

DISCRETIONARY GRANT MONITORING AND EVALUATION POLICY AND GUIDELINES

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INSETA POLICY AND GUIDELINES ON MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A. BACKGROUND

In terms of the PFMA INSETA is required to design, develop and maintain effective, efficient and transparent systems of financial and risk management and internal control. In the disbursement of discretionary grants, policies and processes for projects monitoring and evaluation is an integral part of the management of discretionary grants. To enable effective project/programme management, the SETA must establish and communicate its policies and procedures with relevant stakeholders. This includes the development of suitable capacity to enable the understanding and execution of internal control mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of projects funded through discretionary grants.

(Adapted from "Guidelines on the Implementation of the Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) Grant Regulations", Dept of Higher Education and Training, RSA)

The policy for disbursement of grants enables access to INSETA's funds and sets out rules for compliance purposes. However, this would need to be supported by a mechanism that makes clear what is intended and which sets out criteria for judging whether grants disbursed are in fact achieving what is intended, against clearly defined criteria.

Purpose:

The INSETA monitoring and evaluation system for discretionary projects, within its overall discretionary grant funding system, intends to:

- Set out clearly what is intended to be achieved through the disbursement of discretionary grants and measure the extent to which it has succeeded
- Plan how resources will be aligned to achieve the intended impact
- Account for how the allocation of funds has contributed to that impact

B. SCOPE:

This policy provides a mechanism for monitoring and evaluation of stakeholders that are beneficiaries of discretionary funds and associated learning sites. These include, but are not limited to:

- Workplace and employer premises and associated sites of learning,
- Engagements with learners, employers, mentors, providers and other role-players significant to the learning or funding process deemed appropriate by INSETA

Monitoring and evaluation will only apply to beneficiaries who have gone through the initial application and approval phase, commenced programmes and received payment by INSETA.

Integration with other policies and practices:

There will be mutual alignment of the monitoring and evaluation policy and guidelines with the following:

- **INSETA Discretionary grants funding policy and guidelines:** All beneficiaries of discretionary grants are subject to the criteria and guidelines of the INSETA discretionary grant funding policy. Monitoring and evaluation activities will support and adhere to the policy and guidelines for disbursement of discretionary grants.
- **INSETA Discretionary Grants Commitments Guidelines:** monitoring and evaluation activities will support and adhere to the guidelines for commitments tracking and reporting, including stringent monitoring of activities within projects that may result in any adjustment to INSETA's contractual obligations.

This policy does not preclude the following forms of monitoring and evaluation that may be conducted through this or other mechanisms at the discretion of INSETA:

- Monitoring of disbursement of mandatory grants
- Monitoring of accredited learning providers, which are subject to the policies of the quality assurance system of the quality assurance division and governed by the Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)

The INSETA discretionary grant policy and guidelines provide the criteria for allocation of funds, including payment schedules, qualifying beneficiaries, and the basis on which payments are made. Whilst it recognises that funds need to flow early enough to enable training to take place on a funded basis, projects monitoring will form the link between full payment and successful completion. Successful completion of funded programs must include evidence of achieving the SETA's intended project objectives. Grants must not be seen as a mechanism for reaching numerical targets but as a means of achieving measurable impact.

Monitoring and evaluation must be factored into the grants payment process thus enabling:

- i. Compliance with the discretionary grant policy and guidelines
- ii. Accurate reconciliation and reporting on commitments against project activities
- iii. Adherence to the project plan and intended deliverables
- iv. A quality learning experience and general welfare of learners
- v. The utilisation of funds for the intended purpose in a fair, ethical and transparent manner
- vi. Fair play by all role-players and adherence to the INSETA code of conduct as applicable
- vii. Optimum use of allocated funds towards adherence to projected spend as forecasted in project plans
- viii. Effective and efficient project management

C. INSETA's approach to Monitoring and Evaluation

The following key elements will guide the approach to evidence-gathering and evaluation:

- **Inputs:** are the resources we use to do the work and which contribute to the outputs, including financial, human and physical resources
- **Activities:** describe what we do and are the processes or actions that we will implement to produce the desired outputs and the longer-term outcomes
- **Outputs:** are what we deliver as the final service or product
- **Outcomes:** are what we wish to achieve. These are medium-term results for specific beneficiaries achieved as a consequence of achieving specific outputs, relating also to strategic goals and objectives as set out in the strategic plan.
- **Impacts:** are how we have achieved a longer-term and further-reaching impact through achieving specific outcomes, such as through job creation, transformational leadership etc.

The following principles will be adhered to:

(adapted from the "Policy Framework for the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System", The Presidency, RSA)

Monitoring and evaluation activities will:

- Contribute to improved governance:
 - All findings will be publicly available unless there are compelling reasons otherwise, which may be justified by INSETA
 - Use of resources will be open to public scrutiny
- Be development-oriented:
 - The performance of institutions and service-delivery are analysed, causal links are identified and developmental strategies are agreed as applicable
 - Monitoring and evaluation findings are regarded as an opportunity to explore problems openly and objectively and engage in critical but constructive feedback
 - Interventions for remediation are executed and monitored systematically, objectively and consistently
- Be undertaken ethically and with integrity:
 - The responsible use of personal and sensitive information to ensure confidentiality
 - Respect is shown to stakeholders towards maintaining dignity and self-esteem of all affected parties
 - Personnel engaging in monitoring and evaluation are sensitive to stakeholders as well as fair in representing possible limitations in their own competence in executing related activities
- Be utilisation-oriented:
 - The outcomes of monitoring and evaluation are defined and meet strategic needs
 - A record of recommendations is maintained and implementation followed up
 - A central repository of reports is maintained and accessible

- Be methodologically sound:
 - Indicators used are consistent. Common indicators and data collection methods are used, where possible, towards improved data quality and accurate trend analysis within and across projects
 - Findings are clearly based on systematic evidence and analysis
 - The methodology matches the questions and indicators being used
 - Multiple sources of evidence-gathering are used where necessary to validate findings
- Be operationally effective:
 - Planning is routine and systematic
 - The Scope of monitoring and evaluation reflects its purpose, risk and available resources
 - Thorough management towards a sustainable culture of efficiency, effectiveness and excellence
 - The system is cost-effective and is afforded an appropriate level of resource allocation
 - The system is strong and reliable towards ensuring minimal possible dependency on individual or subjective implementation or chance interpretation
 - The competency of monitoring and evaluation personnel is developed through appropriate capacity building plans, with roles and responsibilities embedded in job descriptions and in the performance management system
 - Rather than degenerating into a ticking of a checklist, the culture of the organisation itself upholds the spirit of monitoring and evaluation and such is integrated with existing management and decision-making systems.

D. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

- **Legislators and regulators:** government and its structures exercise an oversight role over the SETA as a body accountable to them and will evaluate the system accordingly.
- **Accounting authority (the board):** uses the findings of the MONITORING AND EVALUATION system to exercise strategic oversight over INSETA's performance.
- **Accounting officer (the CEO):** is responsible for the quality and integrity of the MONITORING AND EVALUATION system at an operational level and ensures integration with other management systems.
- **Programme/project managers and other line managers:** are responsible for establishing, maintaining and managing monitoring and evaluation activities and data.
- **Designated monitoring and evaluation personnel:** implement monitoring and evaluation strategies by providing expertise and hands-on support through either a centralised or de-centralised service hub, as dictated by the operational plan of the SETA. **There should also be** causal links made between various components of monitoring and evaluation, such as the inputs, processes, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts from projects, programmes and services into an integrated and meaningful whole.

E. GUIDELINES FOR IMPLEMENTATION:

Monitoring will be conducted through mainly:

- Desk-based studies
- On-site visits
- Engagement with learners or other relevant stakeholders as scheduled. Where there is an ad-hoc engagement, such as unscheduled learner, intern or employer contact with INSETA, such will be allowed as a monitoring intervention provided it is documented in accordance with this policy.

The purpose of monitoring and evaluation information:

Information from monitoring and evaluation will be used to:

- Provide developmental plans in support of a conducive learning environment
- Make informed decisions regarding the suitability of parties to host or retain learners or interns
- Make informed decisions regarding the eligibility of parties for future funding through discretionary grants
- Consider repercussions impacting other areas such as quality assurance by the ETQA division or in respect of mandatory grants
- Provide for refund processing where applicable
- Enhance project management and enable impact studies through :
 - Analysing causal links between inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes and impacts in relation to physical, human and financial resources utilised within and across programmes

Monitoring and evaluation reports

A summary of monitoring and evaluation findings will be produced for reporting quarterly to the INSETA management Committee (MANCO) and on an ongoing basis as required for action by the project team.

F. MONITORING CRITERIA

Monitoring and evaluation will be in line with the “INSETA Discretionary Grant Funding Policy and Guidelines”

Institutions will be selected for monitoring and evaluation against a pre-determined set of criteria and from a schedule of host employers or beneficiaries of discretionary funding. Samples will be weighed against, but not limited to, the following indicators:

Level One Monitoring:

The following categories of employer will be subject to level one monitoring:

- Employers with clean track records
- Employers with large numbers/ large funding value (regardless of track record)
- New host/ secondary employers or those limited in experience

Level one monitoring will be desktop and include any of the following:

- o Emails to beneficiaries
- o Telephone calls to beneficiaries
- o Bulk sms to beneficiaries
- Any non-compliance identified may result in the initiation of Level Three Monitoring visit
- Sample selected will be 10% of the total number of each category

Level Two Monitoring:

The following categories of employer will be subject to level two monitoring:

- Employers with a poor track record

Level two monitoring will utilise both desktop and onsite investigation and will include:

- o Emails to beneficiaries
- o Telephone calls to beneficiaries
- o Monitoring visit
- o Interviews with employers and learners/interns
- o Written and telephonic requests for information

Level Three Monitoring:

The following categories of employer will be subject to level three monitoring:

- Employers where a complaint is received/ Issue is raised

Level three monitoring will take the form of an official onsite investigation and will include

- o Monitoring visit
- o Interviews with employers and learners/interns
- o Written and telephonic requests for information
- Sample selected will be 100% of the complaints received/ issues raised, as long as the aforementioned meet the following criteria
 - o Formal written complaint by the learner/ intern
 - o Internal non-compliance raised and communicated formally with employer

A suitable range of samples will be selected for monitoring and evaluation within each programme and across all projects, against the above criteria.

Each project will use a template and checklist suitable to the needs of the project and these will be documented within the operational processes. However, the following minimum criteria will be included across all reports:

- Details of monitoring and evaluation practitioner/s
- Name and address of host employer (lead or secondary)
- Verification of learners against applications granted
- Name and reference number of learning programme
- Start and end date of programme
- The stage of the programme at time of visit (such as at start, 6 months into a programme or at closure)
- Random checks to verify payments of stipends to learners
- Validation against INSETA's technical indicators (such as learners entered, completed certified)

Site visits will be conducted at least six-months into the learning programme and may include ad-hoc interventions at any time during the programme.

Parties subject to monitoring and evaluation will be notified at least five working days in advance. However, INSETA reserves the right to conduct monitoring interventions unannounced within notice.

INSETA may contact learners directly at any stage to discuss relevant matters.

Evidence of remediation will need to be supplied at least 30 days after the party is notified of the area for development. Evidence may be required in a shorter timeframe where the remediation is of a critical nature (Eg. Details of unreported secondary host sites).

Internal operations:

Quantitative monitoring, such as of numbers of beneficiaries and adherence to timelines, may be done through telephonic and electronic means.

Qualitative monitoring, such as support on programmes, information-sharing, query and complaint resolution will lie within the technical expertise of respective business divisions who may employ multiple methods of monitoring and support.

G. DISPUTE RESOLUTION:

Any dispute will be addressed in terms of the "INSETA Discretionary Grant funding Policy and Guidelines"

Any trend of two or more irregularities or appeals of such a nature that INSETA deems significant or that may pose a strategic level risk, will be reported to the accounting officer and may be escalated to higher levels at the discretion of the accounting officer.

H. CODE OF CONDUCT

The code of conduct will apply as per the “INSETA Discretionary Grant Funding Policy and Guidelines”

I. POLICY REVIEW

This policy and guideline will be subject to review by the INSETA board and relevant committees at least annually or as needed.

Works Cited

Higher Education and Training , 2015. *Guidelines on the implementation of SETA Grant Regulations* , RSA: s.n.

THE PRESIDENCY, RSA, 2007. *Policy Framework for the Government-wide Monitoring and Evaluation System*, Pretoria: THE PRESIDENCY, RSA.