# **SPECIFICATIONS: IMPACT EVALUATION OF SERVICES SETA’S LEARNING PROGRAMMES INTERVENTIONS IN THE PAST FOUR AND A HALF YEARS (2020/21-2024/25)**

# **BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT**

The Services Sector Education and Training Authority (Services SETA) was established as a statutory body in terms of the Skills Development Act of 1998 with a mandate to provide for the skills development needs of the services sector through, inter alia, the implementation of Learnerships and internships, the disbursement of grants and the monitoring of education and training.

Through Services SETA funded interventions, a total of **50 509** learners were registered in various learning interventions between 2020/21 & 2023/24. Similarly, through Services SETA funded interventions, a total of **24 070** learners completed their learning interventions in the same period. This represents a **48%** throughput rate. It must be highlighted that the implementation of learning interventions was significantly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the pandemic, training interventions were halted for a considerable time as a measure to mitigate the spread of the disease.

While learner tracer studies have been conducted annually in the past four financial years, the focus has been mainly looking at the destination of Services SETA funded graduates. There is a need to delve deeper into other areas of impact such as overall experience with the learning interventions, benefits derived from participation in these interventions, perceptions of employers of graduates, experience of training providers with Services SETA processes and many other issues related to successful implementation of learning interventions.

Against this background, the Service SETA wishes to conduct an impact assessment study to evaluate the success of all learning programmes in the past 4 ½ years. The broader aim of the study is to determine the destination of graduates, including the uptake of graduates from these programmes into the world of work. This included assessing the phenomenon of wastage in terms of dropping-out before completing their studies, including the causes thereof, and providing a set of evidence-based recommendations to enhance the future effectiveness of SETA-funded learning programmes in South Africa.

# **THE RATIONALE FOR, AND PURPOSE OF, THE STUDY**

To conduct an impact evaluation of Services SETA’s Learning Programmes on beneficiaries including the total value chain of programmes implementation in the period 2020/21-2024/25.

# **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

The study should look at:

1. Establish completion rates of learners across all learning interventions
2. Determine the average time it takes for learners to complete
3. Destinations of beneficiaries who completed learning interventions, including identification of factors that facilitate and impede the uptake of graduates to the world of work
4. Understand the average time it takes for graduates take before they access employment or self-employment
5. The rate of dropout among enrolled learners across all learning interventions
6. Underlying reasons for dropout rates among enrolled learners across all learning interventions
7. Recommendations for improvements, including internal Services SETA systems and processes – including project management practices.
8. To make evidence-based recommendations to the Services SETA about skills training and youth transition to employment.

# **KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

1. What are the completion rates from all learning interventions?
2. What are the transition rates to employment of graduates from all learning interventions?
3. What are the wastage rates in terms of non-completion or dropping-out and what reasons seem to be associated with this wastage phenomenon?
4. What factors promote success with Services SETA learning interventions?

# **RECOMMENDED METHODOLOGY/APPROACH**

The Study will adopt a mixed methodological framework, through which both quantitative and qualitative approaches are integrated either sequentially or concurrently in a line of inquiry. A sequential mixed methods design based on three main data collection approaches:

1. Questionnaire Survey administered to registered learners on a variety of programmes to identify dropouts from the system; unemployed completers; employed completers and self-employed completers
2. In-depth interviews with a sample of trainers and administrators; employment providers; workplace managers; SSETA officials; current learners; unemployed completers; employed completers and dropouts from the system.
3. Focus group interviews with learners in a variety of skills development areas in different provinces

# **RECOMMENDED THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: THE CIIPOO FRAMEWORK**

For a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of learning interventions implemented by the Servies SETA on beneficiaries, it is recommended that the CIIPOO Framework be used as a philosophical grounding. This will also allow comparison with previous studies commissioned by the Services SETA in the past, thus determining areas of success or otherwise. The CIIPOO framework has seven dimensions as discussed below.

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| **Dimension** | **Description** | **Application in the study** |
| **Context** | It considers political, economic, socio-cultural, global imperatives, local employment and skills requirements, policy context amongst others.  Contextual analysis is important so as to create and understand the parameters that define the project and so that any findings and recommendations are appropriately understood and applied. | In what ways do Services SETA funded learning interventions contribute to the context of unemployment and skills development in South Africa |
| **Input** | It considers goals and purposes of the intervention, structures created for pursuing the goals, materials developed for the intervention, resources and funding available, human resources targeted for the intervention among others.  The input dimension is important as it creates a basis for understanding the state of readiness for implementing the intervention and how the learners especially evaluate the effectiveness of the inputs in delivering the envisaged changes. | How do resources, on and offsite learning, financial support, policy frameworks contribute to achievement or lack thereof of learning interventions. |
| **Process** | Considers the organisation and management of the intervention, the learning and teaching arrangements, assessment regimes, progression processes, arrangement and requirements for certification among others.  The study has to interrogate the issues around processes as these more than any other dimension has a direct relation to the experience of learners and are often directly associated with success or failure on the programme. | Transformation: do graduates think that the programmes have enabled them to make the transition from a learner identity to a worker identity.  How students are allocated workplace learning, how they chose learning interventions to enrol for, how these programmes are delivered. |
| **Outputs** | Consider graduation and success rates, failure rates, drop-out rates, the quality of learner performance among others.  Although this tends to be a largely quantitative dimension, much qualitative data can also be obtained regarding how different constituencies associated with the intervention relate with the factors they associate with the several output elements. | Graduate success rates, graduate transition rates to employment, time taken to enter employment drop-out rates and causes |
| **Outcomes** | Considers employability and employment and unemployment rates, learner and employer attitudes overall satisfaction rates towards the intervention and prospective views about what needs to be changed and redeveloped | Are the programmes having the desired impact in terms of skills development and employment uptake. |

**SCOPE OF WORK AND DELIVERABLES**

This is an empirical research project aiming to evaluate the impact of learning interventions by employing both qualitative and quantitative methodology. Activities include:

1. Project Plan with timelines
2. Designing research instruments that covers but not limited to the questions outlined above
3. Literature review
4. Conduct survey, in-depth Interviews and / or focus groups discussions
5. Data analysis
6. Report writing
7. Presentation

# **COMPETENCY AND EXPERTISE REQUIREMENTS**

The successful bidder must have the following competencies:

1. Have proven capacity to undertake a large-scale research project of this nature and to complete the project by the due date.
2. Must demonstrate an understanding and knowledge of impact evaluations within PSET system.
3. Must understand learning interventions within SETAs’ spectrum.
4. An overview of the key personnel to be used on the contract. Provision of curriculum vitae of the team who will be responsible for this project.
5. Please note that the representativity (in terms of race and levels of employment) of the team is an important factor.
6. Description of the current infrastructure arrangements (Organisational structure, systems, and networks).
7. The ability to implement the project in a cost-effective way.
8. Demonstrate these capabilities through a detailed proposal and project plan as guided by this TOR.

# **DURATION OF THE STUDY**

**December 2024 – March 2025**