades. The government in Botswana has supported brigades by leasing and sharing their facilities with them and has also partnered with them to formulate a specialist qualification that exposes learners to current work practices and competencies in their industry (Association of Employment and Learning Providers , 2019).

⁴ Brigades are privately-owned institutions that are supported by the government. They are part of the TVET system and offer skills certificate programmes.

The best practices emanating from the above case studies are:

1. Engage with employers to establish labour market needs.
2. Establish partnerships between public and private training providers and with private providers and the government to gain access into the PSET ecosystem.
3. Deliver skills that are in line with the demands of the labour market and the developmental targets set out by the government.
4. Develop funding models that will create certainty and support the longevity of training providers.
5. Educate and train training providers on policy changes and quality standards to ensure that.

4 Research Findings

This section focusses on the findings emanating from the fieldwork work undertaken, supplemented by insights uncovered through desktop research.

This section analyses the following research questions:

- Degree to which Previously Disadvantaged Training Providers are able to access the PSET ecosystem
- Whether previously disadvantaged training providers receive an adequate level of support from the W&RSETA regarding accessing training opportunities
- Whether previously disadvantaged training providers receive an adequate level of support from the W&RSETA regarding accessing resources
- Degree to which previously disadvantaged training providers have successfully overcome challenges regarding accessing the PSET ecosystem
- Type of support required by previously disadvantaged training providers from the W&RSETA
- Types of issues encountered by previously disadvantaged training providers in trying to access the PSET ecosystem

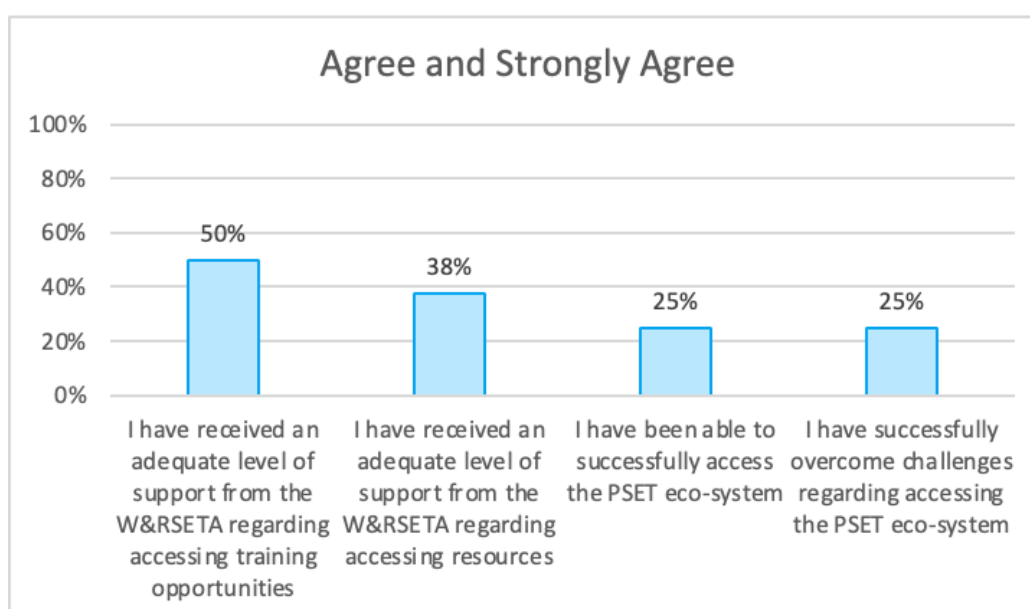
4.1 Access to the PSET Ecosystem, Challenges Overcome and Level of Support Received

Training providers were asked to what extent they agree with the following statements:

- I have been able to successfully access the PSET ecosystem
- I have received an adequate level of support from the W&RSETA regarding accessing training opportunities
- I have received an adequate level of support from the W&RSETA regarding accessing resources
- I have successfully overcome challenges regarding accessing the PSET eco-system

The graph below depicts respondents' answers to these questions.

Figure 4: Training Provider Capacitation



Source: W&RSETA Impact Studies Training Provider, 2022

As can be seen from the above, half (50%) of training providers indicated they received adequate support from the SETA regarding accessing opportunities. Almost two in five training providers (38%) reported an adequate level of support regarding accessing resources. More concerning is the fact that only a quarter (25%) of training providers indicated they have been able to successfully access the PSET ecosystem. Also, only a quarter of training providers (25%) indicated that they have been able to overcome challenges in accessing the PSET ecosystem.

4.2 Type of Support Required from W&RSETA

Training providers consulted indicated the following types of support would assist them in being better equipped to access the PSET ecosystem.

- Coaching and mentoring: some training providers indicated they are new to the environment and would appreciate ongoing mentoring and coaching.

“I accredited with W&RSETA in 2016 with two unit standards, and ever since my accreditation, I never worked with the accreditation from the W&RSETA, so what I would like from W&RSETA is the support. As someone who was new to the industry, I didn't know how to go about approaching clients. For me I really need coaching and support...”

- Training Provider Consultation, 2022

“Maybe W&RSETA can give us support by giving us small projects e.g. train 5 or 10 people. What I have noticed is that the work goes to the well-established guys, we are just left in the dark, we don't know who to talk to, even when you go to the offices, people there are just busy doing their jobs, there is no one to attend you

Maybe we need a programme that is going to support guys, not just by training them, but by being practical and helping them get projects, even it's just a small thing.”

- Training Provider Consultation, 2022

The above comment also points to the need to make training providers more aware of potential opportunities, something which is explored below.

- Support in gaining access to market: training providers indicated they struggle with gaining access to the market and more focussed support from the W&RSETA would assist. Upon completion of the appointment process, the SETA should communicate with unsuccessful bidders to let them know the reasons they could not be appointed. This is expected to clear any misconceptions about the appointment process and help training providers improve their offerings for possible future work.

“What the SETA do is that they get 100 and give the 100 learners to a white company, if they were fair they would divide the learners according to the training providers available. They are not willing to explain their criteria for giving projects to white companies.

- Training Provider Consultation, 2022

4.3 Issues Encountered in Accessing the PSET Ecosystem

Training providers consulted indicated the following issues were encountered in trying to access the PSET ecosystem.

- Barriers to entry: training providers indicated that the market appears to be dominated by existing large businesses.

“When we go to approach companies like Shoprite, they tell us they already have guys they are working with, well established guys, in most cases they are white. As a result I abandoned the idea of giving back to the community, as passionate as I am about education, because it didn't work for me. So I abandoned it and went to look for employment, and right now I am currently unemployed. At the moment I think my accreditation expired last year.”

- Training Provider Consultation, 2022

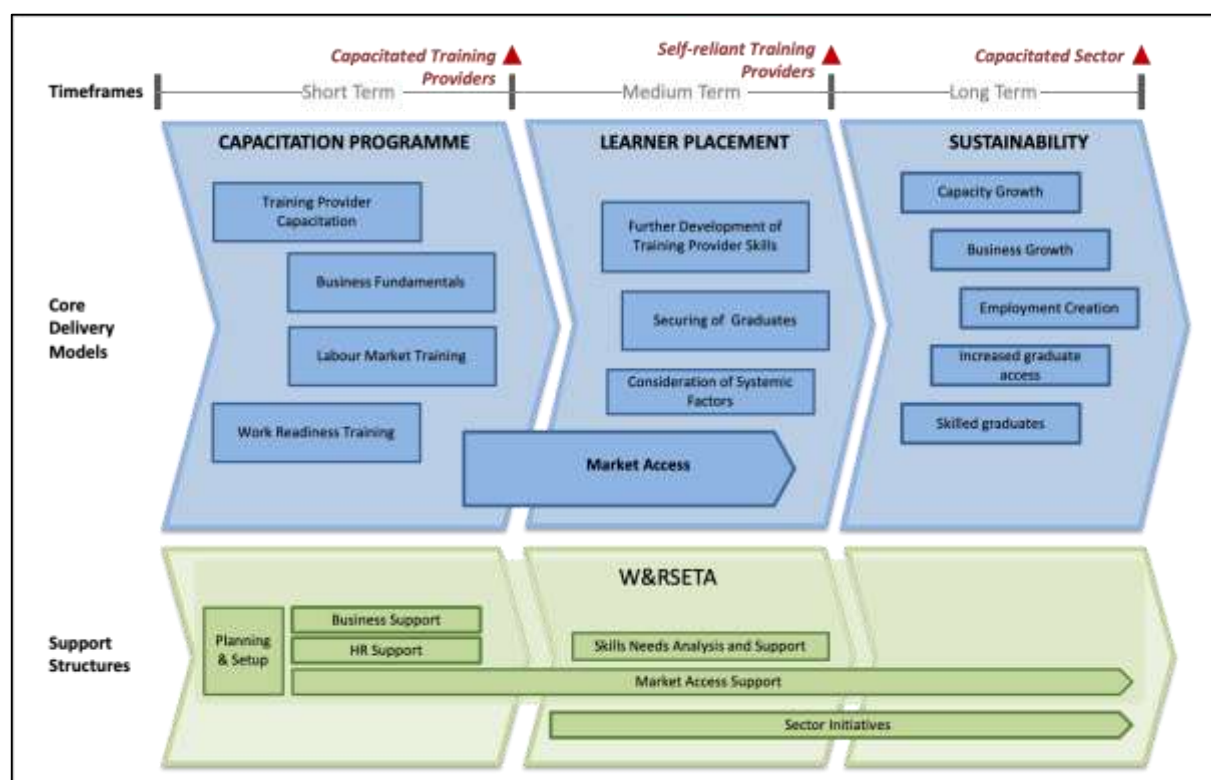
- Lack of ongoing/ follow-up support from W&RSETA: training providers indicated they feel they are “left in the dark” once the capacitation programme is over, and need to fend for themselves.

“The lack of opportunities. I feel as though the SETAs in general they accredit us but they don't take us through, us the new ones, because the landscape of training when it began it was dominated by whites. The big companies are white, meaning they have been doing this for years, but us the new guys there is no one supporting us.”

- Training Provider Consultation, 2022

5 Delivery and Support Model

The following delivery and support model for training providers is suggested whilst considering the challenges faced by training providers attempting to gain access to the PSET system.



The model depicted above is further described below, under the two main sections, namely:

- **Core Delivery Models**
 - **Capacitation Programme:** refers to the current capacitation programme, as supplemented
 - **Learner Placement:** refers to ensuring that capacitated Training Providers have an initial cohort of learners to train
 - **Sustainability:** refers to ensuring the Training Providers are capacitated and supported in such a way that promotes sustainability
- **Support Structures:** refers to the structures and mechanisms through which W&RSETA can support Training Providers.

5.1 Core Delivery Models

This refers to the primary mechanisms that the W&RSETA can sustainably capacitate training providers from previously disadvantaged groups.

5.1.1 Capacitation Programme

This would be an enhanced version of the SETA's current capacitation programme, and will go towards addressing some of the challenges cited by beneficiaries of the programme in previous years.

Training Provider Capacitation

No material issues were identified in the current design of what is currently being done. As such, this practice is recommended to continue.

Business Fundamentals

It is important to acknowledge that training providers need to earn a living through the provision of their services. It is important these individuals are capacitated not only to provide quality training services, but also to run a sustainable, revenue generating business. This is the rationale for including training for the training providers on basic business fundamentals. This training may include:

- Financial skills
- Computer literacy skills
- Business management
- Human Resource (HR) skills

Labour Market Training

In order for training providers to remain relevant and run sustainable businesses, they are required to be aware of labour market developments with respect to understanding what skills and occupations are required in the marketplace. This will enable these training providers to ensure that are accredited in the most appropriate courses and may assist in generating a sustainable pipeline of graduates to be trained.

Work Readiness Training

Work readiness, or the lack thereof, has been cited as a major concern across many employers. Preparing graduates for the workplace should therefore have a high degree of prominence in the training programmes for training providers. This training may include aspects such as:

- Communication skills
- Emotional intelligence
- Appropriate workplace conduct
- Soft skills

5.1.2 Learner Placement

Training providers consulted indicated, as a challenge for them, the difficulty of finding learners who require their services. The W&RSETA could assist these training provider businesses in securing a pipeline of learners until these businesses become self-reliant and have gained a foothold in the marketplace. There are a few core components to this element, as described below.

Further Development of Training Provider Skills

Monitoring of and support for training providers may be required even after they have graduated from the Capacitation Programme. It should be anticipated that with experience these training providers will be able to continuously upskill and reskill themselves, but they may need support in the short to medium-term. This will ensure that learners are receiving a good standard of training from newly accredited training providers.

Securing of Graduates

A major hindrance to new training providers that has been found in this Study is the difficulty in finding learners to train. It appears that there are barriers to entry to the market by virtue of the existence of larger more established training provider. A database of training providers may help, if publicised, whereby all the training providers are listed and their B-BBEE, size, etc. is indicated and learners and

employers can choose for themselves. This may assist in ensuring the market is not distorted by referring learners to these training providers.

Consideration of Systemic Factors

Some training providers consulted have indicated that most learners choose to go to larger training institutions. Another factor to consider is the accessibility, or lack thereof, of training providers based in rural and hard to reach areas. These training providers may find it difficult to attract learners to their institutions. In the case, it may require further support in terms of funnelling learners to them. It may also require strategic decisions in terms of what these training providers are accredited in. For example, training providers in agricultural dominated areas may benefit more by being accredited in agri-related courses.

5.1.3 Sustainability

Providing the above-mentioned levels of capacitation and support may assist training providers to run sustainable businesses. This will have the benefit of these training providers eventually growing their businesses and employing and capacitating more people themselves, thus contributing to the fight against unemployment. Having more skilled training providers, who are accessible to more learners, will increase the access of training to these learners, thus further contributing to lessening the skills gap in the marketplace, thereby reducing macro-level unemployment.

5.2 Support Structures

The W&RSETA could consider providing the following support services to training providers, beyond the technically orientated capacitation programme:

- Planning and set-up
- Business support
- HR support
- ICT support, leading to establishment as Centre of Excellence for digital learning and 4IR
- Skills needs analysis
- Market access support
- Sector initiatives

As mentioned, these training providers should be considered “businesses.”. As a start-up business they would benefit from support in the form of establishing the appropriate systems and basic infrastructure. This could be a simple accounting package, or ensuring appropriate premises are available.

Business support, especially in the form of coaching and mentoring has been cited through consultations as necessary. HR support may also be required as these training providers grow and employ people, including support staff.

Training providers would benefit from ongoing information sharing from the SETA in the form of understanding trends in changing skills needs within the market.

6 Conclusion

Training providers from previously disadvantaged groups are faced with challenges such as lack of access to funding to establish and maintain their training institutions, in addition to a perceived mistrust of minority-run or owned training institutions, which poses another barrier for historically disadvantaged individuals (HDIs) to break through. Many of the challenges are influenced by the environment within which they operate, such as geographical location. Other challenges arise from a lack of access to resources, amongst other things, such as access to quality teachers. The challenges embedded in the Post School Education and Training (PSET) ecosystem are thus systemic problems which will require a holistic problem-solving approach. The number of accredited training providers that offer W&RSETA qualifications under the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) increased from 546 to 611 over the period under review. The increase in the number of accredited training providers is due in part to the efforts made by the SETA, which supported and capacitated a targeted number of training providers who fall under the category of historically disadvantaged individuals, to obtain accreditation for sector responsive programmes.

The United Kingdom and Botswana offer lessons on how previously disadvantaged training providers may be supported. The support mechanisms include market mediation (where training providers help employers to navigate government-funded systems to achieve skills solutions), delivering high-tech, high-value skills, instituting public-private partnerships, providing continuous funding, and providing training to training providers themselves, amongst others.

Remote geographical location, difficulty attracting and retaining quality staff members, lack of appropriate management and leadership skills, underdeveloped economy in rural areas, and lack of access to resources (such as teaching equipment) are some of the challenges faced by training providers, especially those from previously disadvantaged groups.

The best practices emanating from case studies are that the W&RSETA should engage with employers to establish labour market needs, establish public-private partnerships, deliver skills that are in line with the demands of the labour market and the developmental targets set out by the government, develop funding models that will create certainty and support the longevity of training providers, and educate and train training providers on policy changes and quality standards.

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