

**MONITORING AND EVALUATION AS A GOVERNANCE TOOL FOR ENHANCING
ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE SECTOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING
AUTHORITIES**

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Thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree.
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2023



Declaration of Authenticity

I declare that the research project, Monitoring and Evaluation as a governance tool for enhancing accountability in the sector education and training authorities is my own work and that each source of information used has been acknowledged by means of a complete Harvard Referencing System. The thesis has not been submitted before for any other research project, degree, or examination at any university.


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Acknowledgments

This has been the most demanding and mentally stimulating project I have ever been involved in and I want to dedicate this research document to my late father Ngoako Charles Moasa and late daughter Nthuba Moasa, my mother Nthuba Johanna Moasa, my late uncle Mahlodi Jeffrey Phofa, my three sons who are always a pillar of strength, Nare, Kgobuki, and Morwamadi. I would like to thank the Almighty who gave me the courage, wisdom, and strength to complete this research.

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Abstract

Monitoring, evaluation, and implementation of plans and processes have evolved over the years in all sectors and organisations. However, in South Africa, monitoring and evaluation were first formally implemented by the Department of Land Affairs, where the first Monitoring and Evaluation Directorate was established in 1995. The study is focused on various facets of monitoring and evaluation, including the evaluation process, cost-benefit, return on investment, social return on investment, and value for money, to gain more insight into the history and development of monitoring and evaluation. Definitions of key concepts are provided for clarity about the meaning of and extent to which these concepts are used in the study. The study reviewed current monitoring and evaluation practices adopted by the participating sector education and training authorities and explored typical potential obstacles encountered in the execution of systematic monitoring and evaluation. The researcher used a qualitative method to investigate the problem statement.

The research findings highlight a set of challenges that have generally contributed to the poor implementation of monitoring and evaluation in recent times. Findings indicated the extent to which planned monitoring and evaluation activities were conducted and were linked to the project monitoring together with risk management activities to mitigate the corruption risks that might materialise and disturb the proper implementation of the skills development. The findings further revealed that the existence of the monitoring and evaluation framework provided a structured measure on which projects were monitored as a process to curb negative events such as project failure or, in a worse case, corruption regarding the funds paid to learners in the form of stipends.

There is a strong relationship between monitoring and evaluation and good governance within the participating sector education and training authorities, namely the bank sector education and training authority, the insurance sector education and training authority, and the wholesale and retail sector education and training authority. To this end, the study recommends that the approved monitoring and evaluation framework and policy in the sector education and

training authorities be further used to enhance accountability and transparency in all participating sector education and training authorities. In addition, the study recommends that more efforts be made to advocate for the utilisation of the reports that were produced by these business units.

The efforts will ensure that monitoring and evaluation of the discretionary grants accurately account for the money spent and also enhance good governance, accountability, monitoring, and evaluation of activities relating to the quality of the learning experience for learners in various disciplines offered by relevant sector education and training authorities.

Key Words: *governance, organisational performance, accountability, corruption, monitoring, evaluation, Board oversight, ethics*

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List of Acronyms

ADAPT	Adaptive, Dynamic, Active, Participatory, and Thorough
AGSA	Office of the Auditor General of South Africa
ANC	African National Congress
APP	Annual Performance Plan
Bank SETA	Bank Sector Education and Training Authority
CAE	Chief Audit Executive
CATHSSETA	Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, Sport Sector Education and Training Authority
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CET	Community Education and Training (CET)
CIO	Chief Information Officer
CIPL	Centre for Information Policy Leadership
CJC	Canadian Judicial Council
CLSA	Credit Lyonnais Securities Asia
CMR	Comprehensive Management Reports
COO	Chief Operations Officer
COVID-19	Coronavirus disease
DFID	Department for International Development
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DLA	Department of Land Affairs
DPME	Department of Planning M&E
DPSA	Department of Public Service Administration
EQPRS	Electronic Quarterly Performance Reporting System
ETQA	Education Training and Quality Assurance
EXMAN	Executive Management Committee
FFC	Financial Fiscal Commission
GWM&E	Government-Wide Monitoring and Evaluation System
HET	Higher Education and Training
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICAI	Independent Commission for Aid Impact
ICPSK	Certified Public Secretaries of Kenya
ICT	Information and Communications Technology

IIRR	International Institute of Rural Reconstruction
INSETA	Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority
ISDF	Independent Skills Development Facilitator
ITBs	Industry Training Board
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MANCO	Management Committee
MfDR	Managing for Development Results
MS teams	Microsoft Teams
NDP	National Development Plan
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NQF	National Qualification Framework
NSDP	National Skills Development Plan
OD	Organisational Development
ODI	Overseas Development institute
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OHCHR	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights
PCAS	Policy Coordination and Advisory Service
PIO	Public Information Officer
PM&E	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation (PM&E)
POPIA	Protection of Personal Information Act
PSC	Public Sector Commission
PSET	Post-School Education and Training
QCTO	Quality Council for Trades & Occupations
RBM&E	Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation
REDD+	Reducing Emissions from Deforestation and Forest Degradation
ROI	Return on investment
RTI	Right-to-Information Laws
SALRC	South African Law Reform Commission
SAPA	South African Press Association
SASSETA	Safety and Security Sector Education and Training Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SLA	Service Level Agreement

SMME	Small and medium-sized enterprises
SOE	State-Owned Enterprise
SP	Strategic Plan
SPPE	Strategic Planning and Performance Evaluation
SROI	Social return on investment
TID	Technical Description of Indicators
TIPS™	Management of Technology, Innovation, People, and Systems
ToC	Theory of change
TVET	Technical and vocational education and training'
UKCIP	UK Climate Impacts Programme
UN	United Nation
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
US	United States
USCIB	United State Council for International Business
VfM	Value for Money
W&RSETA	Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority
WMO	World Metrological Organisation

CHAPTER 1

OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

1.1. Introduction

Chapter one presents an overview and background of the study, the problem statement, objectives, the importance of the study, the research approach, and the structure of the thesis.

1.2. Background to the study

The evolution of monitoring and evaluation (M&E) practices in South Africa's public sphere is informed by the M&E experiences of other countries globally. This study focused on the various aspects of M&E, including the evaluation process, cost-benefit analysis, social return on investment (SROI), return on investment (ROI), and Value for Money (VfM), to gain more insight into the history and development of M&E.

The researcher drew on his workplace experience, wherein he was employed as a senior manager in M&E within the SETA and later acted as Chief Monitoring and Evaluation Officer. He became aware of the inconsistent application of M&E within the SETA and that there was no demonstrable appreciation and understanding of M&E by governance structures or staff members at all levels within the organisation. He started to research M&E approaches and discovered that the issues he was dealing with in his workplace could be addressed if there was a credible and reliable M&E system in place.

Furthermore, all government departments and public entities are required, through the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) (Act No. 1 of 1999), to have robust M&E processes in place together with the political will to drive organisational performance. The researcher was also aware that the Board and Executive management struggled to understand their roles within the M&E activities, consequently making it impossible for lower-level staff to perform their M&E duties appropriately. The next section provides the definitions of key

concepts and the meaning and extent to which these concepts are used in the study for clarity.

1.3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) defines monitoring as "the continuing function that aims primarily to afford the stakeholders and management an on-going involvement with early signals of progress, or lack thereof, in the achievement of results. An on-going intervention might be a project, program, or other kinds of support for an outcome" (UNDP, 2002:6). Evaluation is defined as "a selective exercise that attempts systematically and objectively to assess progress towards and the achievement of an outcome" (UNDP, 2002:6).

Following the lead of countries in Western Europe (Auer, 1996), the Central European transition economies of Hungary and Poland have adopted performance indicator systems as a means of monitoring active labour program effects. According to Chouinard and Cousins (2013), M&E has flourished in recognition as a consequence of a reaction by African nations to address shifting organisational and community demands as they become autonomous of global assistance. Porter and Goldman (2013) explain that M&E practice on the African continent has been influenced and conceptualised by international donors and non-governmental organisations demanding reports on the projects and programs that invigorated government-driven needs (Porter and Goldman, 2013: 1).

1.4. Return on Investment (Roi)

ROI is frequently defined in management literature as a measure of financial effectiveness concerned with returns on capital employed in (profit-making) business activities (Drury, 2007).

1.5. Definition of Social Return on Investment

SROI is a method that aims to assess social outputs and the importance of social outcomes in monetary terms (Boyd, 2004). However, Nicholls, Lawlor, Neitzert, and Goodspeed (2012:13) define SROI as "a framework for measuring and accounting for the much broader concept of value. It seeks to reduce inequality and environmental degradation and improve wellbeing by incorporating social, environmental, and economic costs and benefits".

Governments are increasingly being called upon to demonstrate results. It is, however, expected of them to demonstrate that they are making a real difference in the lives of their people and that value for money has been delivered (Public Sector Commission (PSC), 2008).

1.6. Sector Education and Training Authorities

The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), which was established through the SAQA Act of 1995, regulated skills development activities such as education and training quality assurance bodies (ETQA). According to the National Qualifications Framework and the Standards Setting (2000: 12–13), ETQAs were established by the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) in each of the sectors described below to monitor and audit achievements in terms of national qualifications and standards. An organisation or group of organisations could seek accreditation as an ETQA in one of the following sectors:

1. A social sector
2. An economic sector [e.g., SETAs and statutory bodies].
3. An education and training sub-system sector [e.g., higher education, general and further education and training, and further basic education and training].

The proposed changes and implementation of these various policies were aimed at improving understanding of the demand for different types of skills as well as

encouraging and supporting training. The SETAs were established with ambitious goals, with the mandate of providing, amongst others, leadership, internships, undergraduate bursaries, graduate development programs, and apprenticeships (Kraak, 2004; Gamakulu, 2016:45). Within the context of the SETA environment, the effective implementation of the M&E systems enabled effective monitoring of the performance of the skills system and the evaluation of the impact of the skills development program. The system was thus intended to create an incentive for employers to train, support training, and supply much-needed information on the training needs of each sector (as determined by the Minister of Labour) (Allais, 2014).

1.7. Ontology

According to Gruninger and Lee (2002:40), ontology "is a formal, explicit specification of a shared conceptualisation. A conceptualisation, in this context, refers to an abstract model of how people think about things in the world, usually restricted to a particular subject area". Flowers (2009:1) posits that "ontology describes people's views (whether claims or assumptions) on the nature of reality". Specifically, it inquires whether this is an objective reality (that exists) or a subjective reality (that is only created in their minds). However, Blaikie (2000: 8) described ontology as "claims and assumptions that are made about the nature of social reality, claims about what exists, what it looks like, what units make it up, and how these units interact with each other".

In short, ontological assumptions are concerned with what we believe about the matter or social reality we face daily. For this study, the researcher assumed constructivism and subjectivism as ontological orientations. The researcher's professional experience as an M&E manager provided a sound platform from which to observe and evaluate how M&E could be improved and implemented successfully. The researcher observed that the Board and Executive management struggled to understand their roles within the M&E activities, consequently making it impossible for lower-level staff to perform their M&E duties appropriately.

The researcher presented an innovative approach to M&E to remove the barriers to proper M&E at each level of employees and to ensure responsible, accountable, and value-driven M&E. It was important for the researcher to ensure that he was adding new knowledge to the M&E field and to align the description of the new knowledge to the prescripts of the NQF level 10 descriptor, which according to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA, 2012) is the scope of knowledge, in respect of which a learner can demonstrate expertise and critical knowledge in an area at the forefront of a field, discipline, or practice; and the ability to conceptualise new research initiatives and create new knowledge or practice. The knowledge base ensured the opportunity for improvement in oversight roles by Board members, the accountability of Executives, and the responsibility of management, which could translate into sustainable service delivery.

1.8. Rationale

The researcher was cognisant of the fact that SETAs had been at the center of negative news in the recent past. This ranged, for example, from non-payment of learners' stipends to corruption, maladministration, and poor performance. On an annual basis, billions of rand are invested in skills development to ensure that the most needed, scarce, and critical skills are developed for the requirements of industry, the economy, and the country. The allocated substantial funds, which were collected from levies paid by the employers, were paid back in the form of mandatory and discretionary grants to encourage employers to open their doors to young people who attended technical and vocational education and training (TVET) colleges, universities, and other institutions at a higher education level.

On its part, the South African government introduced laws, governance protocols, and regulations to enhance good corporate governance and accountability for the public funds invested in skills development, despite the levies coming mainly from the private sector. The legislative requirements governing state-owned agencies (SOEs), such as the SETAs, required that Board be established to provide oversight, enhance good governance, and provide strategic direction to the

organisation. Good corporate governance requires that the SETA Board and Management act with honesty, integrity, diligence, skill, and care in dealing with the affairs of the SETA (SETA Governance Charter, 2016:3). The challenge was always that the SETA Board did not provide much-needed oversight, as evidenced by the number of SETAs that were put under administration. As a result, the Minister of Higher Education and Training appointed administrators to take care of the day-to-day operations of the SETAs that are under administration.

The appointment of the administrator by the minister replaced the functions of both the Board and Executive management. This system, however, did not seem to be properly implemented, making it difficult to measure value for money in the projects and policies being implemented by the SETAs. These consequently resulted in a lack of proper skill development for the targeted group. It was in this context that this study sought to explore the impact and efficiency of M&E systems, specifically investigating their effective application to service delivery in the SETA.

The diaspora concept of M&E is characterised by complexities, and the system of M&E is an evolving perception and has not been fully developed to offer information for programs under implementation within a South African public sector context. Effective M&E is first and foremost about ensuring that SETAs meet their business objectives and that the accounting authorities of the SETAs are responsible for their performance and ultimately accountable (SETA Governance Charter, 2016:3).

1.9. Problem statement

The M&E activity is a crucial component in the improvement of efficient service delivery in the SETAs. However, from an ontological perspective, efficient resources such as the understanding of how M&E should be applied to enhance respectable governance, accelerate accountability, and distribute services within the SETAs generally appeared not to be sufficiently implemented by both the Executive management and staff members responsible for M&E policy

implementation. Reports revealed justification for the poor governance and performance of the SETAs while billions of Rands from levy-paying employers were being invested into skills development managed by staff that seemed to lack technical expertise and the desire for good management, rather showing an eagerness to engage in corrupt practices, to mention but a few. According to Nelson (2016:1), "Despite these problems, M&E implementation remains a critical factor for any government to achieve all-round sustainable development and good governance".

1.10. Research Aim

This study intends to present a new approach to M&E towards the elimination of barriers to proper M&E at each level of employees and to ensure responsible, accountable, and value-driven M&E. Also, the study aims to develop a viable framework for the application of M&E in the SETAs that are established to facilitate a credible skills development mechanism in South Africa.

1.11. Research Questions and Objectives

The table below presents the research questions and related objectives of the study:

Table 1: Research questions and objectives

Questions	Objectives
How effective are the SETA mechanisms in applying M&E as a management and governance tool?	To explore the extent to which M&E is understood and implemented in the SETA environment.
What are the lessons learned from M&E practices within South Africa to date, and how can these contribute to the implementation strategy of M&E within SETAs?	To critically examine the concepts and constructs that inform and shape M&E and the assumptions upon which these are based.
What are the current trends in governance and M&E strategies being implemented within SETAs?	To provide detailed guidelines for the application of M&E in the SETAs.
What are the quality controls in project implementation and improvements for effective M&E processes?	To examine quality control in project implementation and improvements for effective M&E processes
What recommendations can the study contribute to new knowledge related to the field of study– in line with NQF level 10?	To recommend measures for improving M&E practices within SETAs.

Source: Researcher's own compilation

1.12. Epistemology

The epistemological approach that was adopted for this study to address ontology is interpretivism. There is the understanding that the researcher constructed a knowledge society as a result of one's personal experiences of real life within the natural settings being investigated (Punch, 2005). Within this research paradigm, the researcher is influenced by a deterministic philosophy in which events and activities are ultimately determined by impacts. It is for this reason that the researcher concluded that knowledge claims arose out of actions, situations, and consequences rather than antecedent conditions.

This study is supported by the philosophical assumptions that knowledge is dominated by abstract conclusions, therefore the existence of absolute truth is absent, and that research is a process within which claims based on what was observed can be made. Hence, knowledge acquired during research is largely shaped by data, evidence gathered, and rational consideration, with these creating an opportunity wherein biases in knowledge are eliminated through data validity and trustworthiness.

1.13. Theoretical framework

A theoretical framework is a conceptual model of how one theorises or makes logical sense of the relationships among several factors that have been identified as important to the problem (Sekaran, 2000). Swanson (2013:122) explicitly asserts that the theoretical framework is the structure that can hold or support a theory of a research study". The ideas, concepts, and themes constitute a deep and broad base of knowledge in the discipline, which constitutes the theory (Kivunja, 2018).

These ideas, concepts, and themes together comprise the theory, which enables us to explain the meaning, nature, relationships, and challenges asserted or predicted to be associated with a phenomenon in an educational or social sciences context, so that an application of those attributes of the theory enables us to understand the phenomenon and to act more appropriately, including the

ability to predict (Asher, 1984). This study sought to present a new approach to M&E towards the elimination of barriers to proper M&E at each level of employees and to ensure responsible, accountable, and value-driven M&E. The purpose of the study was achieved through a review of the literature coupled with a detailed evaluation intervention, identification of the research gap, and development of a theoretical framework for the interpretation of the research findings.

The researcher began by outlining the (i) history and role of skills development in South Africa, (ii) applicable legislative requirements and SETAs' constitutions, (iii) governance structure of the SETAs, (iv) the SETAs history and roles of M&E in the public segment, (v) systems of M&E within, (vi) key attributes of M&E functions, and (vii) examination of the effect of M&E schemes used. The researcher developed the theoretical frameworks, as shown in Figure 1 below: First, he investigated the extent to which M&E was understood and implemented in the SETA environment and then examined quality control in project implementation and improvements for effective M&E processes.

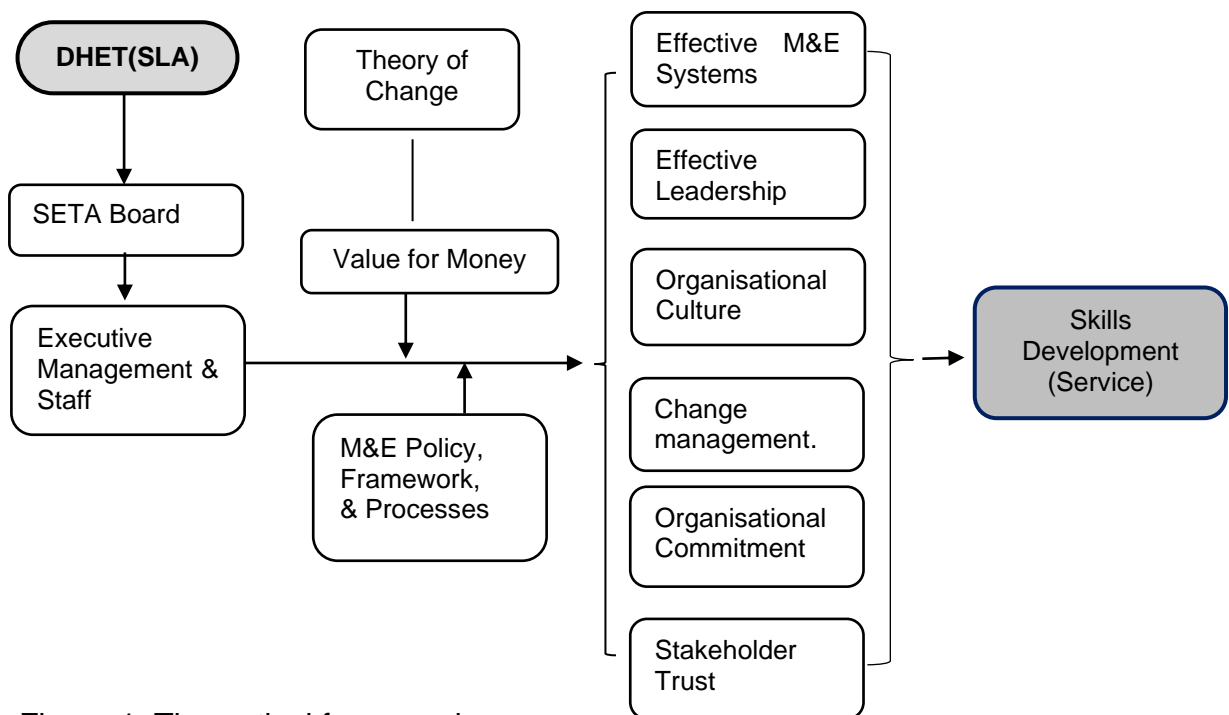


Figure 1: Theoretical framework

The researcher took the existing theoretical model and reframed it so that it served as the theoretical framework for this study. It was for this reason that the researcher chose the constructivist approach to answer the research questions. Constructivism is 'an approach to learning that holds that people actively construct or make their knowledge and that reality is determined by the experiences of the learner' (Elliott, Kratochwill, Littlefield Cook, and Travers, 2000: p. 256). In elaborating on constructivists' ideas, Arends (1998) stated that constructivism believes in the personal construction of meaning by the learner through experience and that meaning is influenced by the interaction of prior knowledge and new events.

The researcher intended to achieve the research objective by reviewing past and current studies on M&E, methods, data, findings, and conclusions around the study topic. It was for this reason that, from an ontological point of view, the researcher was of the view that full implementation of the strategic objectives could translate into service delivery through a comprehensive and proper implementation of M&E tools and strategies. The critical components of M&E included activities such as tracking where projects were not being well managed, identifying areas where funds were not being utilised for intended purposes, and identifying areas where oversight activity was not being adequately provided by the governance structure.

1.14. Theory development

In the study, the researcher employed both secondary and primary research. The secondary research involved a document and literature review of the SETAs in three different sectors of the economy: banking, insurance, and wholesale and retail. The primary research consisted of qualitative, in-depth interviews with SETA personnel in the sampled SETAs. Firstly, the researcher investigated the implementation of M&E within three sampled SETAs. This sheds light on how M&E should be implemented, understood, and supported to accelerate service delivery using secondary data. In the second instance, the researcher conducted

an in-depth interviewing process with SETA personnel in the sampled SETAs, using an interview guide that was developed.

The researcher had, as part of data collection, approached the SETAs to establish contact and identify potential participants in the entities that were part of the sample in this study. The researcher conducted the study by focusing on the SETAs in three different sectors of the economy, namely banking, insurance, and wholesale and retail. This process was aimed at indicating how the various M&E process levels impact the performance of SETAs. The researcher undertook the study using qualitative research and developed interview questions as part of the data collection tool.

1.15. Research design

The qualitative design allowed for a fluid and open study. Babbie and Mouton (1998) elucidate that the kind of research design has to be directed by the expected outcome it intends to attain. Associated with the study, Creswell (2013) described the qualitative design as a continuously shifting method that functions in phases varying from gathering the data to communicating it. The participants in a cross-sectional study are simply picked from an available population of potential relevance to the study topic, unlike case-control studies where the subjects are chosen based on the outcome status, or cohort studies where the subjects are chosen based on the exposure status (Wang and Cheng, 2020).

A cross-sectional (Figure 2) study measures a target population's view at a specific point in time. To this end, a cross-sectional study can equate the different population groups, such as different levels of employees' ratings of training, measured at a single point in time.

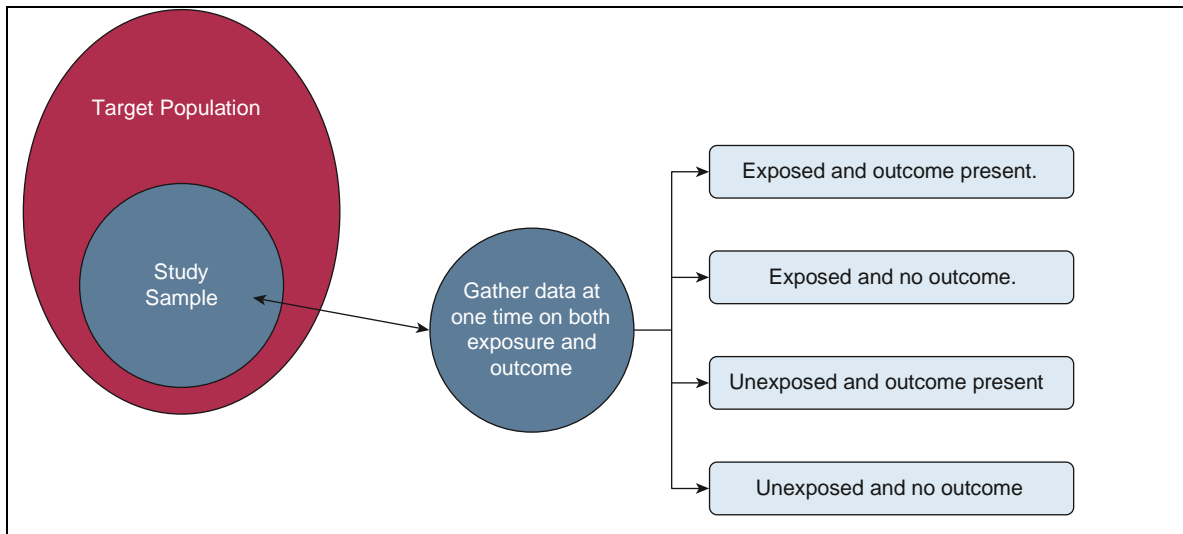


Figure 2: A schematic representation of a typical cross-sectional study. Source: (Wang and Cheng, 2020).

A qualitative design is beneficial in understanding the subject and aids the investigator in analyzing and creating a well-rounded image. Utilizing qualitative design enabled the investigator to experience an uncomplicated flow of the exploratory procedure of the study. An in-depth interviewing process was undertaken with SETA personnel, governance structures, and members of sampled SETAs using an interview guide that was developed by the researcher.

1.16. Research method

Research methods include case studies, questionnaires, interviews, focus group interviews, and written responses, among others. In Chapter 3, paragraphs 3.2 to 3.4, the researcher explained in detail the research methodology and how trustworthiness and data triangulation were achieved. To this end, trustworthiness is a significant concept that is used in qualitative research as a measure of the quality of research. Furthermore, Chapter 3 covers in detail how the qualitative data analysis was conducted to enable the presentation of the study findings. According to Golafshani (2003:597), "qualitative research refers to any kind of research that produces findings that are not arrived at through statistical procedures or other means of quantification". The qualitative research design was utilised due to several advantages associated with it. Firstly, it was useful because it allowed the researcher to describe and evaluate the M&E of

SETA programs in their natural settings, focusing on the process of implementation rather than quantifiable outcomes. Secondly, it enabled the collection of data by securing appointments with all the SETAs targeted for the study to gather more detailed data.

1.17. Research setting

The research setting refers to the place where the data are collected. The data for the study was collected from three different SETAs. This chapter deals with the research design that was followed in carrying out the research. The details concerning the sample, design, tools, and procedure followed for the collection of data and the nature of the data are discussed next.

1.18. Sampling

The researcher sampled three similar SETAs for this study. DeVos (2000:191) defines a sample as "a small portion of the total set of objects, events, or persons that together comprise the subject of the study". According to Tustin, Lighter, Martins, and van Wyk (2005:90), in a qualitative research study, the sampling method to be employed could be purposive. Sampling methods may include probability and non-probability techniques. In non-probability sampling designs, the elements in the population do not have any probabilities attached to their being chosen as sample subjects. This indicates that the discoveries from the analysis of the sample could not be confidently generalised to the whole population when applying the M&E system to other state-owned enterprises (SOEs) that apply the same system.

On the other hand, Saunders, Thornhill, and Lewis (2009:214 & 233) suggest that "sampling is intended to get a sample population that is representative of the target population". Also, Kumar (2011:193) defines a sample as "a subset of a population from which inference is made about the total nature of the population". In addition, sampling refers to the process of selecting research participants to include a group of people, behaviors, or other elements with which to conduct a study (Bezuidenhout and Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:131).

1.19. Sample population

Although sampling can mean any procedure used in selecting units of observations, the key to generalising from a sample to a larger population is probability sampling, which involves the important idea of random sampling. Purposive or judgmental sampling was used for the study. Babbie (2010:188) defines purposive sampling as a type of sampling that happens when a sample is selected based on the knowledge the researcher has of a population, its elements, and the purpose of the study.

In this study, the equivalent of Executives and senior management, regional managers, specialists, and administrators were selected because their understanding was not only limited to operational aspects of the business but also involved in determining the direction of the organisation. The population that was used for the study was sampled in such a way as to make sure that all target groups were included in the sample.

Chapter three, paragraph 3.9, covered the sampling method in detail, while paragraph 3.10 covered the population for this study. Furthermore, in paragraph 3.11, the researcher covered the sample size that contributed to some of the limitations of the study. A population represents a collective where the investigator can select what or who to sample to gather data (Kumar, 2014). The sample was not representative; however, steps were taken to ensure that the target audience was well-spread or represented. To this end, the researcher's invitation was not only limited to senior SETA officials but was extended to everyone who is in charge of M&E to ensure a bigger sample. According to Mouton (1996:132), attaining representativeness of the entire population with the sample underlies the epistemic standard of the impartial sample. The sample population could be described as the cluster from which the researcher's sample was derived. In the study, there were three SETAs from which participants were selected within the entire population. They included the following: Executive managers, senior managers, regional managers, specialists, and administration clerks from selected SETAs.

1.20. Sample size

Twenty-nine invitations were sent to participants in the Bank SETA, the INSETA, and the W&R SETA; four participants declined to continue with their interviews after they had initially accepted. Ultimately, eleven (11) participants did not respond to the invitation, while fourteen (14) responded and participated in the research, comprised of two (2) from INSETA, one (1) from Bank SETA, and eleven (11) from W&R SETA, respectively. Welman (2010:70) states that the choice of sample size is normally governed by the general rule that says, "The larger the sample size, the lower the likely error in generalising to the population".

Anderson (2010) posits that "qualitative research requires small sample sizes because of the intensity of the work required to interpret and report on the data collected". However, qualitative research sample sizes are to a greater extent about the quality of information than the number of participants. The study participants were selected on the basis that they understood the field of research and were able to inform the research. The following two factors were considered when the size of the population was determined, as suggested by Welman *et al.* (2010:71):

1. While the sample size must consider the sample population to ensure representativeness, care should be taken that the sample size has little effect on decreasing the standard error and the margin of error.
2. The size of the sample depends not only on the size of the population but also on the variance (heterogeneity) of the variable. The researcher suggested that, as a general rule, the larger the variance, the larger the sample that is required.
3. If each stratum of a highly heterogeneous population is relatively homogeneous, a relatively smaller stratified sample may be sufficient. The researcher further suggested that if the strata differ in size and heterogeneity, he should adjust the size of the respective samples he

takes from them; accordingly, the smaller the stratum and/or the more heterogeneous it is, the larger the sample that he should draw from it.

The researcher advised that it was usually advisable to draw a larger sample than the one for which complete data is desired at the end. Twenty-nine participants were invited to the study. However, only fourteen participants responded positively and agreed to be interviewed, while others responded to the invitation and others accepted but declined to send back the questionnaires or log in on MS Teams that were used to conduct the oral interview.

1.21. Sampling method

For the study, the researcher used purposive sampling. The researcher selected a sample based on the participants' active participation in the implementation of the monitoring and evaluation activity within the selected SETAs. To this end, the researcher was convinced that the use of a purposive sample method enabled him to select and interview relevant officials in different SETAs, and this was done to align with the qualitative approach. Bezuidenhout and Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014:137) argued that "non-probability sampling is used when it is difficult to determine and assess the entire population".

It is for this reason that the researcher elected to utilise a non-probability sampling procedure to select officials who were most relevant, experienced, and knowledgeable about the M&E (Cozby and Bates, 2014). The sample methods for this qualitative research consisted of a non-probability, purposive selection of three SETAs in Gauteng province with regional offices in other provinces.

1.22. Data collection tools

In this section, the researcher describes the data collection tools that he used to collect data to answer the problem statement for the study. The tools that were utilised were consistent with the qualitative research methodologies and made it easier for the researcher to answer the research questions.

1.22.1. Qualitative data collection

Primary data collection was a method by which the researcher collected the information needed to answer the research questions. The researcher focused more on the semi-structured interview, which allowed the researcher to pose questions to the participants to learn more about their views and opinions on the subject (Bezuidenhout and du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:188). The researcher purposely identified participants from the entire population in different SETAs who agreed to be part of the study as indicated in the sample size and requested an interview opportunity with them. Semi-structured interview questions were developed to assist in data collection from the participants. The interviews allowed the researcher to obtain the perceptions of role players in the respective SETAs regarding their insights into the M&E.

1.22.2. The semi-structured interview questionnaire

According to Merriam and Tisdell (2015: 262), semi-structured interviews are open-ended and flexible. It helped the researcher gain further insights into the participants' responses by asking follow-up questions. As already indicated, the researcher utilised a semi-structured questionnaire, which served as a tool to structure the interview and ensure consistency in questioning. Participants were given the questionnaires in advance.

However, detailed interviews were conducted in person by the researcher with some participants, while other participants decided to offer a response in writing and returned the answers together with the consent forms. The researcher noted that a different questionnaire administration method yielded between written responses and oral interviews different results. The latter gave additional details because it permitted follow-up inquiries, whereas a written response only allowed the researcher to examine the information contained in the returned written reply. Both strategies gave much-needed relevant details regarding the M&E in the SETAs space.

However, the open-ended interview corroborated what was already known while also revealing the rationale behind the responses, as De Vos (2001: 298) notes that "often interviewees may more easily discuss sensitive issues" in such a setting. In-depth interviews took approximately 30 to 45 minutes on average. The questions were initially responded to by the in-depth interview. Depending on the response of the participants, additional probing questions were asked as appropriate. The audio recording was then transcribed. Transcription was written in question-by-question format to capture what was said regarding each question.

1.23. Data analysis methods

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche, and Delport (2011: 397) define qualitative data analysis as the process of creating order, structure, and meaning to the mass of raw data, while Merriam and Tisdell (2015) argue that qualitative data analysis is a very personal process with few rigid rules and procedures. To understand the situation in detail and to gain a holistic understanding of it, qualitative analysis was deemed appropriate (Ferreira, 1988; Neuman, 2000; Van Wyk, 2006). The data was gathered and analysed using qualitative approaches that enabled units of significance to be found. The thematic approach adopted during the data analysis procedure determined the primary framework of the final study report, from which information was produced. The researcher did not use any statistical procedures to analyse the qualitative data.

The researcher conducted the study at the sampled SETAs to contribute towards the effective implementation of M&E concerning skills development by using official files and structured interviews with selected participants. The documents that were in the public domain were also used. The Davinci Institute granted authorization in advance for research to be conducted at the SETAs following research ethics. Study participants were asked to indicate their willingness to participate voluntarily by signing a written consent form. The purpose of the research was explained to the participants, and all transcripts obtained were handled in line with the university's code of ethics.

1.24. Limitations of the study

The qualitative research methodology and generalisability were the two main limitations of this study. The process and outcome of qualitative research, particularly how generalisation is handled and conveyed, must still be guided by epistemologies (such as constructionism) and ontologies (such as relativism), according to qualitative researchers (Smith, 2018: 139). The researcher conducted this study using the qualitative method. It is for this reason that the researcher purposefully invited twenty-nine participants from the Bank SETA, the INSETA, and the W&R SETA.

Out of the three sampled SETAs, only fourteen participants reacted positively to the invitations; as a result, the sample became smaller than what was intended. Smith (2018:139) further suggests that "rich knowledge and small samples purposefully chosen are thus unique strengths of qualitative research, not weaknesses". The degree to which the findings from the study sample may be applied to the complete population is referred to as generalisability (Myers, 2000; Polit and Hungler, 1991: 645). It is for this reason that the study's unique sample posed a limitation to the generalisability of the findings.

1.25. Chapter layout

Chapter 1: Introduction to the Study

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter that provides the background to the study, discusses the rationale, research problem, research objectives, significance of the study, scope, and limitations of the study, and clarifies the terms used in the study.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

The chapter reports on the literature related to M&E within a global and national context. The chapter also presents detailed literature on the study, providing a global perspective on the understanding, acceptance, adoption, and execution of

M&E environments. The literature presented reviews the underlying association between the different approaches related to M&E.

Chapter 3: Research Methodology

The chapter discusses the methodological procedure followed in the study, the research design, the scope of the study, the population, and the methods used for the study. The instruments used for data collection for the respective participants were also explored and explained. The data analysis procedures and levels of data exploration were also presented. The ethical considerations involved in the study are also illustrated at the end of the chapter.

Chapter 4: Findings

Chapter 4 presents and discusses the findings of the study that was conducted to assess the effect of M&E as a governance tool for enhancing accountability and skill development. Paragraph 4.5 answers all the study questions by presenting the study findings (paragraphs 4.5.1 to 4.6.5.2) aligned to the aim and objectives (summarised in Table 1 above) of the study.

Chapter 5: Discussion

This chapter introduces detailed discussions of the outcomes of the study. The researcher presents the proposed conceptual M&E framework for sustainable strategic and operational interventions within the SETA and offers a few recommendations for future studies.

Chapter 6: Recommendations and Conclusions

Chapter 6 contains the proposed framework for the execution of M&E within the SETA environment. The framework consists of processes and suggested standards of practice for the efficient application of M&E in all areas of the SETA. The framework is the study's seminal contribution to the post-school education and training (PSET) sector in South Africa.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The previous chapter presented an overview and background of the study, the problem statement, the objectives, the importance of the study, the research approach, and the structure of the thesis. This chapter deals with a global overview of M&E as an authoritative instrument, given that the progression of M&E practices in the South African government was informed by the M&E experiences of other countries globally. The chapter therefore reviews the literature on decent authority, and M&E focuses on the governance tool to enhance accountability in the SETAs. Further, the chapter expounds upon, *inter alia*, the public dimension, institution dimension, economic dimension, centralised governance, decentralised governance, and collaborative governance.

2.2. Background to the study

The evolution of M&E practices in the public sector was informed by the M&E experiences of other countries globally. The literature review is focused on the various aspects of M&E, including evaluation processes, cost-benefit, ROI, SROI, and VfM, to obtain insight into the past, the development of current practices in M&E, and some successes being achieved in other institutions that can guide the current practices in the SETAs. The study was 'born' out of the concern that there was very little visible M&E within the SETAs concerning the strategic outcome and some of the high-value projects.

2.3. Return on Investment

ROI is frequently defined in management literature as a measure of financial effectiveness concerned with returns on capital employed in (profit-making) business activities (Drury, 2007). The ROI as described by the Phillip Model (Nathwani *et al.* 2013) placed emphasis on isolating the effects of the program on organisational objectives (business impact) and a full analysis of the costs of the

program. The ROI methodology steps are illustrated in Figure 3. The methodology consists of the following 12 steps:

1. Start with why: align programs with the business.
2. Make it feasible: select the right solution.
3. Expect success: a design for results.
4. Make it matter: a design for input, reaction, and learning.
5. Make it stick: a design for application and impact.
6. Make it credible: isolate the effects of the program.
7. Make it credible: convert data to monetary value.
8. Make it credible: capture the costs of the project.
9. Make it credible: calculate the return on investment.
10. Make it credible: identify intangible measures.
11. Tell the story: communicate results to key stakeholders.
12. Optimise results: use black box thinking to increase funding.

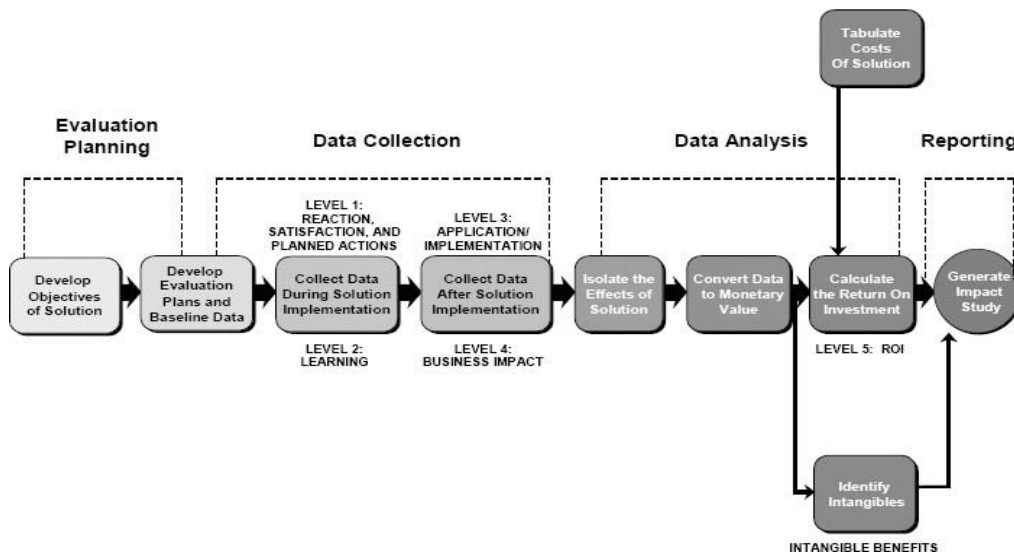


Figure 3: The ROI methodology process model

(Source: ROI Institute, 2019).

To complete the planning process, three simple planning documents are developed: (1) the data collection plan, (2) the ROI analysis plan, and (3) the project plan. These documents should be completed before the evaluation project is implemented, ideally before the program is designed or developed

(Phillip, 2013). Studies have used ROI for various reasons (Schueler, Stanwick, and Loveder, 2017); these include business improvement through supporting new technologies and improving workforce efficiency, workplace health and safety (Brown, Taylor, McKenzie, and Perkins, 2015), and as part of funding agreements (IPP, 2012).

The second phase of the model is data collection (Figure 3). The phase includes determining the costs of the program and collecting the benefit data. To determine the benefits, it is necessary to convert the qualitative data into monetary values (Lynch, Akridge, Scott, Schaffer, and Gray, 2006). In this regard, organisations investing valuable resources in improvement projects, whether for employee efficiency or skills enhancement, are now insisting on the evaluation of the impact of such programs (Russ-Eft and Preskill 2005:71).

It is therefore recommended that managers alert and encourage trainers, facilitators, developers, and educators to use this training measurement and evaluation tool, especially if they are responsible and accountable for training strategy, planning, implementation, budget, and ROI (Jasson and Govende, 2017). The last phase involves reporting. This effectively means communicating the report through meetings, intranets, and weblogs, with the main objective of communicating the findings in a way that can be understood (Brantley, 2007). Thus, some decisions aiming to reduce ROI can improve the economic condition of the company, as some decisions aiming to increase ROI may result in unsatisfactory activity (Diaconu, Albul, Mihai, and Guinea, 2003: 255). It is tempting for a manager to try to maximise short-term results at the expense of long-term results, for example, by reducing advertising spending, which is detrimental to the image of the company in the long term and hence the ROI during a long period, or by reducing investments related to research and development activity without considering their importance for the future of the company (Zamfir, Manea, and Ionescu, 2016).

2.4. Definition of Social Return on Investment

SROI is a method that aims to assess social outputs and the worth of social outcomes in monetary terms (Boyd, 2004). However, Nicholls, Lawlor, Neitzert, and Goodspeed (2012) define SROI as "a framework for measuring and accounting for the much broader concept of value. It seeks to reduce inequality and environmental degradation and improve wellbeing by incorporating social, environmental, and economic costs and benefits". Based on the most recent guideline (Nicholls *et al.* 2012), the conduct of an SROI study requires progression through six stages [Figure 4]. SROI has been used by managers of non-profits or social enterprises to inform their projections, strategic planning, and performance assessment (Olsen, 2004).

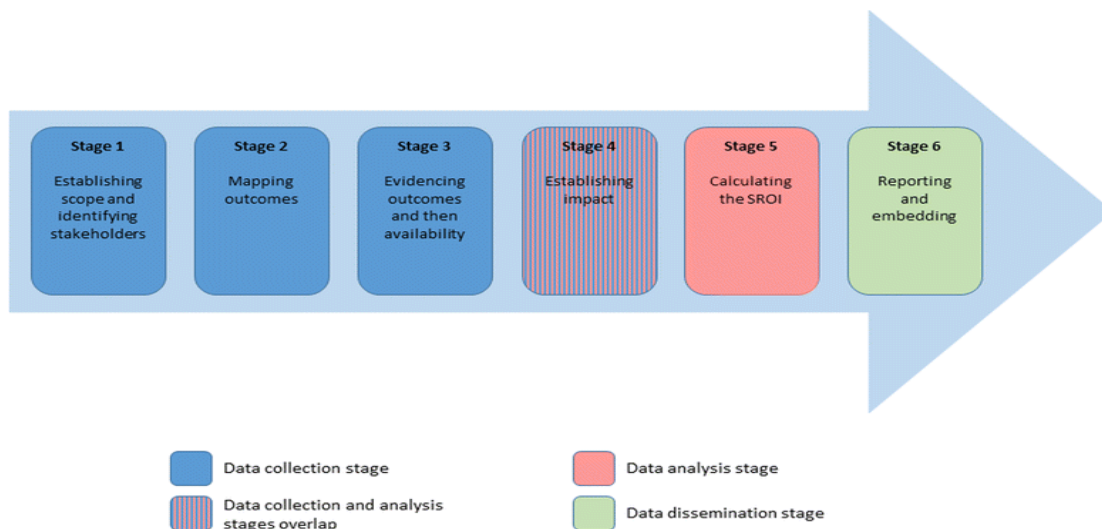


Figure 4: SROI six stages (Source: Banke-Thomas, Madaj, and Charles, 2015)

Governments are increasingly being called upon to demonstrate results. It is expected of them to demonstrate that they are making a real difference in the lives of their people and that value for money has been delivered. Public Service Commission (PSC), 2008. Value for money is about finding the right balance between economy, efficiency, and effectiveness and cannot be assessed through only one of these dimensions in isolation (Jackson, 2012). Figure 5 shows a simplified logical flow of economic and efficiency considerations when determining the effectiveness and therefore value for money of a specific project.

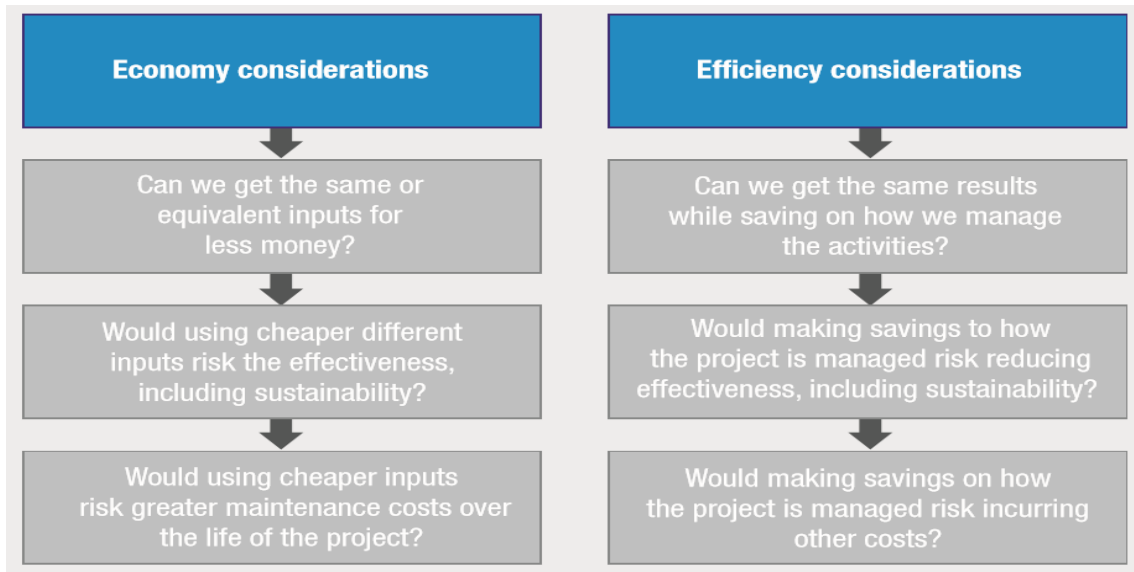


Figure 5: Economy and efficiency considerations as part of the value for money. (Source: 2. ICAI (2011). Approach To Effectiveness and Value for Money, Report No 1)

2.5. Theory of change

In the context of the SETA environment, the theory of change facilitates the enhancement of knowledge that seeks to improve the approach adopted by staff members when gathering data through monitoring of the programs. The staff members acquire more knowledge and experience during the evaluation of the selected programs. The emphasis is on how the development of an evaluation capacity in government supports a results-based management approach and the uses managers can make of evaluation information (Kusek and Rist, 2004:115). Theories of change approaches are not panaceas. Valters (2014) observes that while such strategies can be utilised to foster communication, learning, and accountability, there will frequently be some conflict between them, especially about the accountability component. (Thornton, 2017). Figure 6 shows the interplay among the elements that are commonly used in theories of change.

The theory of change is included here as the basis for the development of a performance framework and performance standards by the SETAs.

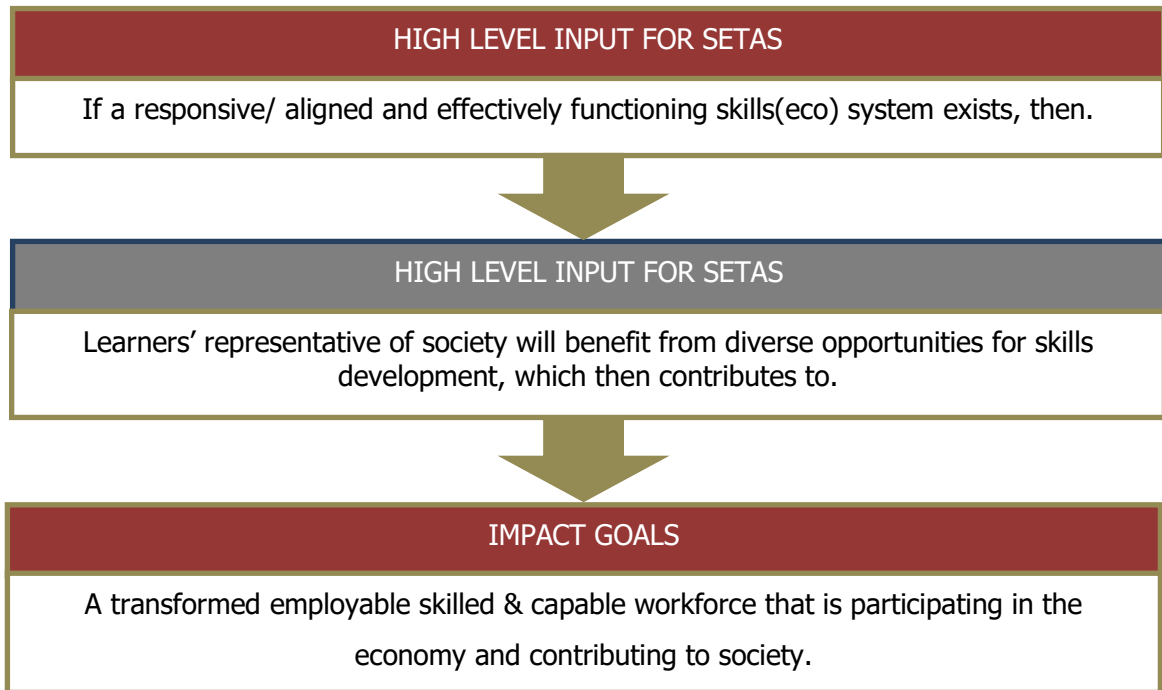


Figure 6: theory of change guiding the overall M&E in a SETA environment. Source: Research Partnership Addressing Monitoring and Evaluation in A Seta Environment (<https://www.ru.ac.za/elrc/projects/>)

However, the theory of change techniques can aid in fostering the widespread dedication to learning from people and organisations, which is increasingly viewed as a crucial component of sustainable development. (Thornton, 2017).

2.6. Governance

Governance is defined as "the process of steering society and the economy through collective action and following common goals" (Torfing and Ansell, 2016: 4). Metrick and Ishii (2002) view corporate governance as the promise to repay a fair return on capital invested. According to Certified Public Secretaries of Kenya (ICPSK) (2014), corporate governance is a set of rules that define the relationship between stakeholders, management, and the Board of directors of an organisation. Researchers at the World Bank distinguished six main

dimensions of good governance (Kaufmann *et al.*, 1999, quoted in Naidoo, 2011).

1. Control of corruption.
2. Independence of the judiciary
3. Voice and accountability, which include civil liberties and political stability.
4. Government effectiveness
5. Protection of property rights is included in the rule of law.
6. Accountability

2.7. Six foremost elements in good governance

Below, the researcher discusses six dimensions of good governance by explaining how they manifest within the communities.

2.7.1. Control of corruption

To understand how effective anti-corruption measures are in reducing the risk of corruption, it was important to establish a regular monitoring mechanism to measure the impact and changes and to adjust policies and institutional arrangements based on the findings (Andonovska, 2016). Recently, the risk of corruption that materialised in the South African government was state capture, which has dominated public debates in the country. The African National Congress (ANC) has always openly declared a profoundly unconstitutional policy to capture the state to advance the party's ideological interests. (Claymore, 2016). Reversing state capture within the South African state remains a priority, but it is also important to note that it is extremely difficult to overcome state capture, especially because it has been institutionalised in the core structures of the state (Martins and Solomon, 2016).

The worrying trends about the continuation of state capture in a different form emanated from the private businesses that fund politicians or their political parties. Therefore, the introduction of a strict regulatory framework for private funding, such as the Political Party Funding Act, No. 6 of 2018, attempted to

enhance accountability and transparency between political parties, politicians, private businesses, and wealthy individuals. Consequently, the likelihood of the risk of state capture is enhanced when powerful business individuals or big businesses instruct government officials to take certain decisions as part of the conditions for politicians and their parties to continue enjoying funding from them.

Johnson (2015: 24) asserted that “the ANC was no longer a party sold out for justice and prosperity for the people but one that was drenched in corruption, rent-seeking, and inevitably squabbles over the distribution of patronage”. Although strong anti-corruption measures and an independent judiciary exist, political influence impacts their efficacy, and significant risks remain for local and international businesses as President Ramaphosa attempts to steer the ship (Lambert-Porter, Capecci, Seelinger, Depass, and Billings, 2021).

2.7.2 Independence of the judiciary

Judicial independence is a requirement demanded by the Constitution, not in the personal interests of the judiciary but in the public interest, for without that protection, judges may not be, or be seen by the public to be, able to perform their duties without fear or favour (De Vos, 2014). Judicial independence entails the ability of a judge to decide without undue influence and interference from internal and external forces (Siyo and Mubangizi, 2015). Furthermore, the judge must have the security of tenure and financial security to guard against bribery, related interference, and corrupt conduct. Concerning the independence of the judiciary, the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) (2021) states that the judiciary should decide matters before them impartially, based on facts and following the law, without any restrictions, improper influences, inducements, pressures, threats, or interferences, direct or indirect, from any quarter or for any reason.

Without the effective implementation of objective and transparent criteria based on proper professional qualification (Article 9, United Nations’ Charter of the Judge), there is a very real possibility that the judges selected will not have the

requisite skills and abilities to discharge their mandate (Limbach and Zoll, 2003). Judicial independence depended on these two factors, but it was not always clear how to separate them (Canadian Judicial Council (CJC), 2016). For discussion purposes, the constituent elements belonging to each of the two dimensions of judicial independence were split as follows:

Table 2: Two dimensions of judicial independence

Dimensions of Judicial Independence	
Adjudicative Independence of Individual Judges	Institutional Independence of the Judiciary
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Impartial decision-making 2. Security of tenure 3. Financial security: pay, benefits. 4. and retirement plan continuing education. 5. Ethics and conduct standards 6. Accountability 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Administration of justice by judges 2. Management of the court 3. Assignment of judges to cases, determination of sittings and lists of the court, and related areas such as the allocation of courtrooms and management of the administrative staff. 4. Conduct review, and removal. 5. Administrative and institutional relationships with the legislative and Executive government bodies

Source: Canadian Judicial Council: 2016

2.7.3 Voice and accountability, which includes civil liberties and political stability.

Voice refers to a variety of mechanisms—formal and informal—through which people express their preferences, opinions, and views. The term ‘CV&A’ was used as shorthand to capture the dynamic relationship between the citizen and the state (Overseas Development Institute (ODI) 2009). Figure 7 below shows the correlation between the level of voice, accountability, and control of

corruption in 192 countries in 2014, as measured by Kaufman and Kraay (2016) for the World Bank.

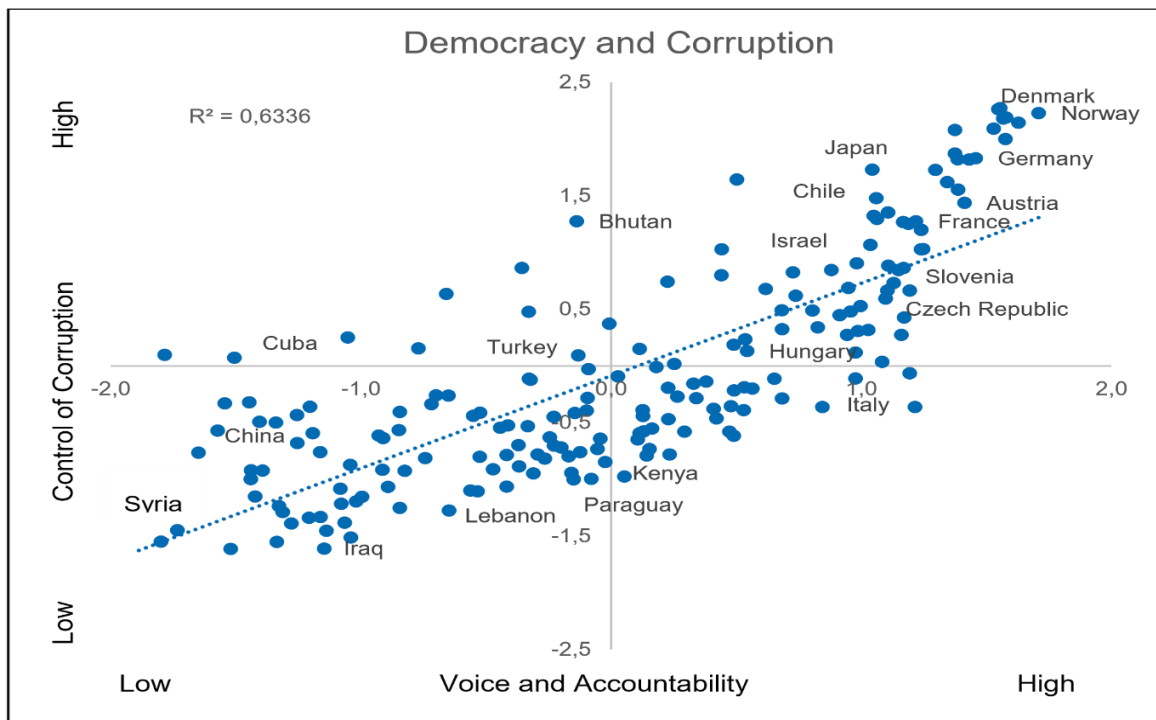


Figure 7: Correlation between democracy and corruption (Source Enste, Dominik; Heldman, Christina (2017) Calculations; Kaufmann/Kraay, (2016).

As indicated in Figure 7 above, data and several research reports that have looked into the relationship have shown evidence that an increase in democracy leads to a decrease in corruption. Some important constraints needed to be accounted for, though (Enste *et al.*, 2017). The findings (Figure 7) also demonstrate that some governmental actions, particularly those that have a regulatory focus, have the reverse impact by providing corrupt officials with more opportunities to engage in illicit behavior.

2.7.4. Government effectiveness

Magalhães (2014) provided empirical evidence to suggest that government effectiveness results in quality policymaking and implementation, which provides support for democracy. Montes and Paschoal (2016) found that developing countries with more democratic regimes have effective governments. Santiso,

Horoch, and Vieyra (2014:11) state that there are three key attributes of good government:

1. An effective government achieves results that respond to the needs of its citizens. For instance, it manages based on results.
2. An efficient government can be understood as one that is effective in achieving agreed-upon policy objectives at the lowest cost.
3. An open government seeks to engage with citizens in collaboration schemes to co-create public value by making information clearly and readily available to its citizens.

2.7.5. Protection of property rights included in the rule of law.

The United States Council for International Business (USCIB) (2015) describes the Rule of Law as capturing perceptions of the extent to which agents have confidence in and abide by the rules of society, in particular the quality of contract enforcement, property rights, the police, and the courts, as well as the likelihood of crime and violence. However, Section 25 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 ('the Constitution') sought to safeguard the right to property while also requiring the state to take proactive steps to increase access to and equity in the distribution of property rights to address the impacts of racialized dispossession and systemic discrimination. Likewise, formal property rights that do not offer control rights in practice are useless, while the absence of formal property rights need not be prohibitive if control rights are sufficiently strong (Rodrik, 2007). Rule of law is non-arbitrary governance as opposed to one based on the power and whims of an absolute ruler (United Nations, 2013).

2.8. Accountability

Haque (2000: 602) stresses that accountability for public governance and market-based economic performance does not necessarily imply accountability for citizens' rights; its accountability for competition and productivity does not guarantee its accountability for representation and equality; and its accountability

for higher profit does not connote its accountability for welfare and justice. Regarding governance, it is established that M&E of accountability is closely associated with auditing, compliance, and performance management (Albusaidi, 2018), and therefore, it plays a crucial role in promoting oversight, which exists when citizens hold the government accountable for the use of funds and performance on programs (Cook, 2006). This is operationalised through strategic leadership in public bodies, properly aligned incentive structures, and accountability relationships among oversight bodies, agency heads, managers, and information officers (see Figure 8).

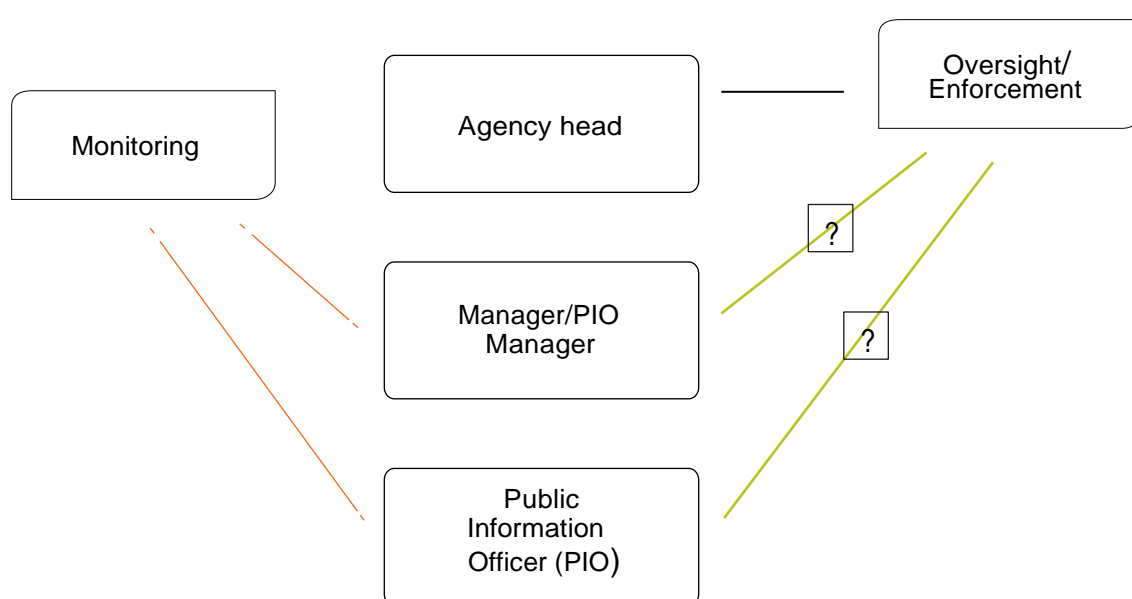


Figure 8: Lines of accountability and responsibility that shape incentives. Source: Trapnell and Lemieux (2014).

Relationships between monitoring entities and individual agencies establish channels of communication among information officers, managers, and monitoring bodies, as shown on the left side of the diagram (Trapnell and Lemieux, 2014).

2.9. The success of M&E global

Most definitions of M&E in the development context look at providing those involved in the program implementation process with the right information so that they can report on any early indications of problems or issues, as well as provide early indications of the likelihood of achieving targets or desired results. To this

end, Australia adopted an ambitious evaluation strategy in the late 1980s. (Mackay, 2011). However, Canada's effort bore little fruit; Australia produced a significant reallocation of budget resources (Mackay, 2011). More fundamentally, according to Mackay (2011), several important factors are crucial to the success of the strategy; their importance was highlighted starkly by changes that occurred during the subsequent Howard era, from 1996 to 2007.

According to Basheka and Byamugisha (2015), globally, the international status of M&E research remains theoretically and methodologically influenced by the American tradition. Countries internationally have started to recognize the significance of M&E as an essential management instrument that tracks the advancement of programs and assists in decision-making (Nyang'ara, Tong', Otieno, and Kisii, 2019). In the evolution of M&E on continents such as Africa, the approach to evaluation presented an opportunity to enhance the knowledge base that has stimulated interest amongst politicians, who in turn use the information to conduct evaluations on good governance (Malefetsane, Lungepi, and Tembile, 2014:5).

However, De Kool and Van Buuren (2004:173) conceded that the rise of New Public Management (NPM), which was constructed around key philosophies that emphasised outputs and outcomes, transparency, and accountability, created a demand for M&E in Africa. In some countries, policy relating to the M&E agency is supported by the Constitution, for example in Uganda and Ghana. (Porter and Goldman, 2013:4) In Ghana, after several years of implementing the national M&E system, significant progress has been made (Clear, 2012). For example, 70% of the M&E budget in Ghana for 2010 is reported as being spent on monitoring activities alone (Porter and Goldman, 2013:6). Also, Rwanda has been cited as one of the best-performing countries in East Africa by the World Bank for its internalisation of M&E in the projects' success in every sector of the economy (Nyang'ara, Tong', Otieno, and Kisii, 2019). However, Bester (2009) argued that M&E practice in the South African government was at an interesting point in its evolution during the period from 2002 to the present. As suggested by Kusek and Rist (2004), approaches like participatory monitoring and evaluation

(PM&E) have not been given the attention that is also necessary to complement results-based monitoring and evaluation (RBM&E) (Figure 9).

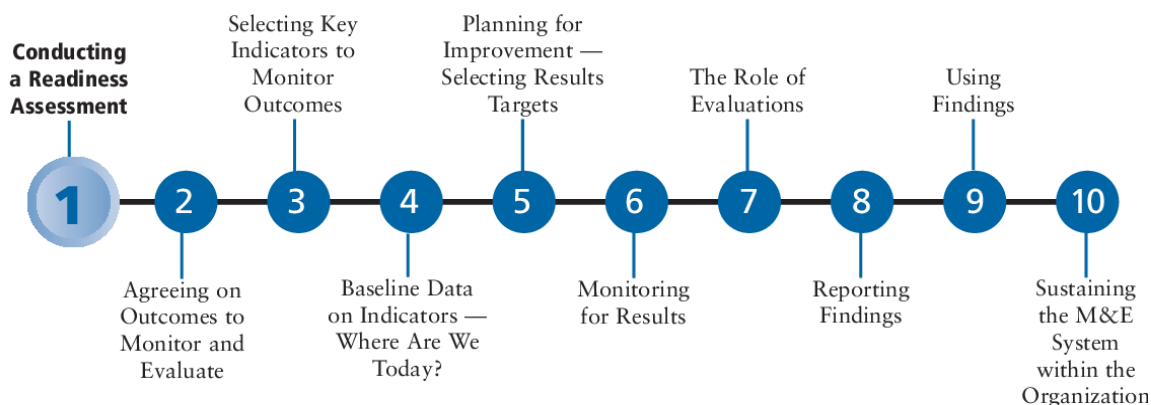


Figure 9: Ten Steps to a Results-Based Monitoring and Evaluation System: A Handbook For Development Practitioners (Source: Kusek and Rist (2004))

A variety of definitions and assumptions are shared through literature; these include the need for M&E as a mechanism that could enhance effective planning, transparency, and accountability, and therefore governments around the globe have prioritised monitoring of programs.

2.10. The history and description of the sector education and training authority

The Minister of Labor established the National Skills Authority as a Sector Education and Training Authority (SETA) in 2000 when SETAs were set up to replace the old Industry Training Board (ITBs) (Skills Development Act, 97 of 1998). SETAs are industry bodies convened in 2000 by the Minister of Labour with the mission to develop and implement a sector-specific skills plan, register, and promote learnerships, and apply to the South African Qualifications Authority for accreditation as an ETQA for qualifications in their sector.

Towards the end of the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) II in 2009, President Jacob Zuma announced a new Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) to focus on post-school education and training (Malambe, 2016). The administration powers and functions originally entrusted to the

Minister of Labour by the Skills Development Levies Act and the Skills Development Act (SDA), except for provisions dealing with Productivity South Africa and employment services, were transferred to the Minister of Higher Education and Training, effective November 1, 2009, by way of Presidential Proclamation 56 of 2009 (DHET Annual Report 2015–2016).

The mandate of SETAs includes providing learnership, internships, undergraduate bursaries, graduate development programs, and apprenticeships. The said programs are implemented through levies collected through the South African Revenue Services, where Billions of Rands in the form of grants are being spent. One of the pieces of legislation that governs the operations of the SETAs is the Skills Development Levies Act, 1999 (Act No. 9 of 1999) (SDL Act), which provides for the imposition of the skills development levy. Matters connected with skills development programs are implemented under the guidance of the SETA constitution, drawn from the SDA. The SETA constitution guides the Board and Executive management in performing their respective responsibilities. Governance protocols, such as frameworks and applicable policies, are drawn up to provide an enabling environment for good governance.

The lack of M&E in these legislative frameworks gave rise to poor performance, an escalation of fraud and corruption, and a lack of realisation of skills development, which translated into the production of a low-skilled workforce. This is where skills development programs that are designed, planned, and implemented by various SETAs need to run effectively and be managed like critical projects. For instance, developing an artisan takes three years, and it requires constant project monitoring that will ensure that potential problems are picked up before they materialise into bigger challenges that will be costly for the SETA to manage and reach the project objective.

2.11. Problems affecting M&E implementation.

Effective M&E is a key factor in project success; thus, using technology to supplement the M&E team's work leads to value addition on the team's part. (Charles *et al.*, 2015). In most community projects, M&E is not effective because

there is no early preparation for it. Sometimes, this stems from the fact that M&E operations are not integrated into the planning phase of the community program or project (Dipela and Mohapi, 2021). In monitoring the project specifications, the monitoring team may check the progress of activities against the plan. They should review performance regularly at the stipulated review points and confirm the validity and relevance of the remainder of the plan (Charles *et al.*, 2015). Various projects that focused on service delivery failed due to an unstructured approach toward project monitoring. M&E plans that are drafted and finalised are at times not supported with financial resources or teams qualified and competent in how to utilise the resources allocated to the projects.

Kamau and Mohamed (2015) suggest that each stage of the project life cycle requires different efforts from the management. In the same way, each stage in the project life cycle requires a different level of effort in terms of M&E. The components of the Project Management Methodology include project management processes such as initiating, planning, executing, and monitoring project progress; a selection of tools and techniques to communicate delivery to the satisfaction of all stakeholders; a consolidated and integrated set of appropriate best practices and values of project management; and a list of references to terminology as a common denominator and language for use in the project environment (Chin, 2012).

2.12. Governance structure of the SETA

The SETA Board is constituted by Section 13 of the SDA. The Minister appoints the SETA Board to provide strategic leadership and determine the goals and objectives of the respective SETA. The skills and experience that individual Board members have should, in essence, accelerate good governance, which will translate into service delivery. In the recent past, most of the SETAs were under administration after receiving audit opinions that painted a bleak picture of the underperforming SETAs. As a result, the SETA as a brand was seen as a corruption enterprise. In the 2016–2017 financial year, three SETAs were still under administration (Phakathi, 2017). The WRSETA is the most recent authority

to be placed under administration in 2016, while the Culture, Arts, Tourism, Hospitality, and Sport Sector Education and Training Authority (CATHSSETA) and the Safety and Security SETA (SASSETA) were placed under administration in 2014 and 2015, respectively.

The Auditor-General's reports highlighted serious weaknesses in environmental control stemming from the poor oversight role, lack of ethical practices, and inadequate skills and competencies to exercise prudent financial management in the SETAs. The constituencies are guided by a well-documented governance framework that highlights the protocols within which good corporate governance should be practiced. These frameworks support the promotion of good governance on paper, but inherent procedural weaknesses, resource constraints, and the role of political principals in the operations of the institution remain fundamental stumbling blocks to good corporate governance (Hussein, 2005:3).

The SETAs have a minimum of five and a maximum of seven committees in addition to the Board, such as the Audit and Risk Committee and the Human Resources and Remuneration Committee. There are, however, various subcommittees that are established to support the Board in optimising operational efficiencies, such as the ETQA committee, Skills Research and Planning Committee, Finance Committee, and Learning Programs Committee, to mention but a few.

2.13. Philosophical Framework for M & E

The underlying philosophical discourse of the traditionalists and modernists around the progression of a system of M&E concerns its approaches to planning and design for successful application (Masuku, 2015). Furthermore, Masuku (2015) asserts that a variety of initial positions have been chosen by industrialised countries to implement results-based M&E systems.

2.13.1 M&E Systems

The evolution of M&E practice in South Africa's public sphere is informed by the M&E experiences of other countries globally. It is for this reason that the study

investigates the experiences of other countries to obtain insight into the development and history of M&E. The present study emphasises that there should be proper monitoring of performance in all spheres of government. According to Van der Waldt (2004:67), "monitoring involves the constant tracking of performance to determine whether the achievement of objectives is likely to occur". M&E systems necessitate twelve major elements to function efficiently and effectively to accomplish the desired outcomes (UNAIDS, 2008). These M&E elements are discussed below:



Figure 10: Organising framework for a functional national M&E system: 12 components. Source: UNAIDS, 2008.

The UNAIDS framework makes it clear that the 12 components are not 12 sequential steps to shape a system of M&E, but rather that all 12 components are essential for an M&E system to function effectively (Herrera, 2016:13). The components in Figure 10 are shown as three rings:

1. Organisational Structures

The acceptable execution of M&E at some level necessitates that a unit exists whose purpose is to bring together functions of M&E at its level.

2. Human Capability

Effective M&E implementation requires that there is not only adequate staff employed in the M&E unit but also that the staff within this unit have the necessary M&E technical know-how and experience.

3. Partnerships for Managing, Planning, and Coordinating

A prerequisite for successful M&E systems whether at organisational or national levels is the existence of M&E partnerships.

Partnerships for M&E systems are for organisations because they complement the organisation's M&E efforts in the M&E practice, and they act as a source of verification for whether M&E functions align with intended objectives.

4. M&E Logical Framework

The M&E framework outlines the objectives, inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the intended project and the indicators that will be used to measure all these. It also outlines the assumptions that the M&E system will adopt.

5. Costs of Work and Plan

Closely related to the M&E frameworks are the M&E Work plan and costs. While the framework outlines the objectives, inputs, outputs, and outcomes of the intended project, the work plan outlines how the resources that have been allocated for the M&E functions will be used to achieve the goals of M&E.

6. Advocacy, Communication, and Culture

This refers to the presence of policies and strategies within the organisation to promote M&E functions. Without continuous communication and

advocacy initiatives within the organisation to promote M&E, it is difficult to entrench the M&E culture within the organisation.

Such communication and strategies need to be supported by the organisation's hierarchy.

7. Routine Monitoring of Programme

M&E consists of two major aspects: monitoring and evaluation. This component emphasises the importance of monitoring. Monitoring refers to the continuous and routine data collection that takes place during project implementation.

Data needs to be collected and reported continuously to show whether the project activities are driving toward meeting the set objectives.

8. Surveillance and Surveys

This involves majorly the national level M&E plans and entails how frequently relevant national surveys are conducted in the country. National surveys and surveillance need to be conducted frequently and used to evaluate the progress of related projects.

9. Sub-National and National Databases

The data world is gradually becoming open source. More and more entities are seeking data that are relevant to their purposes. The need for M&E systems to make data available can therefore not be over-emphasised.

This implies that M&E systems need to develop strategies for submitting relevant, reliable, and valid data to national and sub-national databases.

10. Supportive Data Auditing and Supervision

Every M&E system needs a plan for supervision and data auditing. Supportive supervision implies that an individual or organisation can regularly supervise the M&E processes in such a way that the supervisor offers suggestions on ways of improvement.

Data auditing implies that the data is subjected to verification to ensure its reliability and validity.

11. Evaluation and Research

One aspect of M&E is research. The other is evaluation. Evaluation of projects is done at specific times most often mid-term and at the end of the project. Evaluation is an important component of M&E as it establishes whether the project has met the desired objectives.

12. Use and Data Dissemination

The information that is gathered during the project implementation phase needs to be used to inform future activities, either to reinforce the implemented strategy or to change it.

Within the SETA environment, projects revolve around learners. It is for this reason that when projects that are aligned with the strategic objectives of the respective SETA are implemented, the outputs are referred to as service delivery, which is managed through performance management.

Waldt (2004: iii) posits formulates the view that the lack of an overarching performance management framework to manage inputs, outputs, and outcomes hampers the broader South African Public Service concerning service delivery”.

Ijeoma, Nzewi, and Sibanda (2013: 320) define monitoring as "the consistent and systematic collection of information and data during project implementation or progress to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the project". Lack of effective management of the project within the SETA could lead to mismanagement of mandatory grants as available funds are utilised for the implementation of various projects.

2.13.2. Key attributes of M&E system

According to the UNDP (2009), monitoring is an ongoing process by which key program stakeholders (top program policy and decision-makers, program sponsors, program managers, program staff, and others) obtain regular feedback on the progress made in achieving the set goals and objectives of the program. Wholey, Hatry, and Newcomer (2010) stated that evaluation is used in government to increase transparency, strengthen accountability, and improve performance, whereas performance management systems establish outcome-oriented goals and performance targets, monitor progress, stimulate performance improvements, and communicate results to higher policy levels and the public. To give context to the key attributes of the monitoring and evaluation, the researcher looked at other studies about the M&E within the SETAs and conceptualised the relevant activities that helped the SETA implement the predetermined objectives.

2.13.3. Examining the usefulness

Within the setting of a SETA environment, the effective application of the M&E should enable the authority to effectively monitor the performance of the skills system and assess the impact of the system concerning competence development in the economy. It is for this reason that the monitoring of the Service Level Agreement (SLA), the annual performance plans, projects, risks, and learning programs within the SETA must be such that early identification of weaknesses enables the system to respond speedily to new challenges. These, in turn, will enable more focused M&E on all key attributes than the one that is limited solely to confirming that large numbers of learners have enrolled and/or qualified; however, it will go further to cover the outcomes and impact of skills development. An analysis of the effectiveness of the M&E system and mapping of the various descriptions with the capacities of the organisations and institutions have revealed that the core pillars of an effective M&E system support (1) "Results-Based Management Practice, (2) "Knowledge and Information Sharing Culture," and (3) "Evidence-Based Decision-Making Practice" (Ba, 2021). Within the SETA context, Mapitsa (2019) suggests that

most attempts are made to track and cluster some of the developments into thematic sectors such as the professionalisation of M&E, its development as an industry, and the government's utilisation of M&E as a governance tool. The buy-in of all internal and external stakeholders is important to understand that M&E is the responsibility of everybody in the organisation. However, it must be championed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) Executive Management Committee (EXMAN), or Management Committee (MANCO), as it might be called in different SETAs. The good performance of the SETAs will, however, enhance the successful implementation of the M&E system, which depends on management commitment and the oversight role played by the Board. The value of M&E had been eroded by a lack of understanding, commitment, and poor management information systems, to mention but a few. According to Ba (2021), all these linkages (Figure 11) that the research evaluates are summarised in the hypothesized model below:

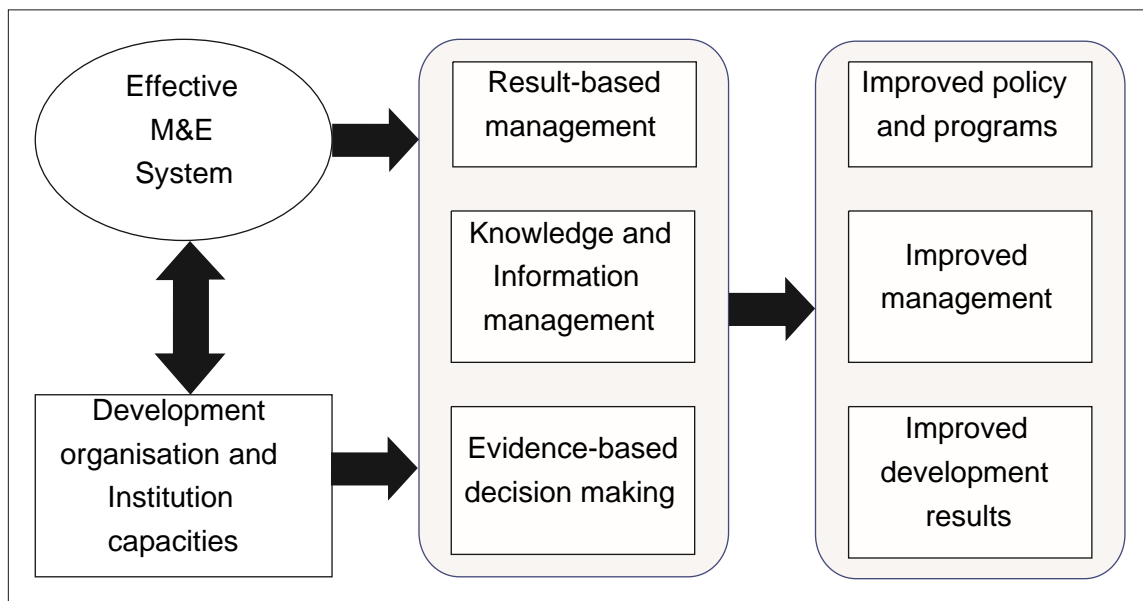


Figure 11: Source: Potential dimensions of effective M&E System at the organisational level.(Ba, 2021)

The situation is further exacerbated by reputational risks that are being portrayed on various media platforms. Mouton (2001: 55) states that a research design is "a plan or blueprint of how you intend to conduct the research". This research is limited to the study of SETAs, which are state-owned enterprises under the

jurisdiction of DHET. The study concentrated on the three identified SETAs in the samples. The reason for choosing the bank SETA, insurance SETA, and wholesale and retail SETA is that they reflected the best performance in financial management and target achievements over various financial years.

2.13.4. Relationship between good governance and M&E

Accountability can be broadly classified into seven types: moral, administrative, political, managerial, legal, or judicial, constituency relations, and professional (Busuic and Lodge, 2016).

According to Albusaidi (2018: 7), concerning governance protocols within government processes, M&E embeds an element of accountability by drawing from other disciplines that enhance governance, such as performance management activities, risk management, and compliance, together with audits that are performed by the Office of the Auditor General and the in-house internal audit function. The close relationship between M&E and good corporate governance is brought about by the approach toward combined assurance that allows collaboration and such reliance by external auditors on the work of the internal auditors.

Internal audits monitor and evaluate the implementation of the policies and strategic imperatives by assuring that the organisation is implementing the controls as intended. As a result, the external audit can use the working papers that were used by the internal audit to track in the form of monitoring how the control was implemented.

The assurance provided by both internal and external sources plays a significant role in providing an enabling business environment for Board oversight where Executive management could be able to present records that allow for public scrutiny and accountability (Cook, 2006). Figure 12 attempts to provide clarity on how M&E is closely related to good governance.

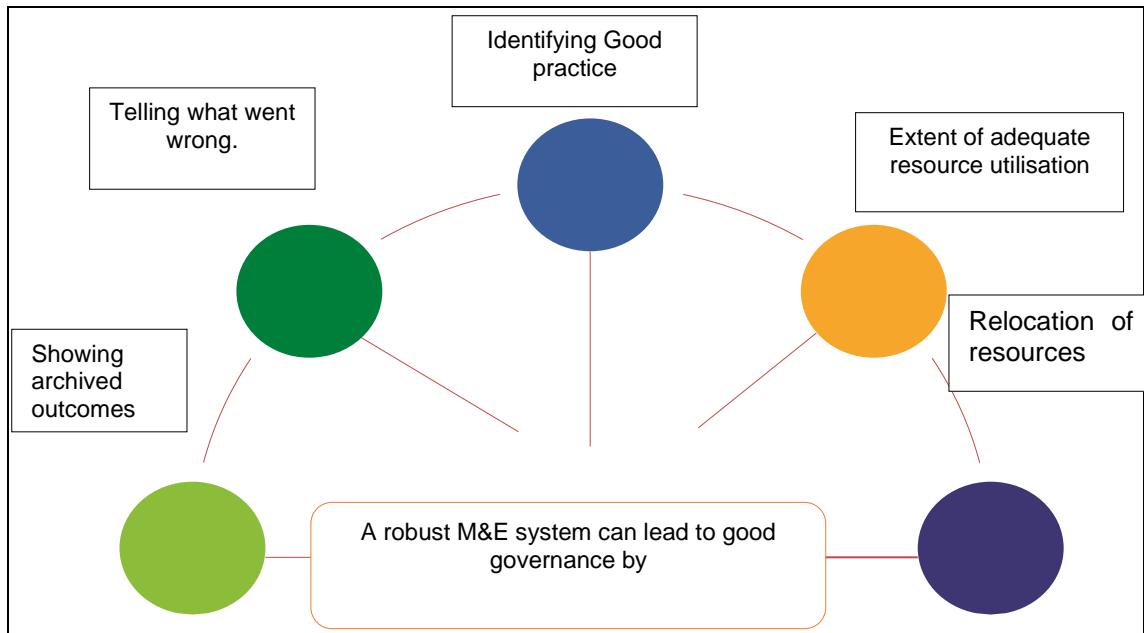


Figure 12: Relationship between good governance and M&E (Source: Agrawal *et al.* 2017).

Implementation of a good M&E system provides opportunities for organisational effectiveness through government departments and entities with reliable policy-based evidence that improves policy planning and implementation. (Agrawal, Kalugampitiya, Rinzin, and Hashim, 2017).

2.14. Chapter conclusion

In this chapter, the researcher presented reviews of good governance literature and M&E focusing on governance tools to enhance accountability in the SETAs. Furthermore, the chapter expounds upon, *inter alia*, the public dimension, the institution dimension, the economic dimension, centralised governance, decentralised governance, and collaborative governance. The next chapter describes the research strategy and methodology that were used to gather and analyse the primary and secondary data to answer the research questions outlined in both chapters.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

In this chapter, the researcher discussed the research method in detail and explained how the research for the study was conducted. Both primary and secondary data were employed in the study.

The researcher adopted constructivism and subjectivism as ontological orientations. The researcher's observation was that the Board and Executive management struggled to understand their roles within the M&E activities, consequently making it impossible for lower-level staff to perform their M&E duties appropriately. The new approach to M&E geared towards the removal of the barriers to proper implementation of M&E at each employee level to enable responsible, accountable, and value-driven M&E was also presented.

The epistemological approach that was adopted for this study to address ontology was interpretivist. The researcher was influenced by a deterministic philosophy in which events and activities are ultimately determined by impacts. The qualitative method adopted for this study sought to collect and analyse data to present a new approach for M&E to remove the implementation barriers at each level of employees within the organisation. It is reasoned that the successful removal of such barriers seeks to ensure responsible, accountable, and value-driven M&E.

This research presents a literature review coupled with a detailed evaluation intervention, identification of the research gaps, and development of the theoretical framework to interpret the research results. The researcher took the existing theoretical model and reframed it so that it serves as the theoretical framework for this study. It is for this reason that the researcher chose the constructivist approach to answer the research questions.

The sampling and questionnaire used to gather additional information are also described. The researcher explained the conceptual framework within which this research was conducted. According to Creswell (2008:8), the research design is defined as "a process of steps used to collect and analyse information to increase our understanding of a topic or issue The process broadly consists of the following three steps:

1. Ask or pose a question.
2. Collect data to answer the question, and
3. Present an answer to the question.

According to Creswell (2008:8), research design is a plan to be followed to realize the research objectives or hypothesis. Hence, the study was designed as a qualitative study, as several people were interviewed to explore different perspectives on a problem at a single point in time and draw some patterns from the data gathered. Furthermore, the study sought to obtain an understanding of how M&E in its current form in different SETAs could enhance service delivery in various occupations in sectors sampled for this study. It is for this reason that the present researcher sought to contribute knowledge on the development and implementation of structured approaches in M&E to mitigate against project failure, which contributed immensely to a lack of service delivery.

3.2. Research methodology

The researcher elected to use the qualitative research study method. The method was chosen because of the opportunity it offered the researcher to interact one-on-one with the participants and gain as much information as possible. Furthermore, a qualitative research design was used because of the various benefits associated with it. It is beneficial because it permits the study to evaluate and describe the M&E of SETA systems in their physical locations, concentrating on the method of execution as opposed to quantifiable results.

Through the above-mentioned research design, the researcher sought to get a greater understanding of the existing management model implemented by

different SETAs in M&E. Furthermore, the study sought to obtain an understanding of how M&E in its current form in different SETAs could enhance skills development in various occupational training programs in the three different sectors sampled for this study.

3.3. Trustworthiness

Several ways can be used to improve the trustworthiness of qualitative study findings (Neuendorf, 2002). Trustworthiness is a significant concept that is used in qualitative research as a measure of the quality of the research. To ensure the trustworthiness of the study, the four primary criteria of confirmability, transferability, credibility, and dependability were utilised. Below, the researcher discusses the four primary criteria that have ensured the trustworthiness of the study:

3.3.1. Confirmability

The concept of confirmability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern for objectivity (Shenton, 2004). Conformity is not limited to the degree to which the study could be objectively confirmed by other researchers, furthermore, the interpretations of the findings are not figments of the inquirer's imagination but could be traced back to the data collected (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). The researcher corroborated the primary data from participants with the literature reviewed. Within the context of the SETA landscape, participants' comprehension and observations supported what had been found in the literature review on good governance and M&E activities.

3.3.2. Transferability

Transferability is a second criterion for trustworthiness proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985, cited in Nowell *et al.*, 2017:3). In positivist research, proving that the findings can be applied to a larger population is frequently a concern (Shenton, 2006). A detailed description from the researcher aids a potential user's assessment of transferability, but it also depends on how well the findings of qualitative research may be applied to different contexts or settings with different

respondents (Korstjens and Moser, 2018). The researcher used both structured and open-ended interview questions to gather detailed M&E information relevant to the study. Although the study's limitations, as summarised in paragraph 1.11, mentioned a small sample size of only fourteen participants out of the twenty-nine that were invited, this did not adversely affect the study's results. The data collected was sufficient to provide meaningful insight into governance dynamics supporting the M&E function within the SETA space.

3.3.3. Credibility Research

According to Saunders *et al.* (2007:168), in establishing credibility, the researcher can contact a participant directly, such as a manager; however, in that process, an exchange of correspondence may be sufficient to gain value from the research work and credibility. Consistent with the research methodologies, the researcher followed the research protocol by contacting the participants directly after obtaining ethical clearance. This process enabled the researcher to access relevant participants in each SETA. Participants who were unavailable to engage in an oral interview were permitted to respond to the interview questions as permitted by the acceptable protocols in qualitative research. Credible and trustworthy data have been gathered directly from fourteen participants in the three participating SETAs through this communication trail between the researcher and the participant. These improved the credibility and validity of the information used to present the study's findings and conclusions.

3.3.4. Dependability

The dependability of the research was enhanced by its validity, reliability, and credibility. This is supported by Hammersley (1987:67), who posited that dependability depends on the participants' collaboration in contributing applicable, credible, "and valid data, which is sorted out through triangulation". To achieve dependability, researchers can ensure the research process is logical, traceable, and documented (Tobin and Begley, 2004). As cited by Nowell, Norris, White, and Moules (2017), one way that a research study may demonstrate dependability is for its process to be audited (Koch, 1994).

Therefore, it is important to state the principles and criteria used to select participants and detail the participants' main characteristics so that the transferability of the results to other contexts can be assessed (Moretti, Vliet, Deledda, Mazzi, Rimondini, and Fletcher, 2011). As explained later in this study, the researcher used purposive sampling to select the participants based on their in-depth knowledge and involvement in the field of M&E and the strategic planning process. The data collected from the participants during in-depth interviews was further corroborated by the literature review together with internally produced reports, such as audit reports and M&E quarterly reports.

3.4.Triangulation

Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates the validation of data through cross-verification from more than two sources (Bogdan and Biklen, 2006:34). According to Leedy and Ormrod (2015), "this approach is especially common in qualitative research; for instance, a researcher might engage in many informal observations in the field and conduct in-depth interviews, then look for common themes that appear in the data gleaned from both methods. The primary data was collected through interviews with participants who consented to participate in the study. However, the secondary data included, amongst other documents, yearly reports for various fiscal years, Auditor-General management letters, and monitoring and evaluation reports for various SETA skills programs. Several key points raised by participants during interviews (primary data) were supported by the secondary data noted in the management letters from the Auditor-General and several quarterly reports on monitored skills projects. These enabled the researcher to triangulate data from participants with recorded information from different sources.

3.5. Ethical considerations

This research study was social and, therefore, dictated by those ethical issues that might arise and need to be properly dealt with in line with the protocol followed in studies. This included addressing areas that might prompt the participants' comfort (Desando, 2017). The researcher conducted the research at

the sampled SETAs to contribute toward the effective implementation of the M&E activities using official files and structured interviews with selected participants.

Following the requirements of the research protocols, after obtaining ethical clearance from the DaVinci Institute, the researcher wrote to five different SETAs and requested their participation. Three of the five SETAs granted the researcher permission to carry out the study following receipt of the letter outlining the study's objectives, voluntary participation, privacy, protection from harm, and the intended use of the data obtained. In addition, the ethical declaration letter, together with the research proposal, was attached to the application for permission. To help the researcher coordinate information with the participants who were willing to participate, Human Resources (HR) employees were nominated in each SETA. These enabled the researcher to send emails to all staff members who were listed by the HR manager.

The people being studied must know the nature of the study and be willing participants in it (this is informed consent), and any data collected should not be traceable back to particular individuals, thus maintaining participants' right to privacy (Leedy and Ormrod, 2015: 278). Twenty-nine participants were invited to participate in the study; however, only fourteen were willing to sign the informed consent form and email it back to the researcher. Invited participants were made aware that their participation is voluntary, and they may opt to discontinue their participation should they feel the need to do so.

3.6. Data Collection of empirical evidence

The purpose of this chapter is also to describe the data collection and empirical evidence that the researcher utilised to gather and analyse the primary data together with the secondary data to answer the research questions outlined in Chapter 1. According to Saunders *et al.* (2019:128), "how you collect your data belongs in the center of the research 'onion', the diagram we use to depict the issues underlying the choice of data collection techniques and analysis procedures," as shown in Figure 13.

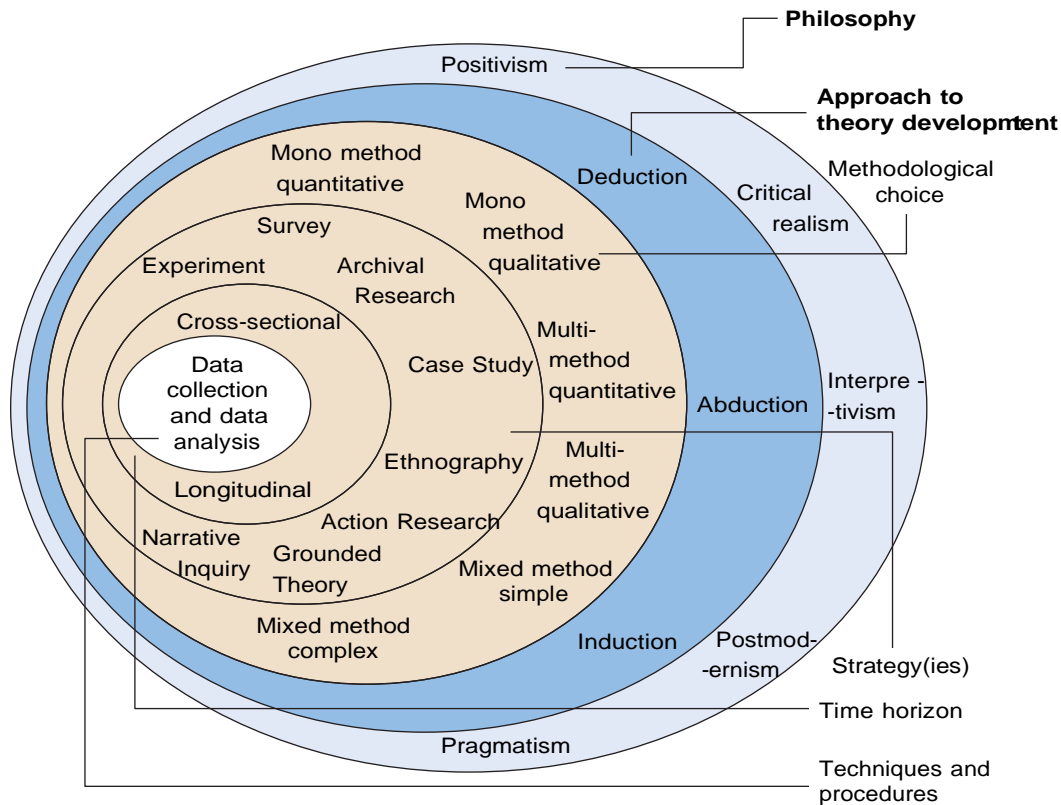


Figure 13: The 'research onion'(Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2019:128)

According to Saunders *et al.* (2004: 342) "even in situations where 'long-distance' connectivity is not a problem, conducting interviews over the phone may still have benefits related to data gathering speed and cost savings". The researcher has used Microsoft Teams to collect data. The advantage of using Microsoft Teams is that it provides the additional capability of recording the conversation in audio and video while also automatically transcribing it.

3.7. Data collection

Collecting data was done by securing appointments after emailing the participants at the sampled SETAs selected by the researcher for the study to interview them. After securing an appointment, the date and time were agreed upon, and both written responses and the interviews were conducted from March 11th to March 25th, 2022. The participants were interviewed on Microsoft teams based on logistics practicalities, and others opted to submit written responses to

each research question on the questionnaire form. These arrangements were also dictated by the COVID-19 regulation that was in force during the period when data was collected. Since the beginning of March 2020, South Africa and the global community have suffered the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a disease that is caused by the new severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). However, the National State of Disaster was officially relaxed on April 5, 2022 (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2022:03).

These resulted in governments attempting to curb its spread by, among other mechanisms, implementing social distancing. It is for this reason that the implementation of social distancing led to the temporary closure of workplaces and schools, among other places where people usually have contact with one another. Consequently, medical experts postulated that social distancing remains the best way to contain the spread of the virus. Governments all over the world, including the South African government, implemented lockdowns in their various countries based on the severity of the pandemic to ensure that its spreading was contained, and the curve flattened.

However, within the framework of COVID-19 and the risks associated with the disease, the researcher adopted technology such as conducting interviews using Microsoft Teams (MS Teams), which has the same effect and quality as face-to-face interviews. Also, MS Teams makes it possible for the study participants to be in their comfortable space, either at home or in the workspace, and still interact with the researcher on video or audio recording applications. In addition, Microsoft Teams can record and transcribe the audio that has been generated.

3.8. Collecting primary data using the questionnaire

The interview questionnaire was designed based on the literature review to include all relevant dimensions of M&E. Data collection is a method by which the researcher collects the information needed to answer the research problem. It was after answering the questions below that the researcher decided that interviews would be a data collection tool for the qualitative method. The

researcher asked the following four (4) questions, as suggested by Babbie (2010:222), in selecting the data collection tools:

1. Are the data collection tools suited for the population that is being assessed?
2. Do the tools have the capacity to produce the outputs and outcomes that are required?
3. Are the tools reliable – will they produce the same result if used at a different time?
4. Lastly, the researcher looked at the advantages and disadvantages of each of the tools before selecting the data collection tool.

The researcher focused more on the semi-structured interview, which allowed the researcher to pose questions to the participants to gain more information about their views and opinions about the subject (Bezuidenhout and du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:188). The interviews were conducted using both handwritten responses and virtual platforms using Microsoft Teams, which allowed the researcher to obtain the perceptions of role players in the SETAs regarding their insights into the M&E processes and practices.

3.9. Sampling method

The researcher used purposive sampling. According to Bryman and Bell (2015:319), purposive sampling refers to the non-probability sampling form "where the researcher does not seek to sample participants on a random basis". The researcher was convinced that the use of a purposive sample method enabled him to select staff members whose operational and strategic functions involved M&E for a qualitative approach from each of the different SETAs to be interviewed. According to Bezuidenhout and Du Plooy-Cilliers (2014:137), non-probability sampling is used when it is difficult to determine and access the entire population. A nonprobability sampling procedure was used for the selection of experienced and knowledgeable expert participants in the M&E field (Cozby and Bates, 2014). The sampling method for qualitative research consisted of a non-probability, purposive selection of three SETAs. A nonprobability sampling method was selected accordingly for the identification of SETAs because the

researcher did not have any guarantee that they were representative of the population.

3.10. Sample population

Sampling is the process of selecting research participants to include in a study, a group of people, behaviors, or other elements with which to conduct the study (Bezuidenhout and Du Plooy-Cilliers, 2014:131). Although sampling can mean any procedure for selecting units of observations, the key to generalising from a sample to a larger population is probability sampling, which involves the important idea of random sampling. As depicted below in Table 3, participants' profiles are presented to demonstrate their relevance in participating in the study and providing answers to the problem statement. The participants who agreed to be part of this study are staff members from the CEO to the specialist level, which is part of middle management.

Table 3: Profile of research participants

Study participants	Institution	Function	Interview date	Level
P01	Bank SETA	Strategy and Research	11 Mar 2022	Executive management
P02	W&R SETA	Operations Department	14 Mar 2022	Executive management
P03	W&R SETA	Strategic Planning & Performance Evaluation	14 Mar 2022	Middle Management
P04	W&R SETA	Office of the CEO	15 Mar 2022	Management level
P05	W&R SETA	Operations Department Provincial: Gauteng South	15 Mar 2022	Management level
P06	W&R SETA	Strategic Planning & Performance Evaluation (SPPE)	19 Mar 2022	Executive management
P07	W&R SETA	Information and communications technology (ICT)	17 Mar 2022	Executive management
P08	W&R SETA	Strategic Planning &	16 Mar 2022	Senior

		Performance Evaluation (SPPE)		Management
P09	INSETA	Office of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	08 Mar 2022	Executive management
P10	W&R SETA	Strategic Planning & Performance Evaluation (SPPE)	11 Mar 2022	Middle Management
P11	INSETA	Operations Department	23 Mar 2022	Management level
P12	W&R SETA	Office of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO)	18 Mar 2022	Executive management
P13	W&R SETA	Internal Audit	17 Mar 2022	Executive management
P14	W&R SETA	Corporate Services	25 Mar 2022	Management level

Source: Compiled by the researcher from results

Purposive or judgmental sampling was used for the study. Babbie (2010:188) defined purposive sampling as a type of sampling that happens when a sample is selected based on the knowledge the researcher has of a population, its elements, and the purpose of the study. In the study, Executive managers, managers, regional managers, specialists, and administrators from participating SETAs were selected because their understanding is not limited to operational aspects of the business, and they implement processes that feed into the strategic objectives of the SETA.

DeVos (2000:191) defines a sample as "a small portion of the total set of objects, events, or persons that together comprise the subject of the study". Sampling methods may include probability and non-probability techniques. In non-probability sampling designs, the elements in the population do not have any probabilities attached to their being chosen as sample subjects. Saunders, Thornhill, and Lewis (2009:214) suggest that "sampling is intended to get a sample population that is representative of the target population". In the beginning, the researcher sampled five SETAs intending to employ qualitative approaches to interview more than thirty participants. As stated in the study's limitations, only three SETAs and fourteen participants out of twenty-nine gave

their consent to participate. However, within the context of the qualitative method, fewer participants do not significantly alter the results when the target group is smaller than what was originally anticipated. The disadvantage, however, is that the researcher might forgo the chance to gather additional information about the M&E activity. Notwithstanding the said shortcomings, chapter four provides comprehensive findings, chapter five provides a discussion of each discovery, and chapter six provides overall conclusions and recommendations.

3.11. Sample size

Welman (2010:70) stated that the choice of sample size is normally governed by the general rule that says, "The larger the sample size, the lower the likely error in generalising to the population". However, Anderson (2010) observed that qualitative research requires small sample sizes because of the intensity of the work required to interpret and report on the collected data. Qualitative research sample sizes are, to a greater extent, about the quality of information than the number of participants. Also, the participants should be selected on the basis that they understand the field of research and can inform the research. The following two factors were considered when the size of the population was selected, as suggested by Welman *et al.* (2010:71):

1. While the sample size has to consider the sample population to ensure representatively, care should be taken that the sample size will have little effect on decreasing the standard error and the margin of error.
2. The size of the sample depends not only on the size of the population but also on the variance (heterogeneity) of the variable. As a general rule, Welman *et al.* (2010) suggested that the larger the variance, the larger the sample that is required.
3. If each stratum of a highly heterogeneous population is relatively homogeneous, a relatively smaller stratified sample may be sufficient. Welman *et al.* (2010:71) advised that if the strata differ in size and heterogeneity, they should adjust the size of the respective samples taken

from them accordingly, the smaller the stratum and/or the more heterogeneous it is, the larger the sample that should be drawn from it.

3.12 Data analysis

In this section, the researcher explains in detail the data analysis which was utilised in the study.

3.12.1 Qualitative data analysis

In qualitative research, information obtained from the participants is expressed descriptively, with emphasis placed on the stated experiences of the participants in each SETA. Merriam (2015) argues that qualitative data analysis is a very personal process with few rigid rules and procedures. Using this method, coded data was compared with the literature reviewed.

De Vos *et al.* (2011:397) defined qualitative data analysis as the process of creating order, structure, and meaning in the mass of raw data. The researcher also identified the trend and practice to be studied, namely, M&E tools and techniques, state-owned entities, service delivery, and concepts, principles, and process features of the phenomenon. Qualitative data analysis is an iterative and reflexive process that begins as data are collected rather than after data collection has ceased (Stake, 1995). To understand the situation in detail and to gain a holistic understanding of it, qualitative analysis is deemed appropriate (Ferreira, 1988; Neuman, 2000; Van Wyk *et al.*, 2006).

3.12.2 Data analysis methods

The researcher utilised acceptable qualitative data analysis methods that supported the literature. Furthermore, Aguayo (2020) demonstrated a different way of collecting and analyzing data utilizing qualitative methods using the eight criteria observed in one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews to "produce a richer interpretation" (Rabiee, 2004: 660):

1. Words

2. Content
3. Internal consistency
4. Frequency
5. Intensity of comments
6. Specificity of responses
7. Extensiveness
8. Big picture

The interview questions were open-ended, and thematic analysis was used to explore the information from them and hence the interpretation of the findings. The researcher followed the above-mentioned steps. Further, the coded data was compared with the literature reviewed. By doing this, the researcher was able to identify the trend and practice to be studied, which involved various tools and techniques utilised in the application of M&E. While the benefit associated with the use of the qualitative method has already been clarified, the researcher adopted descriptive information obtained from the participants, which was expressed descriptively, to present the results collected during the data collection process.

The researcher analysed the transcripts and written responses, and themes relevant to the study emerged. The study findings relating to the themes in Chapter 4 are presented as follows:

The first step is to obtain audio-recorded data from the MS Teams application and download transcribed documents that the application transcribed while recording.

1. The second step is to utilise the transcribed and written response data and arrange them according to themes that emerged from the collected data.
2. The last step is to analyse the content through summative content analysis.

3.12.3 Interpretive qualitative research

As highlighted in Chapter one, the researcher adopted the interpretive paradigm in epistemology to test perceived ontology. The methods used by interpretive researchers differ greatly from those of positivists; while positivist researchers start their research with a hypothesis, interpretivists use more open-ended research questions (Phothongsunan, 2010). However, Walsham (1993) argues that in the interpretive tradition, there are no 'correct' or 'incorrect' theories; instead, they should be judged according to how 'interesting' they are to the researcher as well as those involved in the same research areas.

By leveraging the key method of the interactive interview, which allows the researcher to investigate and prompt things that we cannot observe, researchers can probe an interviewee's thoughts, values, prejudices, perceptions, views, feelings, and perspectives (Wellington and Szczerbinski, 2007). However, one of the limitations is that the interpretivists aim to gain a deeper understanding and knowledge of phenomena within the complexity of the context rather than generalise these results to other people and other contexts. Cohen *et al.* (2011) Hence, it tends to leave a gap in verifying the validity and usefulness of research outcomes using scientific procedures (Pham, 2018).

3.13. Summary

This chapter presents a detailed discussion of the research methodology and design used in the research, which includes the population sample, data collection instruments, sampling strategies, and data analysis methods. The researcher discussed the research method in detail and explained how the research for the study was conducted. As stated above in paragraph 3.1, the researcher employed qualitative research methods to investigate the problem statement, which was to discover the governance tools used within the SETAs to enhance skills development. The research adopted constructivism and subjectivism as ontological orientations. In conclusion, this chapter describes trustworthiness and ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

4.1. Overview

This chapter presents the findings of the study on M&E as a governance tool to enhance service delivery by assessing how M&E is being implemented in the SETA towards enhancing skills development. The study participants were selected from three different SETA entities, represented by Bank SETA, INSETA, and W&RSETA. Two of the entities, namely Bank SETA and INSETA, do not have M&E as a department with staff members devoted to the M&E of the strategies and programs that are implemented. They are, however, performing these functions as part of an ancillary activity that requires a certain functional process to be completed.

4.2. Description of the research environment

According to Kumar (2016:286), a researcher must minimise the risk of harm to study participants so the discomfort created by the interview itself will not be greater than what the participants would experience on an ordinary day. Since the beginning of March 2020, South Africa and the global community have suffered the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. The researcher stated in Chapter three that the research would be conducted in the professional surroundings of each participant. However, within the context of COVID-19 and the risks associated with the disease, the researcher adopted technology to conduct interviews using Microsoft Teams (MS Teams), which has the same effect and quality as face-to-face interviews.

A major advantage of Microsoft Teams is that it can record and transcribe audio. In this study, the environment in which the interviews took place was familiar to the participants as it was a virtual platform at work or home, which thus allowed for very honest and frank discussions with a minimum of risk of physical contact with the participants. This was achieved in the current study. Most of the

participants were interviewed on Teams in their environment of choice, where privacy was guaranteed. Four participants agreed to be interviewed but cancelled a few hours and, in some cases, minutes before the scheduled time.

4.3. Ethics approval

When applying for ethical clearance from the Da Vinci Research Committee, the researchers addressed the potential risks associated with the study along with the potential benefits. The assurances provided by the researcher extend beyond protecting their names to also include the avoidance of using self-identifying statements and information. To this end, the Research Committee evaluated the application to make sure that the benefits of this study exceeded the potential harm. Subsequently, ethics approval was granted before the researcher started any of the research activities.

4.4. Outcomes from the study

Reliability can be defined as the level at which a data collection instrument is free from errors and ambiguity and yields consistent results (Sing and Jusoh, 2015; Huong, Anderson, Dunne, and Huong, 2015; Bolarinwa, 2015). The findings reported in this study are a true reflection of the views of the participants. It is for this reason that the researcher considered it reliable and valid. Reliability encompasses the consistency of the analytical processes, including taking into consideration any potential biases resulting from the research methods and personal viewpoints (Noble and Smith, 2015).

4.5. Findings

The findings and answers to the research questions are presented under five broad areas: 1) M&E functions; 2) M&E systems; 3) M&E readiness assessments; 4) governance and accountability; and 5) system approach. The researcher structured the interview questions into five broad areas to provide answers to individual study questions that are outlined in paragraph 1.11 in

Chapter One above. However, tables 4 to 8 below provide the originating themes with the sub-themes that have emerged from the interview answers:

4.5.1. How effective are the SETA mechanisms in applying M&E?

For the first research question, the researcher shares ten themes that emerged from the responses provided by the participants. The originating themes were consolidated to form one or two sub-themes to answer the research question. Table 4 below presents themes relating to the first research question.

Table 4. Originating themes in the first research question

Interview question subtopic	Originating themes	Sub-themes
1. M&E function supports the organisational mandate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The impact of the investment 2. The return on investment 	Theme 1: Value for money
2.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tracks performance against the targets 2. Annual contractual agreement 	Theme 2: Accountability
3. The extent of M&E activities on planned deliverables,	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Means of verification for success. 2. Monthly tracking is promoted. 3. Project time frames 	Theme 3: Means of verification and tracking
4. The readiness for planning and application of M&E	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Not able to effectively use outcomes of the M&E-related reports. 	Theme4: M&E Maturity
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Inflexible to capture and record. 2. Prone to human error and interference 	Theme 5: Processes and capacity
5. The effects of a credible M&E system	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Tool for decision-making 2. Performance information is verified. 	Theme 6: Decision making
	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accountability, Financial Management, Corruption, Project Management, and Service delivery 	Theme7: Accountability

	1. The governance challenges experienced by the SETAs	Theme 8: Impact and challenges
6. The governance challenges experienced by the SETAs	1. Lack of consequence management	Theme 9: Consequence management
7.	1. Effective accountability and decision-making 2. Non-conformances in reported performance information	Theme 10: Accountability and decision-making

Sources: Researcher's own compilation

What are the lessons learned from M&E practice within South Africa to date, and how can these contribute to the implementation strategy of M&E within SETAs?

Under the second research question, the researcher shares the five themes that emerged from the interview questions. Table 5 below provides themes relating to the second research question.

Table 5. Originating themes in the second research question

Interview question subtopic	Originating themes	Sub-themes
1. Utilisation of M&E systems to enhance skills development	1. Simplifies decision-making. 2. Organisational culture 3. Organisational Strategies	Theme 11: Decision-making and organisational culture
	1. Change Management 2. Improved governance and delivery policies and processes 3. Quality of evaluation	Theme 12: Policy and Change management
2. The link between M&E systems and performance management.	1. Direct link to performance management and M&E 2. Dissemination, and use of performance management. 3. Design the strategy of an organisation,	Theme 13: Performance management

3. Government effectiveness	1. Government effectiveness	Government effectiveness
Protection of property rights is included in the rule of law.	1. Protection of property rights is included in the rule of law.	Protection of property rights is included in the rule of law.

Sources: Researcher's own compilation

4.5.2. What are the lessons learned from the M&E within the country to date and how can these contribute to implementation strategy in SETAs?

Under the third research question, the researcher shares the three themes that emerged from the interview questions. The originating themes were also consolidated to form the three sub-themes that attempt to answer the research question. Table 6 below provides themes relating to the third research question.

Table 6. Originating themes in the third research question

Interview question subtopic	Originating themes	Sub-themes
1. M&E resources.	1. Have policies and procedures. 2. Workshopped with employees constantly	Theme 16: Policies and procedures
2. Leadership support for the M&E system.	1. Budget 2. Higher structures of the organisation 3. Governance structure	Theme 17: Budget and organisational structure
3. Information from the M&E systems used in decision-making.	1. Organisational performance	Theme 18: Human Capacity

Sources: Researcher's own compilation

4.5.3. What are the quality controls in project implementation and improvements for effective M&E processes?

However, in the fourth research question, the researcher shares the four themes that emerged from the interview questions. Table 7 below provides themes relating to the fourth research question.

Table 7. Originating themes in the fourth research question

Interview question subtopic	Originating themes	Sub-themes
1. Corporate governance in the SETAs.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Promotes corporate governance principles. Regulate its governance. 	Theme 19: Corporate governance
2.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Rely upon the assurance levels. 	Theme 20: Assurance
3.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Lack of Information hampers the implementation of oversight. 	Theme21: Oversight and stakeholder engagement
4. Implementation of M&E systems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Improved M&E in the SETA has led to improvement in audit outcomes. Accountability 	Theme 22: Lack of structure and accountability

Sources: Researcher’s own compilation

4.5.4. Which recommendations contribute to new knowledge about M&E?

The fifth research question produced five themes that emerged from the interview questions. Table 8 below provides themes relating to the fifth research question.

Table 8. Originating Themes in the fifth research question

Interview question subtopic	Originating themes	Sub-themes
1. Conflicts within the SETA in respect of the M& E systems.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Incorrect interpretation of Technical Description of Indicators Knowledge gaps, Champions, Budget, and Territoriality 	Theme 23: Inaccuracy
2.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> The political will to implement M&E. 	Theme24: Political will and

	2. The capacitation sessions	capacity
3. The essential aspects to guide the future of SETAs.	1. Implement performance-based budgeting, 2. Communication is critical.	Theme 25: Performance-based budgeting
4.	1. Policies, and processes organisation wide.	Theme 26: Communication and performance culture
5.	1. Committed workforce. 2. Consequence management 3. Conducting comparative analysis	Theme 27: Consequence management

Sources: Researcher's own compilation

4.6. Research questions: data analysis and results

The main research questions are individually explored in this section. Some of the theoretical presumptions made by the researcher are validated by actual data. Graphs that simply include the information gathered from the questionnaires are used to illustrate the results.

4.6.1. How effective are the seta mechanisms in applying M&E?

To answer the first study question, the researcher structured the interview questions to cover five key areas focusing on governance and management tools applied to enable M&E function within the three sampled SETAs:

- a) M&E functions support the organisational mandate.
- b) The level of M&E activities on planned deliverables.
- c) The readiness for the preparation and execution of M&E
- d) The effects of a credible system of M&E.
- e) The governance difficulties experienced by SETAs.

The themes originating from the interview questions covered under the five key areas are discussed under each sub-topic from paragraph 4.5.1.1 to 4.5.5.2.

4.6.1.1. M&E function supports the organisational mandate.

The first interview question was structured in the sub-theme, which focused on how the M&E function supports the organisational mandate in terms of the Skills Development Act, which governs the SETAs. Some participants highlighted how the M&E function could assist the organisation in the achievement of the strategic objectives, while other participants highlighted the institutional capacity as a major hindrance to the effective implementation of the M&E activities.

Theme 1: Value for money

The suggestion by Kaplan *et al.* (2010) is supported by participant P09, who draws a link between the evaluations of performance and the strategic planning outcome to enhance the achievement of the desired strategic outcomes. The public sector's strategic planning sets priorities that are monitored through quarterly reporting to the DHET as an Executive authority headed by the Minister, who exercises an oversight role within his portfolio.

To enhance organisational efficiency, strategic objectives are broken down into annual performance plans with specific targets and timelines. Monitoring these plans against their timelines enables the evaluation of the results during and after the implementation of the strategy. Participant 08, in a written response, elaborated on how the M&E is supporting the achievement of the calculated plan by tracking the performance against the set objectives.

Theme 2: Accountability

"The SETA tracks performance against the targets set in the annual performance plans (APP) using the quarterly performance report system of the DPME. The system is called the Electronic Quarterly Performance Reporting System (EQPRS). In addition to the quarterly performance reports against the APP targets, the SETA monitors performance against the Service Level Agreement using information from the eQPRS.

The DHET also has a system where certain targets should be reported every quarter. The SETA has, however, not reached a point where performance against programs and projects is tracked. Thus, M&E only focuses on the targets against the APP." (P08, March 16, 2022)

Skills development is provided as part of funded programs by the participating SETA in a regulated partnership with various stakeholders, such as participating employers and learners who receive structured training. The different types of workplace training provided by the participating employers form part of the annual performance plan to be monitored and evaluated throughout the financial year. In a written response, P10 elaborated in detail on how the monitoring and evaluation within the SETA are supporting skills development as the primary mandate of the SETA.

There are various ways that the W&RSETA carries out the M&E function to track the progress of the skills development interventions that they carry out. These obligations are carried out in an annual contractual agreement (annual performance plans and service level agreements) with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The targets are implemented throughout the country:

- 1. Provincial offices Within the regional offices, there are project coordinators,*
- 2. ISDFs: The SETAs make use of contracted Independent Skills Development Facilitators to conduct project monitoring visits. (Evaluation has been a separate component if entertained at all.)*
- 3. Project Owners and- Project Leads are expected to conduct project monitoring visits quarterly, to comply with payment requirements.*
- 4. M&E Unit: This newly formed unit conducts M&E on all W&RSETA current projects.(P10, March, 11,h 2022)*

Participant 06, however, was not convinced that the M&E was utilised to support the mandate of the SETA and attributed this to the immaturity of the M&E function.

So, it's not playing a supporting role at the moment in the organisation in the form of monitoring and evaluating projects, programs, and policies in terms of how those policies have been implemented and evaluated.

So, your question... It's quite interesting because now I see something as well that I didn't see before that the relationship with the QMS is paramount, and that's why it was structured together in the organisation because the QMS is the quantitative leg of M&E. But you know if you look at policies, for example,

The M&E business unit should be accessing those policies and monitoring their implementation, and then I won't get issues where I'm told that a certain policy is being ignored by the provinces. It's because then that business unit will pick it up through a monitoring process of implementation. So, I'm afraid to say that at this moment in the history of the organisation, the M&E unit's implementation plan is still at an immature level. (P06, March 19, 2022)

Participant 03's views are supported by Naidoo's suggestion that M&E can improve skills development by ensuring that the ROI on the invested funds is tracked to ensure accountability and support service delivery.

"Yeah, sure. So, the activities and functions of M&E are central to the role of the SETA in terms of the skills development mandate, wherein we have to continuously track the beneficiaries and monitor the return on investment and needs. The annual plan we are implementing yearly, uh, it's also, I mean, should be part and parcel of the M&E activities and functions, yeah." (P03, March 14, 2022)

The delivery of the skills development is divided into program targets to be attained by the financial year's end. However, programs are measured through the evaluation of performance against the set target. Performance measurement has also been equated to 'evaluation' (Van Dooren and Thijs 2010:10) or M&E. The demand and requirement for performance have existed since time

immemorial; that is, they are as old as public administration itself (Pollitt and Bouckaert 2011:106). The study supports the comments of participant 10, who draws the link between the performance of the project and the evaluation through a site visit:

These obligations are carried out in an annual contractual agreement (APP and SLA) with the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET). The targets are implemented throughout the country. There are provincial offices within the regional offices, project coordinators, and ISDFs. The SETAs make use of contracted independent skills development facilitators to conduct project monitoring visits. Evaluation has been a separate component if entertained at all. (P10:11, March 2022)

Further studies affirm that properly implemented M&E ensures credible, accurate, useful, and verifiable performance information, as well as auditable data in the organisation. Evidence from studies supports Participant 14's assertions that link effective M&E implementation to credibility, accuracy, and verifiable performance information. In a written response, the participants stated that:

The M&E within the W&RSETA space ensures credible, accurate, useful, and verifiable performance information, as well as auditable data in the organisation. The M&E within the W&RSETA space ensures alignment between input records and output records. To achieve the above activities, the W&RSETA invests in the following interventions to ensure the effective execution of the M&E initiatives: (P14, March 25, 2022)

4.6.1.2. The level of M&E activities on planned deliverables, outputs, and outcomes of projects.

Skills development projects are implemented through the occupational training of unemployed learners who are placed with several participating employers in the multiple disciplines registered with the SETA. These projects are aligned to the strategic outcome of the respective SETA and are broken down in the annual

performance plan (APP) with specific strategic outcome indicators to be achieved in every financial year.

Amongst other functions of the M&E, it is to provide information on the performance of a specific strategic outcome that needs management. These are red flags highlighted by the evaluation process. Participants were asked to what extent the planned deliverables, outputs, and outcomes of projects and programs are monitored and evaluated. To this end, some participants painted a picture that shed light on the extent and frequency of projects and program M&E.

The extent of the M&E program is measured through the frequency and performance of the implementation of the strategic outcomes. Participant 09 acknowledged that the APP was monitored and evaluated within INSETA; however, it was performed by an independent division that did not get involved in program or project implementations. Participant 01 had reservations about the extent of the M&E activities on projects and programs and whether the planned deliverables were at the level where the SETA derived maximum value; hence, he provided suggestions on how the activities should be performed.

Theme 3: Means of Verification and Tracking

- 1. Therefore, as a student of result-based monitoring and evaluation, we should design a program in such a way that we know how to define success and failure. Then, as such, we will have, you know, the data sources that will pass; what are the means of verification for success? And what would be the means of verification for failure?*
- 2. Therefore, that is how I believe. The design of integrated M&E touches on several issues but only looks at meeting the targets. Qualitative research is to check whether meeting those kinds of targets means meeting objectives and the success of the program that was planned.*
- 3. Therefore, that is a strategy that I always advocate. You know, people were doing program design, and two people were implementing programs*

because it didn't help us to focus on meeting targets. (P01, March 11, 2022).

Participants 08 and 09 shared the observations made on the M&E of the projects, ranging from a monthly to a quarterly basis. The monthly and quarterly evaluations confirm evidence shared by several scholars on the time-bound interventions. Participant 08 added that no formal structure guides the frequency of monitoring activities; hence, it is done haphazardly.

Monitoring of performance against targets is set in the APP and SLA and is conducted formally every quarter, although monthly tracking is promoted, where departments and business units are requested to report performance monthly instead of waiting for the end of the quarter. Program and project M&E are conducted haphazardly, as no office facilitates M&E at that level. Project managers monitor their performance, although there is a Board Projects Committee. It is therefore difficult for the SETA to manage the risks associated with project failure. (P08, March 16, 2022)

Participant 10 linked the project monitoring to risks that might materialise and disturb the proper implementation of the project. The risk SETAs are exposed to is in the implementation of a skills development project with millions of Rands in each SETA being processed through the payment of stipends to learners as the primary stakeholders. These are the areas where corruption risk materialises due to project money being diverted and blocking the achievement of desired results due to ineffective monitoring of activities.

As project schedules are designed, the M&E activity is built in at regular intervals as a deliverable within the listed project tasks. In the real world, the project schedules almost always don't happen as planned, and this always poses a risk to either the project's life span, quality, budget, or reaching the desired target. Mitigating tasks are also built in to mitigate these anticipated risks, but these are hardly ever enough to combat them. Most of the risks are those that are not listed in the risk plan, therefore

becoming issues." Monitoring is conducted quarterly by the M&E unit, as are the regional project visits that serve to pay stipends from mandatory and discretionary grants. P10, 11 March 2022)

Charles *et al.* (2015) note that project M&E exercises add value to the overall efficiency of project planning, management, and implementation by offering corrective action to the variances from the expected standard. Participant 14 provided a written response that highlighted the reputation of project M&E informed by the project planning up to the implementation. This was done to ensure that the project was fully implemented to the satisfaction of stakeholders and to allow management to take corrective action where it was lagging. Participant 14's written response:

1. *Projects are scoped before their initiation; therein, project time frames are set out and agreed to by all parties to the project.*
2. *After project scoping sessions are finalised, project agreements are concluded, wherein the agreements as captured in the project's charters are translated into legal obligations. This includes the setting of deliverables and payments linked to the said deliverables per tranche.*
3. *These agreements are drafted to govern the application of the policies and procedures of the W&RSETA.*
4. *Before the payment of the invoices, which are reflective of the tranche breakdown of the agreements, the monitoring of learners and the deliverables are verified using M&E interventions to ensure that what is being invoiced for is ultimately paid. Where the stakeholder has not met the deliverables per the contract, the concerned invoice will not be paid until compliance is achieved. (P14, March,25,h 2022)*

4.6.1.3. The readiness for the preparation and execution of an M&E system

To ensure that their personal biases or assumptions did not influence the nature of subjective inferences drawn from research, several participants chose to adopt a "neutral" or impartial attitude. To this end, out of the total population (N = 14), 43% (N = 6) of the participants opted to be neutral, while 36% (N = 5) indicated that M&E readiness was decent, while 7% rated the readiness as poor (N = 1), fair (N = 1), and excellent (N = 1), respectively. However, it is important to note that the total sample size in this study is N = 14, and 43% is only about 6 out of the said total population of 14. The Policy Framework for Government-wide M&E (2007:3) required that the scale of monitoring and evaluation reflect the purpose, risk level, and available resources.

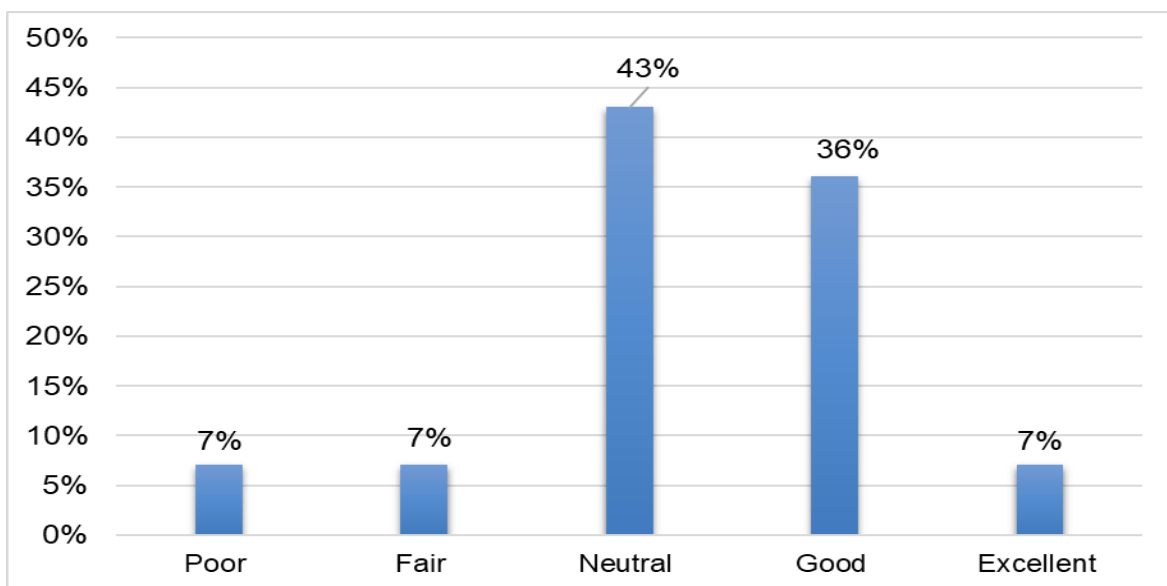


Figure 14: The rate of preparedness planning and execution of the M&E system (N=14) (Source: researcher's own compilation)

Dipela and Mohapi (2021) suggested that in most community projects, M&E is not effective because there is no early preparation for it. Sometimes, this stems from the fact that M&E operations are not integrated into the planning phase of the community program or project. Participant 03 opted to be neutral in the rating of the willingness of the planning and application of M&E and cited a lack of effective use of the M&E-related reports and a lack of integration of planning up

to the execution of the project management to support the strategic objective of the organisation.

Theme 4: M&E maturity

We are not able to effectively use the outcomes of the M&E-related reports and tracer studies to improve our understanding of skills development because we don't understand the value chain in terms of project management, execution, and supporting initiatives that are aimed at making the organisation better. (P03, 14 March 2022)

When asked to rate willingness for the planning and application of M&E systems, Participant 08 indicated that SETA's readiness to plan and execute M&E is good. The participant attributed a good rating to the fact that M&E within the W&RSETA had been tested and there was evidence that it was supporting the developed indicators and operational plan, which ensured the accomplishment of outcomes and outputs. Building the M&E system requires the ability to successfully construct indicators, collect, aggregate, analyse, and report on project performance based on the indicators and project objectives (Kusek, 2011:3).

Theme 5: Processes and capacity

The SETA already has processes in place for M&E that have been tested. The fact that the SETA has a strategy and an annual plan that outline the outcomes, outputs, indicators, and targets demonstrates readiness to execute the M&E system. In addition, the SETA develops operational plans, which provide activities that are conducted to achieve the outputs and outcomes. (Good) (P08, 16 March 2022)

There was a willingness by the SETA at the Board and Executive levels to construct a result-based M&E system, although the rate of implementation was slow. The capacity would, however, need to be looked at since there were some gaps. Participant 10 was convinced that the readiness to plan and implement M&E was fair and attributed this to evidence that the organisation's capacity and

tools, such as the template, were not ready to collect accurate information since they had not changed throughout the financial years with the changes that the SETA had been undergoing over time.

The template: using a single template that is antiquated. The template has been in use for over 10 years and has been inflexible to capture and record different nuances of individual projects and scenarios. It was designed for a different era and has not changed over time with the changes that the SETA has been undergoing. (Fair) (P10, March 11, 2022)

Participant 07 thought that M&E's readiness for planning and implementation was poor due to a lack of capacity to utilise automated mechanisms, which had minimal possibilities of human error.

We are still manually intensive in terms of data gathering, which is prone to human error and interference, so the data source across the organisation is unknown; however, the data input is dependent on their capacity and capacity of data capture at the regions. (P07, March 17, 2022)

4.6.1.4. The results of a credible M&E system to maintain business governance requirements.

Participant 01 suggested that the execution of credible M&E would assist the organisation in making an informed decision based on the evidence emanating from the M&E process.

To this end, governance structures such as the Board and the management team relied on the tools that were developed for data collection to build evidence that supported good governance. The comments by Participant 01 were supported by Mackay (2011) suggestion that evidence-based decisions enhance accountability and sound governance.

Theme 6: Decision-Making

I mean, it is used as a tool for decision-making by both the Board and the management. Furthermore, M&E has a data collection process. Therefore, it helps you to make evidence or to apply evidence-centered decision-making. Based on the information coming from the M&E, organisations can implement what is commonly known as evidence-based decision-making. Therefore, that is why Bank SETA should have a comprehensive and integrated M&E. (P01, March 11, 2022)

The views of Participant 03 were also aligned with the views of Participant 01, who linked the results of a credible M&E system to decision-making about accountability, governance, financial management, and the achievement of strategic goals on which governance structures had a fiduciary duty to provide oversight.

"We must understand that indecision is a decision; you know, a day we take in terms of deciding does have implications in terms of the project management. And will lead us in terms of achieving or not achieving our strategic goals, which in turn will have implications in terms of the type of service delivery we are offering to our stakeholders. And I think above all, accountability and financial management are the pillars of what we want to achieve. (P03, March 14, 2022)

A theory of change is also called the program's theory of action (Patton 2008:352). Developing a theory of change would normally involve carrying out some analysis of the forces that have the potential to affect any desired outcomes (Jones, 2011). In the final analysis, therefore, the real benefit of the Theory of Change method is that it builds capacity for purposeful theory and its effective use. Effective use and capacity building revolve around the production of performance information that is verified, thereby ensuring credibility, completeness, and reliability. When performance information is credible, complete, and reliable, it makes it easy for the information to enable informed decision-making and determine how the budget should be allocated. Participant

08 covered many aspects that may be attributed to the theory of change outcomes that the SETA could utilise to support corporate governance requirements.

Theme 7: Accountability

A credible M&E system will ensure that reported performance information is verified, thereby ensuring credibility, completeness, and reliability. When performance information is credible, complete, and reliable, it makes it easy for the information to inform decision-making and determine how the budget should be allocated. A credible M&E system also assists in determining the return on investment based on all programs of the SETA, which assists in the SETA deciding on which areas should continue to receive allocations. (P08, March 16, 2022)

Informed decision-making depends on the quality of the processed data that was generated from multiple processes in the SETAs. These depend on how policies and programs are performed in the respective business units. This is the area where effective M&E activity is well positioned to enable the achievement of accurate data production. Participant 09's views are aligned with those voiced by Mackay (2011)' through suggestions that link the application of M&E to the improvement of information in the organisation.

A credible M&E framework enables the SETA to account for the investment it makes in its programs, promotes high performance, measures the contribution of the SETA towards its mandate, and provides information on value for money and impact in the sector. (P09, March 8, 2022)

Good governance and accountability are critical ingredients for effective service delivery and transparency, especially where public funds are utilised. External stakeholders tend to be more satisfied with the results emanating from the service rendered by the public institution if the same institution can demonstrate an acceptable level of transparency on the funds spent. In answering the

question about what participants understand the effects of a credible M&E system are likely to be on your SETA to support corporate governance requirements, P10 indicated several activities that talk to M&E systems:

1. **Accountability** is a continuous effort that must be made by organisations to improve their M&E functions, assist in attaining respectable governance and advance the service distribution mandate.
2. **Decision making.** Public sector entities are held back by over-regulation, which is a necessary evil necessitated by the many scandals of corruption. Indecision or decisions not communicated timely destroy employee morale.
3. **Financial Management.** A well-planned project with an M&E that fits that project can help implement projects better.
4. A well-executed M&E plan can circumvent any wrongdoing, intentional or unintentional.
5. **Project Management.** The project management environment also requires constant M&E as part of successful project implementation and target achievement.
6. **Service delivery.** Service delivery is about changing lives and making meaningful changes in people's lives, particularly the economics of historically disaffected individuals through skills development.
7. **Achievement of strategic goals** This M&E unit assists management in tracking where the organisational performance is at, using the M&E-assessed results(P10, March,11,h2022).)

Within South Africa's context, the government implemented several different programs to eliminate the 'triple challenge' of poverty, inequality, and

unemployment by the year 2030 (National Development Plan, 2012,1). The National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS) fed into the National Development

Plan (NDP) with the primary objective of eliminating the triple challenge of poverty, inequality, and unemployment through the implementation of skills development. The challenge has always been an accurate assessment of the results emanating from the application of programs and policies that are undergoing implementation by various state organs. Participant 12 attempted to unpack how policies and programs were being monitored and evaluated to provide information and impactful assurance for the SETA's implementation of the strategic planning document.

Theme 8: Impact and Challenges

It ensures that the resources have been directed to the intended programs and are yielding the intended plans; moreover, it provides impactful assurance for the mandate of the SETA.

- 1. W&RSETA has put together an M&E team that meets bi-monthly to discuss the growth in the execution of M&E objectives.*
- 2. A team has appointed a service provider, who has come on Board to assist with the advancement of the M&E framework. The concerned service provider has completed the development of the respective framework and has also workshopped it with the management team and all staff.*
- 3. The process of implementing the said framework is underway. Even the strategic documents of the organisations are implemented in line with the said framework.*
- 4. Now the organisation is in the process of appointing another service provider to assist with the development of an online or automated M&E monitoring tool for the developed framework that will assist with the monitoring of M&E across the entire organisation. (P12, March, 18, h 2022)*

4.6.1.5. The governance challenges experienced by the SETAs.

The recent state capture commission reports, as reported in the media, name corruption and non-compliance with policies that seek to enhance good governance as various challenges confronting the community sphere. Several SETAs that were placed under administration were part of government institutions exposed to corruption risks that reduced government capacity to render service delivery to the communities that needed it most.

Theme 9: Consequences of Management

Budgets, Human Resources, Governance, Regulatory Environment, and M&E Challenges experienced by the SETA at this point:

1. *Enforcement of consequence management is not adequate.*
2. *The creation of policy environments is effective, however, the communication and education on the policies are lagging, thus creating a labour law nightmare when we have to enforce them.*
3. *The creation of the compliance universe is lacking in the organisation.*
4. *The risk management of the organisation is not considered adequately in matters of governance.*
5. *The circulation of critical minutes when governance structures make decisions is not adequate.*
6. *There is a lack of understanding of the government that permeates various business units.*
7. *There are no service levels agreements and targets among units, therefore delays are experienced at that level, frustrating governance implementation.*

8. *M&E within the governance systems of W&RSETA is still in its infancy, therefore it needs to be greatly elevated so that its importance is adhered to. (P10, March, 11, h 2022)*

W&RSETA has recently implemented the recommendations of the organisational development (OD) study, which resulted in several existing positions being affected positively and negatively. Staff members who were negatively affected by the OD study included those who were relocated to other provinces or those who were placed in new positions with less expertise to execute the tasks at hand. These challenges were highlighted by Participant 09 when providing answers to the questions about governance challenges faced by the SETAs.

Implementation of the newly approved structure to capacitate the top levels for effective accountability and decision-making (P09, March 8, 2022)

Rationally, what the institutional theory model proposes is that structures and the code of conduct that govern the government play a major role in the different kinds of policy processes that take place and eventually how policy role-players will be influential in those policy processes (Kraft and Furlong, 2013:81). Participant 08 noted malicious compliance, a lack of compliance on the performance information, and a lack of proper implementation of the APP as some of the governance challenges within the SETA' space. The major challenge, such as a lack of compliance, results in poor information being relied on for decision-making. Evidence from available research reveals that the challenges mentioned above contribute to poor skill development in various programs offered by the SETA.

Theme 10: Accountability and Decision-Making

1. *It has been observed through monitoring activities that staff participate in monitoring activities for compliance purposes. Thus, performance information reporting is done because there is a requirement to do so and not because there is a willingness to do so.*

2. *This is evident due to a rising number of non-conformances in reported performance information, where relevant information that should be loaded to support reported information is not loaded. In addition, the quarterly performance trends show that employees do not follow the quarterly targets as set in the APP when implementing programs.*
3. *Instead, they wait for the 4th quarter to start implementing programs, which negatively monitor activities. (P08, March 16, 2022)*

4.6.2. What are the lessons learned from M&E practice within South Africa to date, and how can these contribute to the execution strategy of M&E within SETAs?

4.6.2.1. Utilising M&E systems to develop skills.

M&E capacity building deals with the progression of successful M&E systems: systems that are sufficiently independent to be externally credible and socially legitimate; systems that influence policymaking and are sustainable over time; and systems that are responsive to the needs of clients and main stakeholders.

Theme 11: Decision-making and organisational culture

An effective M&E system simplifies decision-making. The SETA will benefit from implementing an M&E system, as it will enable the leadership to make informed decisions on plans and areas of delivery using performance information as a basis. (P08, March 16, 2022)

Participant 09 suggests that the organisational culture that is driven by effective change management is more likely to get buy-in from staff members, which in turn would make it possible for effective M&E's enhancement of accountability and improved performance. The process of gathering information that is fit for purpose relies heavily on an effective M&E system that produces credible and accurate information for informed decision-making. In answering the question on the utilisation of M&E, Participant 09 stated:

A business culture concentrated on better delivery of services Influencing people to change is much better than forcing change. Therefore, with effective M&E, one will be able to influence people to account for and improve their performance. (P09, March 8, 2022)

Participant 09 further suggested that there should be communication to prepare staff for change management, which is aimed at getting support for the execution of M&E. These were the sentiments that were shared by Participant 10, who elaborated on the function of M&E in change management together with organisational culture, amongst other activities. The performance information generated from monitoring enhances dialogue, learning from experience, and improved decision-making. (World Meteorological Organisation, 2012:14). Participant 10 provided a comprehensive written response on how the M&E system would aid the SETA in completing service delivery and skills development.

Five areas of focus were highlighted, as follows:

1. ***Organisational Strategies and Policies***

The organisation is following the National Development Strategy (NDP 2030) and its sub-policies.

2. ***Information Management***

The circulation of information internally is managed through a singular department, in partnership with the IT department or the CEO's office.

3. ***Change Management***

Change in organisations can come in different ways, shapes, or forms.

4. ***The position of M&E in change management***

If M&E is not incorporated to measure the before, mid, and after of the processes, if not properly implemented, some people in the organisation may be found lost and feeling helpless, with no one noticing the damage being done. Organisational culture (OC), on the other hand, is something that cannot be taught.

5. **Administrative Leadership**

An organisational culture where employees feel heard and valued will defend the entity even in the most trying times. (P10, March 11, 2022)

In responding to the question, participant 14 suggested that there is a relationship between the M&E function and the compliance activities wherein policies, processes, ethical practices, and independent assessment would add value to the organisation.

Theme 12: Policies and change management

On the issue of the M&E systems assisting the SETA in attaining service delivery and skills development, I submit that the M&E systems would assist the SETA in the following facets:

1. *M&E would contribute to improved governance with the SET.*
2. *M&E would ensure that the creation of the policies and processes is rights-based labour statutes and constitution adherence to provisions that regulate human rights as well as the POPI Act.)*
3. *The M&E would ensure that delivery policies and processes and delivery itself are development-oriented (nationally, provincially, institutionally, and locally.)*
4. *M&E will ensure that they are conducted and undertaken ethically with integrity.*
5. *M&E measures will ensure that they are pragmatic.*
6. *M&E measures will ensure that they are methodologically sound and operationally effective.*
7. *Furthermore, the M&E implemented effectively will ensure that there is independence, and the quality of evaluation will improve the credibility of findings when the assessment of its application is assessed.*

8. *There may be a need for different types of evaluations where necessary.*
(P14, 255 March 2022)

4.6.2.2. The link between M&E systems and performance management

It is established that M&E of accountability is closely associated with auditing, compliance, and performance management (Albusaidi, 2018:7) and plays a crucial role in promoting oversight, which exists when citizens hold the government accountable for the use of funds and performance on programs (Cook, 2006). Within the SETA environment, projects revolve around learners. It is for this reason that when projects that are aligned to the strategic objectives of the respective SETA are implemented, the outputs are service delivery managed as a project through performance management. Supported by Albusaidi (2018:7), participants 09 and 10 affirmed that the link between performance and M&E exists.

Theme 13: Performance Management

There is a direct link between performance management and M&E, and this is where the core functions coincide with support functions. The strategic plan is cascaded down to the divisional and operational plans to support the mandate of the organisation. (P09, March 8, 2022)

In response to the question, Participant 10 highlighted that performance within the organisation was not coordinated in a manner that supported the achievement of desired results, which effectively hampered skills development. However, after the utilisation of M&E, the organisation started experiencing performance improvement.

A link exists between systems of M&E and the SETA's performance management, dissemination, and use of performance management. This shows that the linkage between implementers of targets and projects, the submission of evidence, and the performance management team was

non-existent. The introduction of the M&E component is starting to yield desirable results. (P10, March 11, 2022)

We have a performance management policy where we should see what we do, how effective it is, and how efficient we are as an organisation. When you design the strategy of an organisation, it will come up with a combination of how it is monitored. Then every division for every program listed in logical frameworks should have your data sources. (P01, March 11, 2022)

Participant 14 provided a detailed written response on how he understood the link between the M&E systems and performance. His views were aligned with those of Kimaro, Fourie, and Tshiyoyo (2018:109).

A link exists between the system of M&E and the management of performance practices in the organisation.

- 1. The SETA performance management system is quantitative as it has predetermined numbers to be attained by the organisation targets).*
- 2. Thus, when the said targets and budget are approved the system of M&E to be applicable is also assessed for appropriateness.*
- 3. A wide distribution of the approved annual performance plans report is undertaken by the organisation, but where we still need some work is to workshop the entire organisation on the importance of the M&E system.*
- 4. It is further important to note that M&E systems are not static or stationary. There needs to be an element of agility adopted that can fuse to changes in circumstances with the M&E system (e.g., COVID-19). M&E systems were forcefully improved, but their changes were not communicated effectively or even documented.*
- 5. Compliance measurement within the framework and systems needs to be better managed. (P14, March,25,h 2022)*

4.6.2.3. Stakeholder participation in the M&E processes

Results-based systems of M&E are a powerful community management instrument for helping governments and organisations demonstrate impacts and outcomes to their respective stakeholders and gain public support (Kusek and Rist, 2004: 26). In line with Kusek and Rist (2004), participant 08 suggested that the application of an M&E system within the organisation helps to demonstrate impacts and outcomes at the level of reporting performance results to the diversity of stakeholders.

Theme 14: Stakeholder Engagement

Oversight (DHET, DPME, Parliament, National Treasury): These stakeholders are active participants in M&E processes as they receive feedback on the M&E activities. Levy-paying companies, employers, and beneficiaries (HETs, TVETs, CETs, learners, SMMEs, cooperatives, bursars, etc.) are also the primary stakeholders of the SETA.

Employers are active participants in the M&E processes as they are required to provide M&E information on the programs that they implement in partnership with the SETA or on behalf of the SETA. They are given feedback on an annual basis through an annual performance report at general meetings (AGM). (P08, March 16, 2022)

Participant 01 reiterated the importance of bringing the status quo of the project's weaknesses and strengths to the Board to enable an effective oversight role as one of the stakeholders within the SETA.

Yes, it is for the Board to make the right decisions for the organisation. Remember, the operations business unit staff members do not always know what is given or what is going on in the organisation. Therefore, it is important sometimes to bring the Board up and present the status quo of the project's weaknesses and your strengths in terms of what you were and indicate if you need to change gears. (P01, March 11, 2022)

Recently, stakeholders and public opinion have been promoted to the extent of advocating proposals for the inclusion of performance indicators that measure the 'trust' of the public or citizenry towards their government. Kimaro *et al.* (2018:115) Participant 08 agreed with the views shared by Kimaro *et al.*(2018) that there should be regular feedback to the stakeholders in a manner that would promote advocacy on the performance information, which in turn enhanced trust between the organisation and the stakeholders.

The information from M&E activities is shared with stakeholders every quarter for oversight structures such as DPME, DHET, the Board, the Audit Committee, and EXCOM. Stakeholders of the SETA, who are levy-paying companies, receive M&E information on an annual basis through Annual Performance Reports that are presented at the Annual General Meeting (AGM) and published on the SETA's website.

The timeframes for sharing M&E information need not change, as explained above. For internal stakeholders, however (i.e., employees of the SETA), M&E information should be shared at a monthly interval, as this serves as an early warning where there are risks of not achieving certain targets. Currently, the information is shared every week only in quarter 4, and this practice should not only apply in quarter 4 but all quarters. (P08, March 16, 2022)

Management of multiple stakeholders through the use of M&E is a complex process that needs a structured approach to cater to different interest groups. The written response by Participant 09 is aligned with the suggestions by Kimaro *et al.* (2018) on the complexity of stakeholder management.

Theme 15: Annual Performance Plan

Employees of INSETA, employers in the sector, HEIs, TVETs, professional bodies, associations, organized labour, and the public are among the critical stakeholders of the SETA. The focus currently is on information linked to the SP/APP that is linked to the M&E system;

INSETA wants to improve such that this is applied universally across all business functions. (P09, March 8, 2022)

An effective M&E system equipped with these three dimensions is well-positioned to provide decision-makers and other relevant stakeholders with relevant information and evidence in the process of development action preparation, implementation, and capitalization. (Ba, 2021). However, it has proved difficult to achieve optimal coordination and avoid duplication of activities among the core M&E stakeholders. To this end, Participant 14 suggested that some of the hindrances to M&E implementation emanated from inadequate knowledge by the stakeholders, and less interest was expressed in the process itself. In this regard, the optimal coordination of M&E activities has, according to the reviewed literature, been difficult.

The organisation's key stakeholders are all the wholesalers and retailers in the sector and the learners, whom W&RSETA seeks to empower and capacitate through various learning interventions.

- 1. It is my opinion that at this stage we have an autocratic approach as far as M&E is concerned, no input is solicited as far as the advancement of the system of M&E is concerned.*
- 2. However, when the M&E process is carried out, they are explained and are just participants.*
- 3. It should be remembered that most of the learners we seek to empower are not educated, thus their understanding of what we seek to do can only be best explained hoping that they will understand. That, too, is a hindrance to the full application of the M&E system.*
- 4. Where the wholesale and retail are concerned, they are partially interested in the process for various reasons (e.g., tax rebates, time of year constraints, only interested in the capacity of the employed learner nothing else) (P014, 25 March 2022).*

4.6.3. What are the current trends in governance and M&E strategies being implemented?

4.6.3.1. M&E resources

Effective and guided implementation of M&E requires well-documented policies and procedures that ensure that end users and interested stakeholders are informed on how the implementation will affect their projects or programs. It is evident from the interviews that the three SETAs do have policies and procedures that are applied as management instruments to oversee various programs and projects within the entity. Participant 01 reiterated that Bank SETA does have policies and procedures that direct efforts in the implementation of the M&E. Several participants confirmed that there were policies in place in both Bank SETA and W&RSETA; however, their views on whether staff members were aware of those policies and procedures varied.

Theme 16: Policies and procedures

Therefore, we have policies and procedures, and we have ways of interpreting, implementing, and monitoring those by pulling the policy implementation from such kinds of sources. We have rules, management tools, and policies. (P01, March 11, 2022)

Participant 08 stressed the need for further training on M&E for all staff members and recommended a summary of policy and procedures in weekly newsletters to ensure adequate publication to both internal and external stakeholders.

Yes. Although the policies and procedures are in place, not all employees are aware of them. The policies and procedures need to be workshopped with employees constantly. This can also be done by taking some sections of the policy or procedure and publishing them as part of the weekly newsletter of the SETA. As new employees join the SETA now and then, the M&E policy and procedure must be included as part of the induction file that is given to all new employees. (P08, March 16, 2022)

4.6.3.2. Leadership support for the system of M&E

Participant 08 confirms that there is an allocated budget that caters to M&E resource requirements. These range from training together to day-to-day activities.

Theme 17: Budget and organisational structure

Yes. Although the budget was located within Program 3, there is a sufficient budget that can provide for the M&E activities and training of its staff. However, the budget could be improved to enable the M&E Business Unit to have sufficient capacity. To reduce the high number of non-conformances, performance verification should be done on a full population and not a sample. However, with the current insufficient capacity, the business unit is limited to verifying a selected sample. (P08, March 16, 2022)

Every quarter, the performance reports are presented to the Board of EXCO, where areas for improvement are recommended. However, at EXCOM, performance information is discussed every month, and different strategies are implemented under the leadership of the CEO to promote a culture of performance. The strategies include staff engagements conducted by the CEO through events and walkabouts to talk about performance, as well as weekly updates through staff communications and newsletters.

Yes, the function has support in the higher structures of the organisation, from EXCOM to the management team. Example of support: Budgetary support means there is absolute support from the higher echelons of the SETA. (P10, March 11, 2022)

Yes, because the unit has been established and is allowed to operate independently within the governance structure without any hindrances. (P12, March 18, 2022).

4.6.3.3 Information from the M&E systems used in decision-making.

Decision-making, corrective measures, and revisions to plans and resource allocations about the activities in question can all be thoroughly organized based on M&E of the decisions of management, consequently promoting good governance through improvements in efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance throughout policy reforms (Stern, 2013). Program evaluation, however, requires a sufficient collection of detailed information to enable credible and proper impact assessments. It measures the helpfulness and reliability of programs, influences future programs, and helps in decision-making.

Theme 18: Organisational Performance

Concerning organisational performance, the participant provided the answer as follows:

Yes. M&E information informs the target set for the annual performance plan, and it is also used to inform decisions by the Board on the implementation of performance rewards for employees. The level of organisational performance is used to determine whether employees will receive performance bonuses or the percentage of the performance bonuses. M&E information is also used in determining the research agenda of the SETA on identified programs. (P08, March 16, 2022)

Evaluation is an assessment of either completed or ongoing interventions to determine the extent to which they are achieving stated objectives and contributing to decision-making (UNDP 2009:8).

Theme 19: Human capacity

Human capacity is a major contributor to organisational success. Participants mentioned the effect of inadequate human capacity as one of the activities that affected their performance within the SETAs. Participant 10 provided answers to the question.

Yes, the SETA gets information from the M&E reports. But sadly, just like anywhere else, only the managers who make the most noise can have the

*extra human capacity that is required to correct their next undertaking.
(P10, March 11, 2022)*

Theme 20: Decision-making process

The M&E systems and framework are critical for decision-making processes to be accurate.

In the creation of the annual performance plan and agreeing on the targets per SLA as given by the DHET, it is important to consider the program reports before you go into monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the respective plans.

- 1. Change management processes involved in projects and contract management involve assessing whether M&E systems are or have been adhered to, before recommending that change management processes be engaged.*
- 2. There are internal control tools aligned to the M&E systems that ensure that deliverables are met, this assessment is conducted before the invoice is processed.*
- 3. In tenders, before awards are made, M&E measures are implemented to ensure that the appointed service provider has the requisite competence.
(P14, March,25,h 2022)*

4.6.4. What are the quality controls in project implementation and improvements for effective M&E processes?

The fourth research question sought to establish quality controls in project implementation and improve effective M&E processes.

4.6.4.1: A governance framework that enables improvement for effective M&E processes.

The frameworks support the promotion of good governance on paper, but inherent procedural weaknesses, resource constraints, and the role of political principals in the operations of the institution remain fundamental stumbling blocks to good corporate governance (Hussein, 2005:3). All participants (N = 14) were asked to rate the current corporate governance in their SETAs. Interestingly, the responses that were substantiated indicated that (N = 8) 57% opted to be neutral in their rating, while (N = 6) 43% rated corporate governance as good. (N = 8) 57% represent 8 participants who provided a neutral answer on the current corporate governance rate within the SETA. The (N = 6) 43% of participants indicated that the current corporate governance of the SETA is good. Figure 14 provides statistics on the rating relating to the current corporate governance within the SETAs.

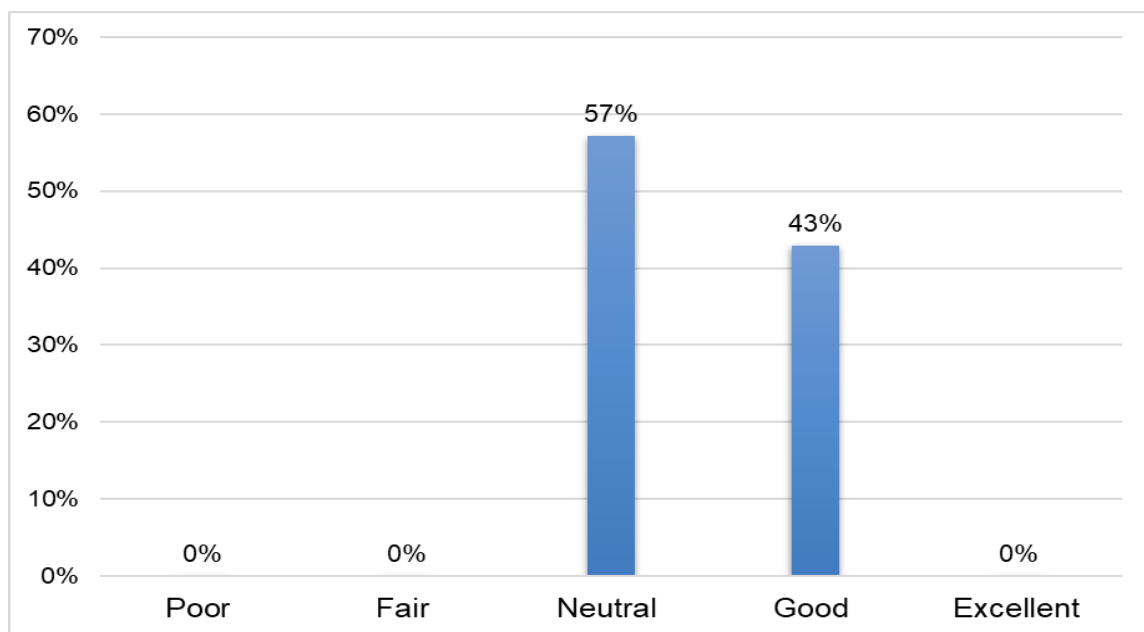


Figure 15: Corporate governance ratings in the SETAs (N=14) (source: researcher's own compilation)

Empirical studies on corporate governance provide information on how structure, practice, and purpose are carried out. Participants who opted to be neutral did not motivate their answers except Participant 08, who shed light on the reasoning behind the selected rating. Other participants who were of the view that the SETA had good corporate governance explained their reasoning as outlined below. Corporate governance principles discussed within the theoretical framework

developed for the establishment of the research model involved the variables of transparency, fairness, accountability, and responsibility as well as the variables of social awareness, independence, and discipline (CLSA, 2001).

Participant 08 rated governance as good and unpacked the response by indicating that the SETA used the performance management system to ensure accountability and take responsibility. Furthermore, the participant linked the answer to the process of transparency, fairness, accountability, and responsibility practiced by the SETA. Participant 08 was aligned with CLSA (2001), which in a discussion about the theoretical framework detailed their research model that involved transparency, fairness, accountability, and responsibility. Effective governance in the public sector inspired improved decision-making and the efficient use of resources and strengthened accountability for the stewardship of those resources (Albusaidi, 2018:12).

Theme 21: Corporate Governance

There are relevant governance structures in place that promote corporate governance principles. The SETA's governance structures are underpinned by the four basic principles of corporate governance, which are ensured by the Board and its sub-committees (i.e., accountability, transparency, fairness, and responsibility). The SETA also uses a performance management system to ensure that each employee can be accountable and take responsibility for their duties through the signing of performance contracts. (Good) (P08, March 16, 2022)

Good corporate governance requires the SETA Board and Management to act with honesty, integrity, diligence, skill, and care in dealing with the affairs of the SETA. (SETA Governance Charter, 2016:3). Participant 10 agreed that the SETA had governance mechanisms. The challenge that prompted the neutral rating on the current corporate governance was informed by the strength of the relationships between different stakeholders, which contributed to the delay in timely communication to all affected parties. As a result, Participant 08 was of the view that there

were no fit-for-purpose mechanisms to support good governance within the SETA. ICPSK (2014) suggests that corporate governance is a set of rules that define the relationship between stakeholders, management, and the Board of directors of an organisation.

The rating is neutral. The SETA tries to regulate its governance in all the activities that it does and carries regular updates to all staff; however, this is hard to carry through and filter to all employees timely. Sometimes the one-size-fits-all phenomenon does not work in all instances. (P10, March 11, 2022)

Participant 14 rated governance as good owing to the SETA's structures that promote transparency and accountability. Such structures include internal audit functions, the Auditor-General, and competent committees that deal with several governance activities within the SETA. The views shared by Participant 14 are aligned with Samsun (2003), who defines accountability as the ultimate protector of transparency, and transparency is shown as the complementary element of accountability. The primary objective of governance structures is to enhance good governance and promote transparency and accountability for public funds used for service delivery. In responding to the question on corporate governance in the SETA, Participant 14 mentioned the following:

Theme 22: Assurance

The corporate governance at the SETA is above average, as the AG and Internal Audit have been able to rely upon the assurance levels that emanate from the governance processes when they conduct their audits in every financial year from 2018 to date. (Good)

The diffusion of information from the Board and sub-committees needs some attention to the non-availability of the concerned.

- 1. Information hampers the implementation of oversight recommendations.*
- 2. Lately, the governance structures of the accounting authority have attended to engagements with stakeholders and project holders in every region, this is favourable as it encourages implementers that the accounting authority is involved and that they will be tracking the performance of the projects at a strategic level and making recommendations at a strategic level on projects implemented.*
- 3. As far as M&E is concerned the corporate governance of other organisations needs to be better aligned with the existing framework as well as the measurement of the implementation of the M&E framework and policies (P14, March 14, 2022).*

4.6.4.2. Implementation of M&E Systems to Support Corporate Governance

Good governance can be used in several contexts; it is for this reason that Participant 01 described the effect of good governance on financial management, wherein the SETA was able to secure an unqualified audit opinion. This meant that the SETA was able to provide evidence relating to the financial and performance information of the organisation. However, such evidence did not affect the fair presentation of the financial affairs of the SETA. Audit opinion as a powerful monitoring tool could influence the decisions of investors and other stakeholders (Bo and Wu, 2011). Empirical studies support the views of Participant 1, who drew a link between audit opinion and accountability, together with M&E systems that provide accurate feedback to the stakeholder.

Theme 23: Lack of structure and accountability

I would answer your question in conjunction with the systems because I've already seen that the systems that we have are not currently structured, but I can

say there's been good progress because, for the past five years, we have been having an unqualified audit. (P01, March 11, 2022)

The views of Participant 08 are aligned with the empirical evidence that also supports the views expressed by Participant 01, who linked progress on the application of M&E to the audit outcome. Participant 08, however, reiterated the importance of the M&E to increase the performance of the SETA under its administration, which necessitated extra efforts from employees to improve governance and overall organisational performance.

Improved M&E in the SETA has led to improvements in audit outcomes and increased performance levels, which shows that the system is working. The SETA moved from a performance of just above 60% in 2018/19 to 86% in 2019/20, which shows improvement. In addition, for a SETA that was under administration, an effective M&E system was necessary for improvements to be visible. (P08, March 16, 2022)

Talbot (2010:190) concurs with the argument that public-sector employees may respond to pressures for improved performance by responding to well-designed incentives. Further studies, however, add that organisational culture is subtle and seldom made explicit for this reason (provide a reference for further studies). Furthermore, team efforts seemed to be a challenge that contributed to the slow application of M&E. Both Participants 10 and 09 were not convinced that M&E in its current state supported good governance within the SETA. These were due to the low maturity level of M&E and the lack of accountability and discipline by some of the staff members who are tasked with implementing M&E.

Yes. On governance, great strides have been made in improving and tightening the governance issues that have plagued the SETA, but this is like a moving target. As soon as a new thing is achieved, the next new thing is introduced that requires more time, more hands, etc. Accountability: My experience is that managers are still unable to hold slacking staff members accountable; instead, those members get to be

rewarded alongside performers. The “team effort” works for those that do not bring the effort to the table. (P10, March 11, 2022)

In reply to the question on the application of M&E systems to support corporate governance, Participant 09 stated the following:

The M&E is evolving and, in some parts, hasn’t matured except in SP/APP monitoring, as I have indicated above. (P09, March 8, 2022)

4.6.5. What improvements should be made in light of the study's findings to advance new knowledge in the field of M&E?

4.6.5.1. Conflicts within the SETA concerning the M & E systems.

Participant 08 highlighted the challenge of incorrect interpretation of collected data by staff members tasked with performing data collection and reporting on the performance information as some of the conflicts attributed to the inconsistent application of M&E. Empirical evidence attributes such an interpretation to the ambiguity of requested data, which causes conflict with M&E systems. Program staff who will be required to collect the data are often best placed to identify which information is easy to obtain and which may be more problematic, and what requests for data are ambiguous and can be interpreted in different ways or may even be so unreliable as to be useless. Perrin (2012:17).

The evidence suggests that there is interest in the utilisation of M&E for decision-making purposes, but top management does not utilise M&E-collected information. Monitoring reports are available but are not used regularly by top management and program managers to track progress and inform improvement. Goldman *et al.*, 2012:5). Participant 08 elaborated on the M&E conflict as follows:

Theme 24: Inaccuracy

The only conflicts are about the incorrect interpretation of the technical description of indicators, leading to conflicts between internal audit and M&E. In addition, some departments report incorrect information due to

incorrect interpretation of technical descriptions of indicators (TDI), which leads to conflicts when performance is assessed. (P08, March 16, 2022)

Participant 01 views the lack of political will as one of the factors causing conflicting outcomes in the M&E systems. Participant 01 further mentioned that M&E is being implemented for compliance purposes, as evidenced by where it is currently located, where administrators are given responsibilities beyond their level.

This flexibility needs to be coupled with regular assessments of progress in implementation and strong political oversight to ensure that objectives and timelines are met.

Theme 25: Political will and capacity

But M&E should be part of governance; it should be part of the office of the CEO. If you make a person an administrator as an M&E Officer, it shows that you do not have the political will to implement M&E. So, there can be nothing considered a conflict, and people will see it as a test to be done. (P01, March 11, 2022)

Participant 10 suggested that there was confusion about the function of the unit, which was initially mistaken for duplicating efforts in the activities already performed by other offices at the regional offices. The confusion caused conflict over how M&E is performed and understood by various internal stakeholders.

Initially, the M&E unit was thought to be duplicating the M&E function that is carried out by the different regions and Independent Skills Development Facilitators (ISDFs). As the unit progressed, the team went around the provinces to capacitate the regional staff on what the new M&E was all about. The capacitation sessions took over a month and took place both virtually and physically due to COVID-19.

1. Knowledge gaps

Employees are still learning about M&E, the role that they should play, and the role that ME plays in their projects.

2. Champions

Lack of champions or drivers to energize the processes of M&E in the regions.

3. Budget

The available budget is way too small and inadequate to carry out the required activities.

4. Territoriality

Project coordinators in the regions and provinces are very territorial with the work that they do and do not easily share project information with the M&E team (P10, March 11, 2022).

History shows that a vast amount of individual M&E effort has only led to confusion about competing approaches, duplication of efforts, and a failure to learn from experience (Stem *et al.*, 2005:13).

4.6.5.2. The vital aspects that shape the SETA's future

Low staff morale is among other factors stimulated by a lack of cordial relations between top management and governance structures. When SETA leadership structures do not find each other, lower to middle management levels are mostly on the receiving end of hardship as a result of long hours of engagement at the operational level, trying to find solutions for activities in which they receive minimal support.

It is at this level that production, or lack thereof, is being experienced. Participant 08 highlighted some of the factors that their leaders should consider in enhancing performance and implementing policies with the primary objective of enhancing organisational performance, not just compliance.

Theme 26: Performance-based budgeting

M&E activities should continue to inform the targets of the SETA, and this needs to be considered by DHET to avoid imposing unrealistic targets.

- 1. The SETA must also implement performance-based budgeting, which will ensure that resources are directed in areas of high performance.*
- 2. M&E needs to be simplified, as there is currently too much data that is not manageable using the current system, which is manual based.*
- 3. Communication is critical to ensuring an effective M&E system. The SETA should therefore ensure constant communication of its plans and M&E policies and procedures to employees. This will also assist in preventing employees from being involved in M&E processes for compliance only, but to promote a performance culture.*
- 4. Performance monitoring should be done every month to ensure that risks associated with the non-achievement of targets are mitigated on time. This will remedy the 4th quarter rush, where.*
- 5. Departments within the SETA focus on pushing targets in the last quarter of the financial year.*
- 6. The M&E activities should not only focus on targets as set in the APP, as monitoring program and project performance would ensure that the SETA fully implements its mandate. (P08, March, 16,h 2022)*

Participant 09 made comments that are supported by empirical studies on some of the critical characteristics of an effective and visionary leader.

Clear vision, exemplary and efficient leadership, A committed workforce, and sufficient funding for the Seta mandate. (P09, March 8, 2022)

Contrary to empirical evidence, Participant 10 is of the view that there is a lack of appropriate leadership. Also, applications of fairness and transparency seem to be at their lowest.

Close the leadership deficit through the application of fairness, openness, and transparency in management (P10, March 11, 2022).

Governance frameworks are developed to guide and support governance protocols, and the output from governance processes is interlinked with operational activities. It is for this reason that management, together with the governance structures such as the Board and its competent committees, is required to support the implementation of the governance framework to enable organisational performance and productivity (Abou-Moghli, 2015).

Contrary to the requirement of the governance framework, Participant 12 is of the view that there is no adequate implementation of the applicable governance framework to help an organisation surge the productivity and performance of personnel. Empirical evidence confirms that the structures bring harmony to the employees who are engaged in the implementation of governance frameworks that support an organisation.

Progression to the implementation of governance of M&E measurement and framework (P12, March 18, 2022)

Empirical studies on the factors that shape the success of the organisation consider several activities that support good governance and enable the survival of the organisation. Participant 14 provided views on the factors that paint a picture of the activities around the future of the SETA. A few activities, which include a lack of consequence management for ill-discipline and ambiguous instructions, were named as some of the factors that negatively affect the SETA.

There is a lack of confidence in implemented systems, such as consequence management, which forms a crucial element in eradicating corruption but is underused and remains a source of serious backlash or fear thereof to report

possible or alleged acts of the corruption scourge (Phahlane, 2021:54). Participant 14 expressed concerns about the internal controls, which are more critical for the success of the SETA.

The views expressed by the participants are aligned with the empirical evidence, which outlines the role of internal controls. To this end, the role of internal control therefore provides support for management in safeguarding company assets and eliminating waste (Musya, 2014).

Theme 27: Consequence Management

Workshopping of the M&E systems and their importance to the entire organisation

- 1. Constant testing of the effectiveness of the internal control processes.*
- 2. Inculcating the M&E framework and systems in all the policies, and processes organisation wide.*
- 3. Measuring the effectiveness of the application of a system of M&E and framework.*
- 4. Consequence management implementation where non-compliance has been notified.*
- 5. Conducting a comparative analysis with other SETAs concerning getting a unified M&E system and framework principles that would be reviewed annually.*
- 6. Stakeholder involvement in the creation of awareness around the organisation's M&E Thus when we have inputs to make, we may also solicit their inputs, which will assist in getting them to give buy-in and comply with the SETA's M&E systems and framework. (P14, March,25,h 2022)*

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

5.1. Introduction

This study's key aim is to present results on the current approach to M&E within the three participating SETAs. This was done by highlighting areas where M&E was being effectively utilised, while barriers that frustrated efficiency were identified by participants and supported by empirical studies. The primary data collected from participants also indicated areas where an effective M&E approach could be utilised by every level of employees to enhance responsibility, accountability, and value-driven activities. Analysis of the findings enabled the researcher to review the current M&E framework within the SETAs and recommend implementable activities as informed by the findings to support credible skills development mechanisms in South Africa.

5.1. Discussions

Discussions of the findings are presented under five broad areas: M&E functions, systems, readiness assessments, governance and accountability, and system approach.

5.2.1. M&E functions

5.2.1.1. The M&E function supports the organisational mandate.

The study findings disclosed that the newly established M&E business unit within W&RSETA is supporting the achievement of the strategic plan by tracking performance against the set objectives. However, the findings also indicated that while the three participating SETAs have policies and are currently implementing the M&E activity, the challenge is that it is not yet mature enough to optimally produce results at the level of the well-established business unit.

The views expressed by some participants are that while M&E is being implemented to ensure the impact of the investment made by the SETA, more still needs to be done to strengthen policies, processes, systems, and procedures. The research findings from this study show some consistency with empirical evidence that the public sector's strategic planning sets priorities that are monitored through quarterly reporting to the departments as the Executive Authority and accounts for the level of implementation of strategic objectives as outlined in the strategic planning documents. The optimal utilisation of M&E to boost the development of skills is being implemented; however, it is not activated to a satisfactory level. The study further reveals that various programs linked to work-based learning are monitored against the plans and their timelines. Therefore, M&E is being utilised to improve skills development by ensuring that the return on investment on the invested funds is tracked to enable accountability and support service delivery across sectors catered for by the participating SETA. Further empirical studies affirm that properly implemented M&E enables the production of credible, accurate, useful, and verifiable performance information. Performance information emanating from the M&E process was audited by both internal and external auditors to confirm the accuracy, reliability, and completeness of the records used for decision-making. It was for this reason that the degree of reliability of the information was authenticated by auditors, as dictated by good corporate governance protocol. The integrated processes, which ranged from M&E activities to the authentication of the records by audits, supported and enforced accountability across all levels within the SETA.

5.2.1.2. The level of M&E activities depends on the planned deliverables, outputs, and outcomes of projects.

The researcher found that the level of M&E activities on planned deliverables, project outcomes, and outputs within three SETAs was performed by independent divisions that did not get involved in program or project implementations. The data collected revealed that in all three participating SETAs, the activity had not yet matured enough to optimally produce results that could be relied upon for major decisions. The findings and recommendations

suggested that the assurance provided on a project implemented by the SETA should be provided by divisions that were not involved in the operational activities. The study found that while the function is still immature in terms of expertise and the extent to which M&E is performed in certain areas, business units and managers who are not operationally involved are tasked with conducting the monitoring of learning programs and evaluating the associated results to enhance the independence and objectivity of the outputs. Findings revealed that the degree to which planned M&E activities are conducted is linked to project monitoring and risk management activities to mitigate corruption risks that might materialise and disturb the proper implementation of skills development. The risk of project money being diverted and blocking the achievement of desired targets is possible when monitoring of activities is ineffective and inadequate. Furthermore, the results revealed that the existence of an M&E framework provides a structured measure on which projects are monitored as a process of curbing negative events such as project failure or, in a worse case, corruption of the funds paid to learners in the form of stipends.

5.2.1.3. The willingness to plan and apply.

The study findings revealed that there was a willingness by the SETA leadership at the Board and Executive levels to construct a result-based system of M&E. However, the rate of implementation was slow. This is evidenced by the low level of confidence demonstrated by participants when asked to rate their readiness for the preparation and application of a system of M&E (Figure 13). Findings further suggested that M&E readiness for planning and implementation was poor due to a lack of capacity to utilise automated mechanisms, which have minimal possibilities for human error.

5.2.1.4. The results of a credible system of M&E to support the requirements of corporate governance.

The finding revealed that the SETAs linked the activities of a system of M&E to decision-making about accountability, governance, financial management, and achievement of strategic goals, over which governance structures had a fiduciary

duty to provide oversight. While W&RSETA had a dedicated M&E business, Bank SETA and INSETA did not have a business unit established to perform M&E activities. The functions were performed as part of the project and program management by a business unit that was not involved in project implementation. The information collected was then utilised to assess the level of targets linked to the program achieved and reported every quarter to DHET and the Board. The study findings further shared the views and understanding of staff members on the M&E systems, which enabled accountability in areas that hindered the proper functioning of the program and project implementation, such as, amongst others, corruption, and poor decision-making. Empirical evidence confirmed that some of the benefits of a credible system of M&E were well positioned to significantly fight corruption in the discretionary funds that were paid as monthly stipends to learners.

5.2.1.5. The governance challenges experienced by the SETAs.

Findings showed that some of the challenges encountered by the SETAs included an absence of consequence management and compliance with policies. In the recent past, empirical studies, together with media reports on findings in the state capture commission reports, named corruption, lack of M&E, and non-compliance with policies that sought to enhance good governance as numerous challenges confronting the public segment (please provide a reference here). Study findings also indicated that the SETAs, as government institutions, were also exposed to corruption risks and complacency that reduced government capacity to render service delivery to the communities that needed it most.

In response to questions regarding the SETA's governance challenges, participants expounded on how the 2019/2020 financial year Organisational Development (OD) study affected several staff members in the W&RSETA. Accordingly, the findings also reveal that the OD study had an impact on several current positions, both favourably and unfavourably. However, the unfavourable impact of the OD study affected staff members who were transferred to other provinces. While the study revealed that the M&E business unit within the

W&RSETA was still finding its feet, the information collected through these processes did not adequately assist in decision-making. Empirical studies provided some suggestions on how some of the challenges could be resolved. Evidence from available research revealed that the challenges mentioned above contributed to poor skill development in various programs offered by the SETA (include a reference to the available research).

5.2.2. Monitoring and evaluation systems

5.2.2.1. Utilisation of M&E systems to enhance skills development.

Findings suggested that the organisational culture that is driven by effective change management is more likely to get staff members' buy-in, making it possible for effective M&E, which could effectively enhance accountability and improve performance in the organisation. The process of gathering information that is fit for purpose relied heavily on an effective M&E system, which in turn would produce credible and accurate information for informed decision-making. In support of the findings, an empirical study suggested that M&E capacity building dealt with the development of successful M&E systems: systems that were sufficiently independent to be externally credible and socially legitimate; systems that influenced policymaking and were sustainable over time; and systems that were responsive to the needs of clients and main stakeholders (Bertha, 2010: 8). The findings further suggested that there should be communicated to prepare staff for change management aimed at gearing support for the application of M&E. Furthermore, the function of the M&E in change management, together with organisational culture, is among the other activities that the SETA should implement to enhance skills development. The study findings also shared dissatisfaction amongst staff members due to inadequate dialogue on the use of M&E in the SETAs. The findings were aligned with an empirical study that suggested that the performance information generated from monitoring enhanced dialogue, enabled learning from experience, and improved decision-making (World Meteorological Organisation, 2012:14). The present study showed that there is a connection between the M&E function and the

compliance activities wherein policies, processes, ethical practices, and independent assessment would add value to the organisation. Empirical studies also suggest a connection between M&E and compliance. Engel and Carlesson (2002) argue that a sound system of M&E should not only improve compliance; it should also enhance the reflective capacity of organisations while simultaneously increasing transparency and accountability and supporting a culture of learning. In support of the conclusions on the use of M&E, Hauge (2003, cited by Ojoko, 2016) argues that the objective of M&E is seen as the improvement of the performance and effectiveness of the government and its public service delivery system.

5.2.2.2. The link between M&E systems and performance management

Within the SETA environment, projects revolved around learners; it was for this reason that when projects that were aligned to the strategic objectives of the respective SETA were implemented, the outputs were skills development-related, which was managed through performance management. The study findings revealed that the staff members understood the direct link between performance management and M&E and provided suggestions on how the current approach to M&E could be enhanced. This was done to ensure that the strategic plan was cascaded down to the divisional and operational plans to support the mandate of the organisation. There were reservations revealed by the study findings that performance within the organisation was not adequately coordinated in a manner that supported the achievement of desired results. These effectively hampered skill development. The study findings revealed a status quo within the SETAs on M&E that was contrary to empirical studies that suggest that evaluation is used in government to increase transparency, strengthen accountability, and improve performance (UNDP, 2009; Wholey, 2010).

5.2.2.3. Stakeholder participation in the M&E processes

Results-based systems of M&E are a powerful public management instrument for helping governments and organisations demonstrate impacts and outcomes to their respective stakeholders and gain community support (Kusek and Rist, 2004:

26). This study discovered that the execution of the systems of M&E in the organisation contributed to the consistent reporting of performance results to the diversity of stakeholders, which included the DHET, Board, EXCO, and MANCO. The findings further suggest that it is important to bring to the Board's attention the status quo of the project's weaknesses and strengths in terms of what is following the performance. The study found that M&E procedures did not sufficiently encourage active contribution by a diversity of stakeholders, wherein the organisation would be placed in a better position to address the concerns and needs of all relevant stakeholders. However, the study findings indicate that some of the hindrances to M&E implementation emanated from inadequate knowledge by the stakeholders, and less interest was expressed in the process itself. The optimal coordination of M&E activities is difficult, according to the collected data.

Contrary to the lack of interest found in the study findings, empirical evidence from other studies reveals that recently, stakeholders and public opinion have been promoted to the extent of advocating proposals for the inclusion of performance indicators that measure the 'trust' of the public or citizenry towards their government (Kimaro *et al.*, 2018:115). To this end, the findings agree with the views shared by Kimaro *et al.* (2018:115) that there should be regular feedback to the stakeholders in a manner that would promote advocacy on the performance information, which in turn enhances trust between the organisation and the stakeholders.

5.2.3. Monitoring and evaluation readiness assessment

5.2.3.1. M&E resources

These findings agree with empirical studies by confirming that the three SETAs participating in the study had policies and procedures that directed efforts in the application of M&E. Guided and effective application of M&E requires well-documented policies and procedures that could ensure that end users and interested stakeholders were informed on how the implementation would affect their projects or programs.

The study findings indicate that while the policies and procedures existed, there was inadequate capacity in terms of technical know-how to fully implement M&E to drive organisational performance and enhance stakeholder trust. Empirical evidence also suggests that results-based M&E is a management instrument to help track progress and demonstrate the impact of development projects, policies, and programs (please provide a reference here).

5.2.3.2. Leadership support for the M&E system

The findings of the study indicate that M&E activities formed part of Board and EXCOM meetings. In addition, both the Board and EXCOM discussed and recommended ways in which the system of M&E could be improved, which showed their support for the improvement of an effective system of M&E. The study established that every quarter, the performance reports were presented in the Board and EXCO meetings, where areas for improvement were highlighted and solutions were recommended. The study confirmed that at the Executive management level, performance information was discussed monthly, and different strategies were explored and ultimately implemented at the behest of the CEO to promote a culture of performance.

5.2.3.3. Information from M&E systems utilised in decision-making.

Evaluation is an assessment of either completed or ongoing interventions to determine the extent to which they are achieving stated objectives and contributing to decision-making (UNDP, 2009:8). The study found that M&E information was used to inform decisions by the Board through its Remuneration Committee on the implementation of performance rewards for employees emanating from recorded information on the target set for the APP in four different programs. The level of organisational performance was used to determine whether employees would receive performance bonuses or the percentage of the performance bonuses. Part of the M&E information was also used in deciding activities around the research agenda of the SETA on identified programs.

5.2.4. Governance and Accountability

In this section, the researcher discusses the findings related to governance and accountability as shared by the participants and the literature review.

5.2.4.1. Corporate governance in the SETAs

The study findings on the rate of current corporate governance in the SETAs indicate the level of confidence and/or lack thereof among staff members who participated in the study. The findings reveal that (N = 8) 57% did not have full confidence in the level of corporate governance in the SETA by opting to be neutral in their rating, while (N = 6) 43% rated the corporate governance as good. Further studies reiterate that corporate governance principles discussed within the theoretical framework developed for the establishment of the research model involved the variables of transparency, fairness, accountability, and responsibility as well as the variables of social awareness, independence, and discipline (CLSA, 2001).

The findings also revealed that participants who opted to be neutral on the corporate governance rating indicated that the Board of the SETA imposed a regulatory burden that, in their view, was not necessary, ultimately depriving them of space to perform their duties. Findings highlighted frustrations in the SETA about the hardship encountered in carrying out related tasks and filtering all employees timely; sometimes the one-size-fits-all phenomenon did not work in all instances. Furthermore, the findings indicate that on the neutral rating, the strength of the relationship between different stakeholders, which contributed to the delay in timely communication to all affected parties, was among the reasons why participants opted for the selected rating. Lastly, findings on the neutral side could be an indication of a low level of confidence in the processes implemented within the SETA to support good governance. The low level of confidence could be attributed, among other reasons, to the description of the 'one size fits all' approach. The lack of confidence in the implementation contributed to the inability of the SETA to achieve the desired results. However, the findings on the (N = 6) 43% good rating on governance were attributed to the SETA's approach

to the performance management system, which ensured that each employee could be accountable and take responsibility for their duties through the signing of performance contracts. Good corporate governance requires the SETA Board and Management to act with honesty, integrity, diligence, skill, and care in dealing with the affairs of the SETA (SETA Governance Charter, 2016:3).

5.2.4.2. Application of the Systems of M&E

The study findings revealed excellent governance in the area of financial management, where the Bank SETA was able to secure an unqualified audit opinion. The study findings attribute the audit opinion to other processes from M&E activities, such as verification of performance information and submission of evidence based on documented data that was authenticated against the supporting documents. Unqualified audit opinion implies that the SETA was able to provide relevant information and supporting documents requested by the auditors and was found to be consistent with the internal policies together with the applicable legislation; as a result, the process did not limit the scope of the external audit on the financial and performance information of the organisation.

According to Bo and Wu (2011), an audit opinion is a powerful monitoring tool that could influence the decisions of investors and other stakeholders. Empirical studies support the findings, which draw a link between audit opinion and accountability, together with M&E systems that provide accurate feedback to the stakeholders. The link between audit opinion and accountability, together with M&E systems, puts pressure on responsible officials to produce accurate information due to its completeness.

5.2.5. Systems Approach

5.2.5.1. Conflicts within the SETA concerning the M&E systems.

Program staff who would be required to collect the data are often best placed to identify which information is easy to obtain and which may be more problematic, and what requests for data are ambiguous and could be interpreted in different

ways or may even be so unreliable as to be useless (Perrin, 2012:17). The study found that the challenge of incorrect interpretation of collected data by staff members tasked with collecting and reporting on performance information contributed to incorrect decisions that caused conflicts in the SETA. These findings are supported by empirical evidence, which attributes such an interpretation to the ambiguity of the requested data as more problematic, causing conflict with M&E systems. According to Goldman *et al.* (2012), monitoring reports were available but were not used regularly by top management and program managers to track progress and inform improvement. Findings on conflicts in the organisation are supported by empirical studies that suggest that there was evidence that suggested that there was interest in the utilisation of M&E for decision-making purposes; however, top management did not utilise M&E-collected information (insert reference for the empirical study).

Additional findings revealed that conflicts were about the incorrect interpretation of TDI indicators, leading to conflicts between internal audit and M&E processes. The study revealed that, in addition, some departments reported incorrect information due to incorrect interpretations of TDI, which led to conflicts when performance was assessed. With regards to leadership, it was found that there was a lack of political will, as some of the factors causing conflicting outcomes in the M&E systems showed. Findings further highlight that M&E was being implemented for compliance. This was due to the current location being managed by the administrators, who were given responsibilities beyond their level.

The study findings, supported by Kusek and Rist (2004) empirical evidence, suggest that political oversight, which is normally performed by senior officials, should be performed to assess progress on the implementation of various programs and projects. Study findings indicate that there was confusion about the function of the M&E unit, which was initially mistaken for a duplication of efforts in the activities already performed by other business units at the regional offices. According to Stem *et al.* (2005:13) history suggests that "a lot of individual M&E efforts have only led to confusion about competing approaches, duplication of efforts, and to a failure to learn from experience". The findings

reveal that confusion caused conflict over how M&E is performed and understood by various internal stakeholders.

5.2.5.2. The important aspects to guide SETA's future.

The findings of this study indicate that there was low staff morale attributed to frustration caused by a lack of cordial relations between top management and governance structures that eventually cascaded down to lower and middle management levels, which were at the heart of operational activities. Findings reveal some of the recommendations on how SETA leaders should consider enhancing performance and implementing policies with the primary objective of enhancing organisational performance; however, it is indicated that M&E should not be done for compliance only. In responding to critical factors that could shape the future of the SETA, the study findings indicate that visionary leadership, teamwork, and effective communication are some of the essential ingredients for a successful business within the SETA.

The findings further highlight that in the absence of those ingredients, staff morale is more likely to go down, particularly where staff members are of the view that their leaders are not leading by example. According to Atkinson (2015), if there is no effective leadership in an organisation, no changes will be made because there are no leaders that motivate and lead the organisation's employees, as well as provide a clear direction for the organisation. Findings reveal that some reservations about the type of leadership being practiced in the SETAs, where effective teamwork relies heavily on the effectiveness of the communication channels, together with demonstrable efforts to practice open door policies and fairness, were absent in the SETA environment.

The leader should communicate and work together with the group of employees to sustain long-term process changes (Wuestman and Casey, 2015). On the requirements of the governance framework, the study findings suggest that there was no adequate implementation of the applicable governance framework. If this were present, according to Abou-Moghli (2015), it would help the organisation increase the productivity and performance of its employees. In addition, the study

findings reveal that lack of consequence management for ill-discipline and ambiguous instructions were some of the factors that negatively impacted the W&RSETA, there was a lack of confidence in implemented systems, such as consequence management, which formed a crucial element to eradicating corruption. This was underused and remained a source of serious backlash or fear thereof to report possible or alleged acts of the scourge (Phahlane, 2021:54). The study findings further highlight the areas where the participants expressed concerns about the weaknesses of the internal control factors to be considered for the enhancement of the business success of the SETA. The views expressed by the participants are aligned with the empirical evidence, which outlines the role of internal controls. The role of internal control, therefore, provides support for management in safeguarding company assets and eliminating waste (Musya, 2014).

5.2.5.3. Management of Technology, Innovation, People, and Systems (TIPSTM) Framework on Findings and Discussion

In this section, the researcher laid out a TIPSTM framework that is aimed at strengthening the existing SETAs' policy position and M&E framework (well-designed but ineffective with regards to achieving a maximum strategic outcome on skills development). TIPS is described as the management of technology, innovation, people, and systems (The Davinci Institute, 2020).

It is for this reason that the framework (see Figure 14) integrates activities at the impact level, which is what remains after learners have completed their learning and training in the workplace. The purpose of the framework is to provide a systemic awareness of the multiple sub-systems at play within society, including the workplace, evoking an awareness of existing mental models and the ability to re-think and dissect assumptions about work performance (The Davinci Institute, 2020).

In the context of this study, the researcher presented the framework under six sub-headings:

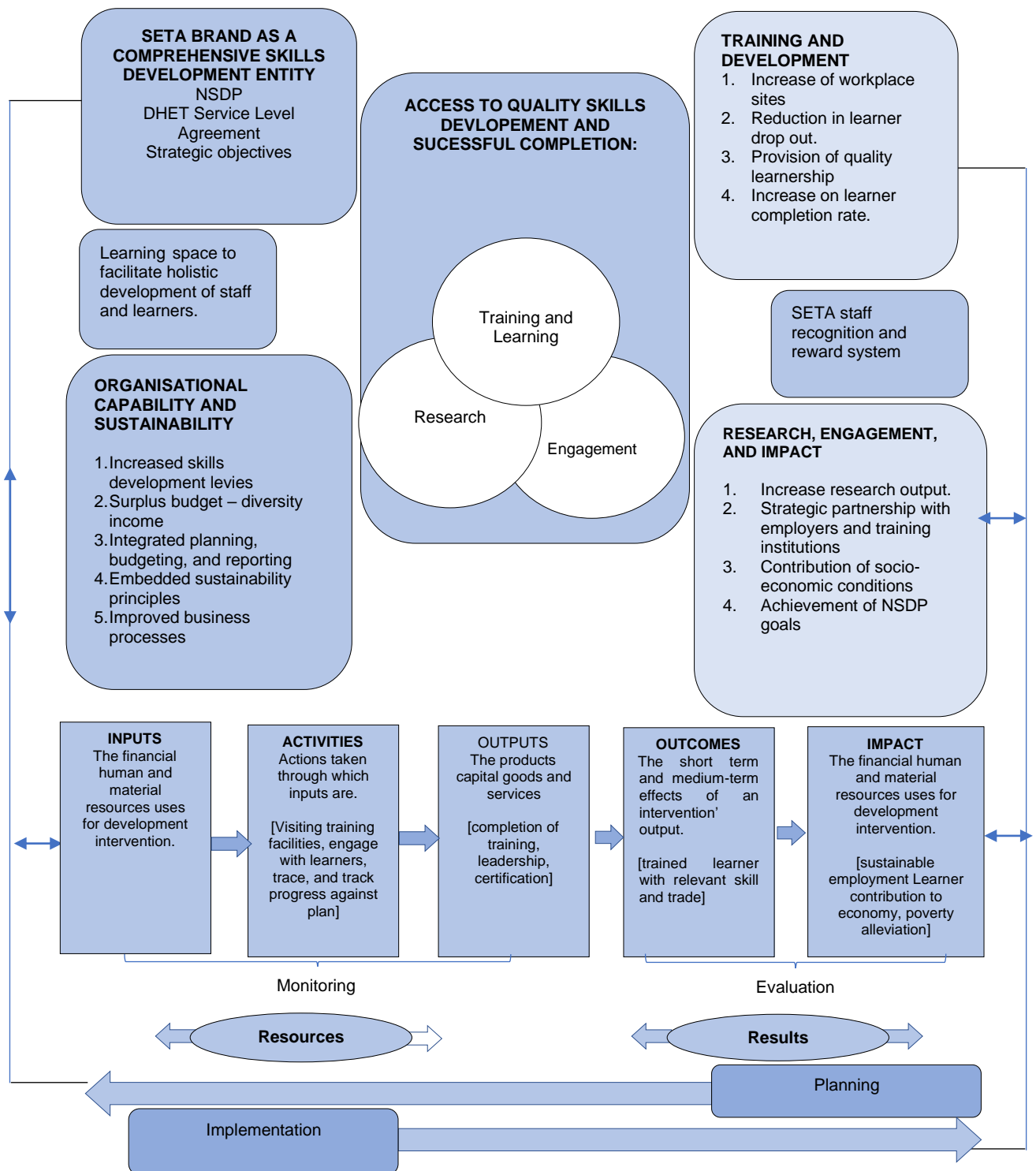


Figure 16: Framework for contemporary approach to M&E.

Source: Adopted from the combination of the UNDP Handbook on Planning, Monitoring, and Evaluation for Development Results (2009, p 55) and Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University (UMMU) Monitoring and Evaluation Framework, Botha, and Muller(eds) 2016

The integrated strategic and operational intervention is presented in the framework through the dissection of primary and secondary data collected during the study of the research problem and answering research questions. The literature reviewed and responses from participants painted a picture from which the researcher identified strengths and M&E shortcomings that leave room for program administrative malfunction, corruption, fraud on discretionary grants, and poor-quality training activities.

1. SETA brand as a comprehensive skills development entity

The problem statement in Section 1.9 of Chapter 1 highlighted the negative image of several SETAs due to poor governance, corruption, and maladministration of discretionary grants earmarked for skills development. In addition, the widespread recognition of the gaps that gave rise to the adverse disclaimer of opinion by the Auditor-General of South Africa (AGSA) is due to the compromised implementation of policies. It is for this reason that the researcher concludes that the DHET SLA signed with the sitting Board of the respective SETA is implemented in a manner that does not consider the policy positions that govern the utilisation of resources allocated for skills development.

The APP is monitored through M&E tools and collects data monthly that is fed into the quarterly reports to the DHET. The study found that such data, which form part of the report to DHET, are not entirely accurate. This is evident from the end-year audit from the AGSA, which points out multiple discrepancies on four different quarterly performance reports. In view of this, the framework sought to bring harmonious integration of accurate information that feeds into the NSDP implemented through twenty-one established SETAs in the country. Within the context of this study, M&E capacity and the avoidance of malicious compliance that facilitates incorrect disbursement of funds could be corrected to enhance effective organisational performance. This is an indication that an improved level of buy-in by the Board and Executive management is likely to contribute positively to the effective strategic direction of the SETAs.

2. Organisational capability and sustainability

It is strongly emphasised that the factors attributed to poor quality training due to the inadequacy of resources allocated to skills development programs must be adequately addressed. These factors include human resource activities, the competency of personnel tasked with facilitating the disbursements of learners' stipends, and the correct interpretation of the M&E templates used during project monitoring by M&E staff members. Also, improvement in stakeholder engagement could have a significant impact on efforts made to retain participating employers in relevant SETA programs while contributing their levies within the sector.

Current legislation does not prohibit collaboration between the SETA and private donor businesses. Therefore, the organisation is best positioned to ensure that surplus budget-diverse income is supplemented through such a partnership. While there are structured processes to integrate planning, budgeting, and reporting, the evidence gathered reveals that gaps exist that undermine good governance initiatives.

The negative pictures painted in the media reports about certain SETAs, amongst others, are attributed to the internal control bypass that is stimulated by unethical behavior by staff tasked with the management of millions of Rand allocated to several skills development programs. In view of this, embedding sustainability principles of ethical behavior, a prudent approach to complex project dynamics, and effective implementation of various policies should be utilised to enhance organisation performance on skills development. Improved business processes by design draw their strength from the strategic direction an organisation takes. Such direction is facilitated by the extent to which policies are adequately designed and effectively implemented.

It is in the context of strategic imperatives that the positions of Executive authority (DHET), Board (accounting authority), and Executive Management demonstrate that they are very intentional about supporting quality skill development. It is for

this reason that the reward system and work-based facilities match the infrastructure that supports effective and quality skill development activities.

3. Access to quality skills development and successful completion:

Secondary data from annual reports reveals that access to quality skills development facilities and successful completion of the programs have declined due to several factors, including COVID-19, that caught businesses and individuals unaware. The emergence of the pandemic exposed strategic gaps, inadequate innovation, and reactive strategic decisions, among others.

As noted in the framework (see Figure 13), advanced resource allocation for research and effective engagement with all relevant stakeholders to contribute to training and learning require enhanced performance solutions for outdated skills development activities. Therefore, there is a need to increase the research and development budget that will bring about much-needed innovative mechanisms such as e-learning and the discovery of innovative research tools with which to collect sufficient quantitative data on programs completed by learners who participated in the SETA programs.

4. Training and development

Training and development are central to the SETA mandate. This is done by establishing strategic partnerships with various stakeholders, such as training providers, both public and private, as well as employers who participate in skills development initiatives. The partnership requires constant M&E in pursuit of target achievements that will feed into strategic outcomes. It is worth noting that good progress has been made in monitoring programs provided by large training providers, who without such monitoring would have breached the agreements entered into with the SETAs. Several M&E reports attribute such breaches to the prioritization of other business imperatives over skills development in the various disciplines on offer.

5. Research, engagement, and impact

A critical component of M&E within the SETA environment is the number of research initiatives that are conducted on an annual basis. Among this research, the SETA conducts SSP, value-for-money research, and tracer studies. In answering the research questions, participants mentioned SETA's compliance with the research policy that enforces research on programs in every financial year. However, they highlighted poor compliance as one of the hindrances to the full implementation of the research recommendation.

The framework guides how to leverage existing strategic partnerships with employers and training institutions. This suggests how data on participating learners should be collected and stored beyond their training interventions. In addition, empirical data reveals that learners are not traceable after completing training; the same applies to those who dropped out before completion of training. Learners' disappearance contributes to difficulties in conducting the last component (impact assessment) of M&E.

The contribution of socioeconomic conditions as part of both the NDP and the NSDP is possible within the SETA context when the six elements highlighted in the framework are implemented. The starting point will be to focus on the SETA brand as a comprehensive skills development entity by advocating, among others, for business imperatives, ethical service provision within the organisation, and organisational capacity.

6. Results-based management activities (inputs, activities, outputs, outcomes, and impacts)

In the last phase of the presentation of the framework, the researcher provided clarity within the context of SETA and elements that sought to bring coherence together with synergy for the activities that are already in the process of implementation. This ranges from the input level of the M&E, which includes the capacity of the staff performing the project monitoring supplemented by adequate and relevant knowledge of how to conduct the assigned task. The proposed

framework advocates continuous M&E of the program until a learner completes theory and practice training. Therefore, the impact of the SETA intervention is likely to be accurately assessed when accurate, reliable, and relevant information is collected as part of the M&E process.

5.2. Conclusion

This chapter covered all aspects of the framework and explained how SETA's activities are integrated, from the strategic interventions to the impact level. To this end, within the context of the SETAs, the impact is what remains after learners have completed their learning and training in the workplace. However, this is not limited to educational qualifications that are funded through bursaries paid by the SETAs. The TIPS framework is developed in a way that provides a systemic awareness of the multiple sub-systems that affect skill development.

programs in South Africa. These include the unemployed learners' ability to re-think and dissect assumptions about work experience, the quality of work-based training, and improved performance for the employed learners. The implementation of the framework intends to complement the approved SETA policies that control the utilisation of the resources allocated to skill development.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1. Introduction

Chapter 6 presents the recommendations and conclusions for M&E as a governance tool for enhancing service. The study aimed to present a new approach to M&E, to remove the barriers to proper M&E at each level of employees, to ensure responsible, accountable, and value-driven M&E, and also to develop a viable framework for the execution of M&E in SETA that was established to facilitate a credible skills development mechanism in South Africa. The literature review in Chapter 2 and methodology in Chapter 3, together with the research findings presented in Chapter 4, contribute to the conclusion and recommendations concerning the implementation of the M&E as the governance tool for enhancing skills expansion and accountability in the SETA environment.

The study has highlighted the strong association between M&E and respectable governance within the participating SETAs. To this end, the M&E framework and policy as minimum requirements to kickstart the process of accountability and transparency were approved by the Board in all participating SETAs. Also, the researcher highlighted that, within the SETA context, accountability revolves around the utilisation of the invested discretionary funds, while transparency includes the accuracy of the performance information on the skills development programs.

The Board is responsible for establishing and implementing a system of internal control intended to offer a satisfactory guarantee as to the reliability and integrity of the performance information, the human resources information, and the annual financial statements (WRSETA, 2018:18). Performance information that is validated through M&E processes is reported externally to the DHET in line with the SLA, accounting for the quarterly targets achieved and reconciling the amounts of discretionary funds utilised.

The study findings highlight that while there were demonstrable efforts in the implementation of existing M&E policies and frameworks by business units that performed M&E functions at different levels, more interventions are still required to advocate for the utilisation of the reports that are produced by those business units. M&E of projects funded through discretionary grants assisted INSETA in accounting for money spent, ensuring that money was spent for the intended purpose, and improving the quality of the learning experience for learners. (APP, 2021/2022:30). However, the study findings shed light on the varying degrees of challenges faced by staff members in all three participating SETAs assigned the responsibility of implementing M&E policies and frameworks. In Section 6.1.1 below, the researcher summarises the research findings against each research question the study sought to answer.

6.1.1. Research questions and answers emanating from the studies.

Below, the researcher shares what the study has found when addressing the first research question: How effective are the SETA mechanisms in applying M&E as a management and governance tool? The following summarises the answers to the above question:

1. The study reveals that the three participating SETAs have approved M&E policies and frameworks to support the organisational mandate. However, the major challenge with the said approved policies and frameworks is their effective implementation. As a result, the value gained from the implementation of the M&E function is minimal, attributed to the low maturity level of the function itself.
2. Further, the M&E readiness for planning and implementation was found to be poor due to insufficient support by the Board and Executive Management for the activities performed by low-level staff members monitoring skills development programs at the head office and provincial offices.

3. While the study found the existence of policies and frameworks, the SETAs' readiness for full implementation of M&E activities is weakened by the lack of dedicated business units at the Bank and Insurance SETA, while W&RSETA is not fully optimising the function of the business unit.
4. Consequently, the implementation of various governance tools such as frameworks, policies, and consequence management, together with dedicated structures, are not effective governance tools to drive high-quality skill development.

Second research question: What are the lessons learned from M&E practice within South Africa to date, and how can these contribute to the implementation strategy of M&E within SETAs?

The researcher summarised the answers to the research questions as follows:

1. The organisational cultural change supported through structured change management was found to be one of the possible mechanisms that could stimulate buy-in for all affected by the M&E systems tailored to enhance accountability and improve organisational performance.
2. In answering the second question, the study found that participants agreed that effective M&E systems could produce correct and credible information that is relevant to an informed strategic decision by both the Board and Executive management.
3. The study provided information on the dissatisfaction with the approach adopted by the SETA to utilise the M&E system to enhance skills development in the respective sector. The dissatisfaction was attributed to inadequate dialogue on the use of the M&E in all participating SETAs.
4. The answers to the research question on lessons learned and their contribution to M&E strategy highlighted the understanding of the participants and the existence of links between the M&E system and the performance management implemented in the respective SETAs. The

links were pointed out as one of the critical components that could provide many improvements to the M&E approach.

5. Among the participants' lessons is that the M&E reports are among some of the management tools that eased stakeholder participation in the business of the SETAs. Also, the stakeholder engagement eased through M&E activities was considered inadequate to reach all critical stakeholders in the SETAs.

Third research question: What are the current trends in governance and M&E strategies being implemented within SETAs?

1. The answers to the current trends in governance and M&E strategies were answered by pointing out the availability of resources such as documented policies and procedures. These were highlighted as an adequate demonstration of SETAs' readiness to implement M&E activities.
2. High demand by governance structures for the provision of much-needed support for the implementation of the M&E systems. The use of M&E to gather data to enhance effective decision-making was found to be a new approach to promoting a culture of high performance.

Fourth research question: What are the quality controls in project implementation and improvement for effective M&E processes?

1. Empirical studies share multiple methods that the organisation could utilise to measure quality control. Among the measures used to gauge the improvement of M&E systems was the assessment of the level of confidence participants have in corporate governance within the SETAs.
2. The study revealed a low level of confidence in the effectiveness of corporate governance across all participating SETAs. These were attributed to the high level of interference in operational activities, primarily to influence management decisions to facilitate various interests in the governance structures.

3. Contrary to the lower level of confidence expressed by most of the participants, the study found a smaller percentage of participants were comfortable with how corporate governance was carried out in the respective SETAs.

Fifth research question: What recommendations can the study contribute to new knowledge related to the field of study required?

The researcher developed a framework based on the TIPS framework (see Figure 13). The framework highlights several critical components that are currently not fully integrated to yield positive strategic outcomes within a defined time frame. Based on the topic covered by this study, scholars who are interested in additional research on the M&E topic are given the foundation to get their study going.

6.2 Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the researcher concludes by recommending possible measures through which SETA's management could consider strengthening the execution of governance through M&E activities.

6.2.1. The M&E function supports the organisational mandate.

Monitoring and evaluation have been formalised in all three spheres of government in South Africa. Therefore, to adhere to their statutory and regulatory obligations, SETAs ought to progress and execute a comprehensive M&E system that is fully aligned with skills development.

6.2.2. The level of M&E activities upon planned deliverables, outputs, and outcomes of projects

Skills development projects that are implemented through occupational training of unemployed learners for the multiple disciplines registered with the SETA are not all monitored by staff members who are in the M&E business unit. These

limitations are attributed to inadequate human resource capacity and technical know-how by the SETAs to fully implement the M&E activities.

6.2.3. The readiness for planning and application

As part of monitoring various programs accredited and implemented by the respective SETAs, easily implementable procedures should be developed and shared with all relevant M&E staff members. The implementation of structured processes by trained staff members should be designed in such a manner that supports accurate data collection while enhancing the monitoring of the various programs within the SETAs. Poor data collection during the monitoring of learners as primary beneficiaries of SETA programs is negatively affecting proper planning due to the inaccuracy of the data.

6.2.1. The results of a credible M&E system to support the requirements of corporate governance

While participants confirm that the SETAs have evidence linking the activities of a system of M&E to decision-making about accountability, governance, financial management, and achievement of strategic goals, the staff members tasked with performing such activities should be continuously supported with relevant training to embed M&E in all governance support structures.

Further, the information collected with the primary purpose of enabling assessment of the level of targets linked to the program achieved and reported every quarter to DHET together with the Board should be continuously improved to benefit all relevant stakeholders. The existing credible M&E system should be continuously supported and maintained to activate the significant contribution to fighting corruption within the discretionary funds that are paid as monthly stipends to unemployed learners.

6.2.1. The governance challenges experienced by the SETAS_

The study findings show that certain challenges handled by the SETAs included a lack of consequence management and compliance with policies. In view of this,

SETA management should ensure that in critical functions where maladministration of funds is prevalent, robust M&E activities are activated to minimise incidents of non-compliance with various relevant policies. It is therefore critical that the SETAs create a conducive environment for good M&E systems to be implemented to support governments with learning and evidence that assists in enhancing services relating to skills development.

6.2.6 The stakeholder participation in the M&E processes

Management should consider implementing M&E systems within the organisation in a manner that contributes to the consistent reporting of performance results to the diversity of stakeholders; these include the DHET, Board, EXCO, and MANCO, to mention but a few. Results-based systems of M&E are an influential community management instrument in helping governments and organisations demonstrate impacts and outcomes to their respective stakeholders and gain public support (Kusek and Rist, 2004: 26). To correct the anomalies within the SETAs, consideration should be given to the M&E process, which is currently not sufficiently encouraging active participation by a diversity of stakeholders.

6.2.6 Leadership support for the M&E system

Du Plessis (2005) submits that, for cooperative environmental governance to succeed, political buy-in and leadership are needed. Concerning the three participating SETAs, both the Board and EXCOM demonstrate support for M&E systems by discussing and recommending ways in which the system of M&E could be improved. SETA's leadership should continue supporting effective systems of M&E by not only discussing methods in which M&E functions could be improved but also by having a deeper analysis of challenges experienced at the operational level. The DPME indicates that both political and administrative leadership are responsible for ensuring that M&E findings result in consequences where there is poor performance and no serious attempt at improvement.

6.2.8. Conflicts within the Seta in respect of the M&E systems

Based on the study findings, the challenge of incorrect interpretation of collected data by staff members tasked with collecting and reporting on performance information that contributes to incorrect decisions that contribute to conflicts in the SETA should be corrected. As the study reveals, monitoring reports were available but were not used regularly by top management and program managers to track progress and inform improvement. Goldman *et al.* (2012:5) Lack of political will, as observed by staff members in the SETA environment, should be addressed to enhance effective and less conflict-generating efforts. Engela and Ajam (2010: 13) reveal that the underlying reasons for conflicts vary from, among others, inadequate leadership, a lack of political will, management weaknesses, misaligned decision rights, and inappropriate institutional design.

Management should review the job description and align the powers and responsibilities of the administrators who are given responsibilities beyond their level. Furthermore, political oversight, which is normally performed by senior officials, should be performed to assess progress on the implementation of various programs and projects. According to Stem *et al.* (2005:13), history indicates that a lot of individual M&E efforts have only led to confusion about competing approaches, duplication of efforts, and a failure to learn from experience.

6.2.9. The important aspects to shape SETAs future

SETA's leadership should develop a plan to address the low staff morale that is attributed to frustration caused by a lack of cordial relations between top management and governance structures that eventually cascade down to lower and middle management levels, which are at the heart of operational activities. The critical factors that assist SETA service delivery outputs, which could shape the future of the SETA, should include, amongst other interventions, improving teamwork and effective communication as essential ingredients for a successful business within the SETAs. According to Atkinson (2015), if there is no effective leadership in an organisation, no changes will be made because there are no

leaders that motivate and lead the organisation's employees as well as provide a clear direction for the organisation.

Lack of consequence management for ill-discipline should be corrected within the SETA. However, instructions to lower-level staff members should not be ambiguous to avoid victimization or the perception of victimization of less powerful staff members (Wuestman and Casey, 2015). For this reason, leaders should communicate and work together with the group of employees to sustain long-term process changes (Abou-Moghli, 2015). This would help the organisation increase the productivity and performance of its employees.

6.2.10. Return on investment.

Scholars define ROI by drawing a link between the investment made in terms of time, resources, and money and the positive results flowing thereafter. The researcher presented in an integrated manner the return on investment from a personal, professional, and societal point of view. ROI is one of the most popular performance measurement and evaluation metrics (Botchkarev, 2015). Drawing on Boatchkarek's definition, the researcher presents the context of performance measurement against the evaluation metrics at three different levels, as highlighted below:

6.2.10.1. Personal return on investment

While the term personal return on investment can be defined in several ways, in common usage, it is just what it sounds like the investment potential that you, as an employee, offer to your organisation (Stack, 2019). It is against the backdrop of the definition that the researcher elaborated on the personal returns on investment accrued from employment activities, particularly as an M&E staff member. The SETAs provided a window through which the researcher was able to make a critical observation on the activities that inform the M&E function. It is, however, important to note that access to personnel and secondary data such as annual reports and policies granted to the researcher has presented the opportunity to the SETAs to gain

comprehensive and critically analysed information about the organisational performance in the M&E context.

The researcher is of the view that the SETAs are presented with the opportunity to improve organisational performance and remove bottlenecks created by insufficiently supported policy positions; however, they could review such activities through the lens of the TIPS framework documented in this study.

6.2.10.2. Professional return on investment

ROI is defined and perceived differently by different stakeholders. However, it is possible to monetize the benefits of training, and a simple calculation could quantify the value (Jasson and Govender, 2017). In the context of this study, the researcher is of the view that quantification of the professional value gained out of pursuing an assignment is proven to be difficult to quantify in monetary terms. These points of view considered many factors, such as access to professors at school and professionals at all levels in the SETAs, ranging from Executive management to junior personnel. The professional ROI presented the researcher with an opportunity, at a doctoral level, to contribute new knowledge to the existing body of knowledge in the current research area.

6.2.10.3. Societal return on investment

The adjective societal is closely linked with another adjective, social. It is therefore within the context of the relation between the two adjectives that the researcher presents his views on the ROI at the societal level. The workplace and economic society do not exist in isolation. Interaction with participants at the workplace and professionals in the economic activity space during data collection and presentation of the results is therefore geared towards adding to the body of knowledge for societal consumption.

The researcher is of the view that the knowledge gained during the study of the problem statement, together with the presentation of the results and recommendations, contributes to the societal return on investment. The researcher concludes that with proper M&E, society can be assured of better and more efficient use of funds as well as the achievement of targets and goals while mitigating wasteful expenditure. This would be one of the societal ROIs, as a society can be confident that corruption and wastefulness are kept under control.

6.3. Recommendations for future study

Various study findings reveal that there are pockets of knowledge gaps around public involvement in the reduction of the triple challenges of unemployment, inequality, and poverty, particularly amongst youth (include a reference here). The present researcher therefore believes that a future study would benefit from further research, as mentioned in this section. Methodological work is needed on how to robustly analyse the impact of legislative burdens on government institutions to the detriment of service delivery. Research can also be conducted to develop approaches that would confront the challenges of unemployment, poverty, and inequality in three spheres of government using M&E activities gathered data. Furthermore, future studies can also focus on an in-depth exploration of how business and political leadership might support effective corporate governance and eradicate public sector corruption that entrenches poor service delivery at the municipal level as the first port of entry into government services.

6.4. New M&E information the researcher provides.

Therefore, based on the research findings, the researcher recommends that the existing Board-approved M&E framework and policy in the SETAs be strengthened and used to enhance accountability and transparency while sustaining robust sector skill development. The study shares detailed information on how M&E is structured and ways in which it could be strengthened through, amongst other interventions, advocacy for the utilisation of the reports that are produced by M&E business units.

However, the lack of dedicated business units that take care of M&E activities weakens the robust assurance provided by the M&E professionals. Within the SETA space, the lack of a dedicated business unit minimises accountability and transparency for the discretionary grant money that should be accurately accounted for. The results of the lack of a dedicated business unit minimise the opportunity for the SETAs to enhance the quality of the learning experience for the unemployed learners. The research findings highlight a set of challenges that have generally contributed to the poor application of M&E in recent times.

The extent to which planned M&E activities are conducted that is linked to project monitoring and risk management activities could mitigate the corruption risks that might materialise and disturb the proper implementation of skills development. However, the level of assurance emanating from these activities is not fully supported by the governance structure because they expose some of the unethical activities taking place at higher levels within the organisations.

6.5. Conclusion.

The study was 'born' out of the concern that there was very little visible M&E within the SETAs concerning the strategic outcome and some of the high-value projects. The findings reveal that the existing SETA M&E framework has provided structured measures on which projects should be monitored to curb negative events and provide accurate information for skills development planning. However, a lack of political will and capacity in terms of technical know-how hinders full implementation and contributes to poor planning, to mention but a few.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Letter(S) of Permission to Conduct the Study



11 December 2020

ATTENTION: MR. JACOB MOASA
W&RSETA

Email: JMoasa@wrseta.org.za

Dear Jacob Moasa

Re: Letter of permission to conduct study at Banking Sector Education and Training Authority (BANKSETA) on the Monitoring and Evaluation as a governance tool to enhance accountability and service delivery.

This letter serves to inform you that after careful consideration we hereby grant you the permission to conduct your research on the Monitoring and Evaluation as a governance tool to enhance accountability and service delivery within the BANKSETA for your Doctoral Degree with Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management

All interviews around the office, observations and distribution of questionnaires are approved and will be duly supervised by the BANKSETA human resource unit, and please feel free to contact the Strategy and Research unit for additional clarification.

All the best with your research.

APPROVED / NOT APPROVED

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'DM'.

**LEFASO (DANNY) MOTSOENENG MR.
ACTING CEO (ACEO): BANKSETA**

**Cc: Vuyani Ntanjana: HOD Strategy & Research
Evans Riba: Specialist: Strategy & Research**

BANKSETA Gauteng (Head Office)
Building C2, Eco Origin Office Park
349 Witch-Hazel Avenue
Eco-Park Estate, Highveld
Centurion

BANKSETA Free State Office
Motho TVET College Central Office
c/o Georges & Alwal Streets
Bloemfontein

BANKSETA Eastern Cape Office
Waverley Office Park, Phase 4
Building 3-33, Philip Frame Road
Chiselhurst
East London

BANKSETA Limpopo Office
Stand 3200, Platinum Park
Extension 68, Bendor
Polokwane

30 April 2021

Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority

Ground floor

37 Empire Road

Parktown, Johannesburg

Tel: 011 381 8900

Dear Jacob Moasa

Re: Letter of permission to conduct study at Insurance Sector Education and Training Authority (INSETA) on the Monitoring and Evaluation as a governance tool to enhance accountability and service delivery

This letter serves to inform you that after careful consideration we hereby grant you the permission to conduct your research on the Monitoring and Evaluation as a governance tool to enhance accountability and service delivery within the INSETA for your Doctoral Degree with Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management.

All interviews around the office, observations and distribution of questionnaires are approved and will be duly supervised by the INSETA human resource unit, and please feel free to contact the unit for additional clarification.

All the best with your research.

APPROVED / NOT APPROVED



Chief Executive Officer

Board Members: Mr. J.S. Ngubane (Chairperson), Ms. V. Pearson (Business), Ms. L. van der Merwe (Business), Ms. R.G. Govender (Business), Ms. P. Mandes (Business), Ms. S.J. Kruger (Business), Ms. Z. Motsa (Business), Mr. R.P. Motshabane (Labour), Mr. M. Soobramoney (Labour), Mr. J.J.M. Mabena (Labour), Ms. S.A. Anders (Labour), Mr. C.B. Botha (Labour), Ms. S.T. Dinyake (Labour), Ms. F. Mabaso (Government), Mr. S.M. Mpuru (Community Organisation)
CEO: N. Starr

Mr Jacob Moasa
Senior Manager: Enterprise Risk Management
Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&RSETA)
Riverside Office Park
Hennops House
1303 Heuwel Avenue
Centurion, PRETORIA
0157

10 May 2021

Dear Mr Moasa

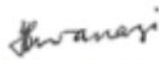
RE: LETTER OF PERMISSION TO CONDUCT STUDY AT WHOLESALE AND RETAIL SECTOR EDUCATION AND TRAINING AUTHORITY (W&RSETA) ON THE MONITORING AND EVALUATION AS A GOVERNANCE TOOL TO ENHANCE ACCOUNTABILITY AND SERVICE DELIVERY

This letter serves to inform you that after careful consideration you are hereby granted permission to conduct your research on the Monitoring and Evaluation as a governance tool to enhance accountability and service delivery within the W&RSETA for your Doctoral Degree with Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management.

This research may include interviews around the office, observations and distribution of questionnaires and the approval is granted providing the information gathered is used solely for research purposes and that research reports/outcomes are shared with the W&RSETA upon completion.

All the best with your research.

Yours sincerely,



Mr Tom Mkhwanazi
Chief Executive Officer

Board: Reggie Sibya (Chairperson), Sibusiso Busane, Thandeka Nshangase, Themba Mthembu, Mzimasaké Sijimandela, Lerato Mokhele, David Makua, Lucas Ramathodi, Ross Raynen, Margaret Bango, Zinhle Tyikwe, Nonkululeko Bogopa, Zibele Sokabo, Sebe Rasibisa

Appendix B: Data Collection Instruments

Main interview Semi-structures interview questionnaire questions

Interview Questionnaire

Name of SETA	
Name of Interviewee	
Contact details of Interviewee: Office/cell phone	
E-mail	
Date	
Time Venue	
Direct/telephonic interview	

This research study is to be conducted for a Doctor of Philosophy in the Management of Technology and Innovation at the Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management. Cell: 082 826 3976, email: moasapj@gmail.com

Title: Monitoring and Evaluation as a governance tool to enhance accountability and service delivery

Supervisor: Dr. Shirley Lloyd Contact details: (011) Cell No. xxxxxxxx E-mail: xxxxxxxx

SECTION A: MONITORING AND EVALUATION FUNCTIONS

1. How does an M&E unit/activities/function support the SETA to carry out its mandate in terms of the Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act No. 97 of 1998

2. To what extent are the outcomes of projects, programmes, and policies monitored & evaluated?

3. How do you rate your current readiness for the planning and implementation of a monitoring and evaluation system? e.g.

1. Poor	2. Fair	3. Neutral	4. Good	5. Excellent

Please explain why.

4. What are the effects of the M & E system to support corporate governance?

Please explain why.

SECTION B: MONITORING AND EVALUATION SYSTEMS

5. How would the monitoring and evaluation system assist the SETA in achieving service delivery/ skills development? (

Please explain why.

-
-
-
-
6. Is there a link between M&E systems and the SETA's performance management, how are they linked?

-
-
-
-
7. Who are the organisation's key stakeholders, and how does the M&E system respond to their information needs?

-
-
-
-
8. How is the information provided by the M&E system shared with stakeholders?

SECTION C: MONITORING AND EVALUATION READINESS ASSESSMENT

9. Does the organisation have written M&E policies and procedures in place and what do you is the best method to implement M&E in the SETA?

10. How many M&E staff does the organisation have and what are their roles and responsibilities?

11. Does leadership (Board & Executive Management Committee [EXCOM]) support the M&E system? Can you provide examples of how this is done?

12. Is information from the M&E system used in decision-making? Can you provide examples of this?

SECTION D: GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

13. How do you rate the current corporate governance in your SETA?

Poor	Fair	Neutral	Good	Excellent
-------------	-------------	----------------	-------------	------------------

Please explain why.

14. How does an M&E system enhance good governance?

15. How do you measure the improvement in governance and accountability due to the implementation of an M&E system?

16. What are the current challenges experienced by the SETA in terms of governance?

SECTION E: SYSTEMS APPROACH

17. How do you envisage the involvement of all stakeholders to achieve a synergistic (outcome (DHET, Board, and administrators) in the M & E initiative?

18. How do you deal with conflicts concerning the monitoring and evaluation system?

19. What are the critical factors that would shape the future of SETA?

Appendix C: Ethical Clearance Certificate

The Da Vinci Institute for Technology Management (Pty) Ltd
PO Box 185, Modderfontein, 1645, South Africa
Tel + 27 11 608 1331 Fax +27 11 608 1380
www.davinci.ac.za



Reference: 00122
Date: 20 January 2022

Ethical Declaration

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the Doctorate Research of the student named below has received ethical clearance from The Da Vinci Institute Ethics Committee. The student and supervisor will be expected to continue to uphold the Da Vinci Institute's Research Ethics Policy as indicated during the application.

Proposed Title: Monitoring and Evaluation as a governance tool to enhance service delivery

Student Name: Moasa Pheaga Jacob

Student number: 10618

Supervisor: Dr Lloyd Shirley

Co-Supervisor: N/A

Period: Ethics approval is granted from 2022/01/20 to 2024/05/14

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "HB Klopper".

Chairperson: Research & Ethics Committee

Prof HB Klopper
Executive Dean: Research and Institutional Partnerships

Directors: B Anderson (Vice-President and Chief Executive Officer), B Mkhize
Company Registration No. 2001/009271/07
Registered with the Department of Higher Education and Training as a private higher education institution under the Higher Education Act, 1997.
Registration No. 2004/HE07/003

RESEARCH • DESIGN • EDUCATION

Appendix D: Consent form)

Example of a consent/assent return slip to participate in a study.

I, _____ (participant name), confirm that the person asking my consent to take part in this research has told me about the nature, procedure, potential benefits, and anticipated inconvenience of participation.

I have read (or had explained to me) and understood the study as explained in the information sheet.

I have had sufficient opportunity to ask questions and am prepared to participate in the study.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time without penalty (if applicable).

I am aware that the findings of this study will be processed into a research report, journal publications, and/or conference proceedings, but that my participation will be kept confidential unless otherwise specified.

I agree to the recording of the _____ (e.g., virtual on Microsoft Teams, or physical in the office).

I have received a signed copy of the informed consent agreement.

Participant Name & Surname (please print)

Participant Signature

Date

Researcher's Name & Surname (please print)

-

Researcher's signature

Date

Annexure E: Editors' Letter



CERTIFICATE OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDITING & PROOFREADING

21st June 2023

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

This is to confirm that my professional service was consulted for the editing and proofreading of the doctoral thesis titled:

"Monitoring and evaluation as a governance tool for enhancing accountability in the sector education and training authorities."

Below is the summary of my editorial/proofreading work:

- I have proofread and edited the work to make it more presentable by correcting errors and omissions in spellings and punctuations.
- A few sentence and phrasal structuring were also adjusted including ensuring consistency of tenses.
- I also made corrections on few referencing errors.

Signed: Ifedayo Oshin
Academic Editor
0780055881

17, Meyerton Fruits Farm, Meyerton, 1960, Midvaal, Johannesburg
roshinenterprises@gmail.com

Annexure F: Overall Similarity Index (Turnitin Report)

Final Draft Thesis			
ORIGINALITY REPORT			
10%	7%	2%	9%
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS
PRIMARY SOURCES			
1	Submitted to Da Vinci Institute Student Paper		4%
2	hdl.handle.net Internet Source		1%
3	quod.lib.umich.edu Internet Source		1%
4	scholar.sun.ac.za Internet Source		1%
5	uir.unisa.ac.za Internet Source		1%
6	evaluateblog.wordpress.com Internet Source		<1%
7	slidelegend.com Internet Source		<1%
8	Submitted to Coventry University Student Paper		<1%
9	repository.nwu.ac.za Internet Source		<1%

Annexure G: Document analysis protocol



**MONITORING AND EVALUATION AS A GOVERNANCE TOOL FOR
ENHANCING ACCOUNTABILITY IN THE SECTOR EDUCATION AND
TRAINING AUTHORITIES**

1. Introduction

The purpose of the documents is to highlight the research protocol that the researcher has followed to conduct this study. The description of the methodology and ethical considerations that the researcher took into consideration are also discussed in this document. A more recent study (Patton, 2015 cited in (Morgan, 2021:64) shows that qualitative document analysis is valuable, hence this method consists of analysing various types of documents including books, newspaper articles, academic journal articles, and institutional reports.

2. Primary (published and unpublished), secondary, and tertiary

The secondary data is referred to as data that was collected by another person (s) than the current researcher. It is for this reason that during the research design, the researcher developed procedures to collect secondary data that was already in existence to support the study. According to (Wagh, 2023) primary and secondary data are defined as:

a) Primary Data:

Data that has been generated by the researcher himself/herself, surveys, interviews, and experiments, specially designed for understanding and solving the research problem at hand.

b) Secondary Data:

Using existing data generated by large government institutions, healthcare facilities, etc. as part of organisational record keeping. The data is then extracted from more varied data files.

The researcher collected both primary and secondary data using permissible protocol requirements for research. In line with qualitative methods, semi-structured interview questions were developed and utilised for data collection from Bank SETA, Insurance SETA, and Wholesale and Retail SETA. The

secondary data was also collected to support the researchers' epistemology. These include annual reports, internally issued memos, internal and external audit reports, policies, and M&E frameworks to mention but a few. The literature sources available to help the researcher develop a good understanding of and insight into, previous research can be divided into three categories: (Figure 1) primary (published and unpublished), secondary, and tertiary. (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2007:64).

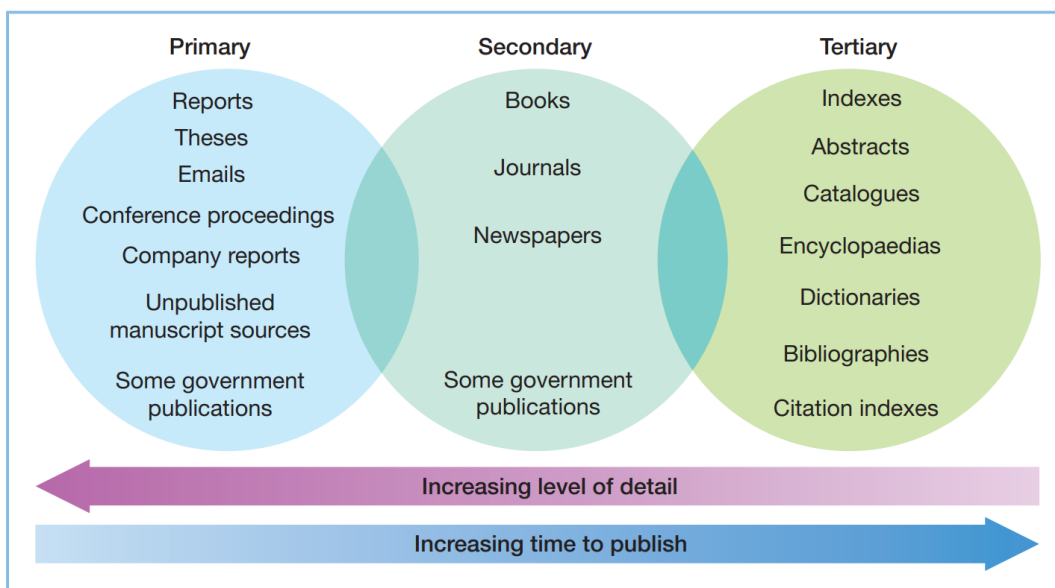


Figure 1: Three categories: primary (published and unpublished), secondary, and tertiary (Saunders, Lewis, and Thornhill, 2007:64)

3. The methods section of protocol when using primary secondary data and tertiary data.

The methodical section is discussed under research protocol, research protocol, questions, and objectives.

3.1. Research protocol

As required by the research protocol to mention the questions, aim, and objectives of the study paragraph 3.2 share the aim of the study, while paragraph 3.3 in Table 1 below provide information on the research questions together with the objective. Although some mention of the original study should be made when relevant, the methods part of the protocol should primarily focus on the procedures of the current study (Marais., *et al.* 2021).

3.2. Research Aim

This study intends to present a new approach to M&E towards the elimination of barriers to proper M&E at each level of employees and to ensure responsible, accountable, and value-driven M&E. Also, the study aims to develop a viable framework for the application of M&E in the SETAs that are established to facilitate a credible skills development mechanism in South Africa.

3.3. Research Questions and Objectives

The table below presents the research questions and related objectives of the study:

Table 1: Research questions and objectives

Questions	Objectives
How effective are the SETA mechanisms in applying M&E as a management and governance tool?	To explore the extent to which M&E is understood and implemented in the SETA environment.
What are the lessons learned from M&E practices within South Africa to date, and how can these contribute to the implementation	To critically examine the concepts and constructs that inform and shape M&E and the assumptions

strategy of M&E within SETAs?	upon which these are based.
What are the current trends in governance and M&E strategies being implemented within SETAs?	To provide detailed guidelines for the application of M&E in the SETAs.
What are the quality controls in project implementation and improvements for effective M&E processes?	To examine quality control in project implementation and improvements for effective M&E processes
What recommendations can the study contribute to new knowledge related to the field of study that is required – in line with NQF level 10?	To recommend measures for improving M&E practices within SETAs.

Source: Researcher's own compilation

4. Sub-sections of the 'methods' section of your protocol:

4.1. Study design

Although the research design was cross-sectional, the researcher also used a qualitative strategy for this study. The qualitative design allowed for a fluid and open study. Babbie and Mouton (1998) elucidate that the kind of research design has to be directed by the expected outcome it intends to attain. Associated with the study, Creswell (2013) described qualitative design as a continuously shifting method that functions in phases varying from gathering the data to communicating it.

A qualitative design is beneficial in understanding the subject and aids the researcher to analyse and create a well-rounded image. Utilising qualitative design, enabled the researcher to experience an uncomplicated flow of the exploratory procedure of the study. An in-depth

interviewing process was undertaken with SETA personnel and Executive management members who are involved in the M&E processes in sampled SETAs using an interview guide which was developed by the researcher.

4.2. Study setting

The research setting refers to the place where the data are collected. The data for the study was collected from three different SETAs. This chapter deals with the research design that was followed in carrying out the research. The details concerning the sample, design, tools, and procedure followed for the collection of data and the nature of the data are discussed next. The researcher needed to discuss the original study's environment since it gives the current study a crucial perspective. Review the original study's protocol and make a summary of the information presented in the findings format.

4.3. Participants

The researcher was convinced that the use of a purposive sample method enabled him to select staff members whose operational and strategic functions involved M&E, for a qualitative approach, from each of the different SETAs to be interviewed. The researcher has described the participant characteristics that qualified them for inclusion in the present study. Not all participants were relevant to this study, hence the number of participants in SETAs such as Bank SETA and Insurance SETA where the M&E units are yet to be established as a dedicated function were smaller in number.

A nonprobability sampling procedure was used for the selection of experienced and knowledgeable expert participants in the M&E field (Cozby and Bates, 2014). The sampling method for qualitative research consisted of a non-probability, purposive selection of three SETAs. A

nonprobability sampling method was selected accordingly for the identification of SETAs because the researcher did not have any guarantee that they were representative of the population. The participation was one (Bank SETA) and two (Insurance SETA) respectively. According to (Parveen & Huma, 2017) non-probability sampling method mostly involves judgment. Instead of randomization, participants are selected because they are easy to access.

4.4. Data collection

Collecting data was done by securing appointments after emailing the participants at the sampled SETAs selected by the researcher for the study to interview them. After securing an appointment, the date and time were agreed upon, both written responses and the interviews were conducted from the 11th to 25th March 2022. The participants were interviewed on Micro Soft teams based on logistics practicalities and others opted to submit written responses to each research question on the questionnaire form. These arrangements were also dictated by the COVID-19 regulation that was in force during the period when data was collected. Since the beginning of March 2020, South Africa and the global community have suffered the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) is a disease that is caused by a new severe acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2). However, the National State of Disaster was officially listed on the 5th of April 2022. (Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs, 2022:03)

4.5. Data analysis

The researcher utilised acceptable qualitative data analysis methods which supported the literature. Furthermore, Aguayo (2020) demonstrated a different way of collecting and analysing data utilising qualitative methods using the eight criteria observed in one-on-one interviews and focus group interviews to “produce a richer interpretation” (Rabiee, 2004:

660). The researcher followed the above-mentioned steps. Further, the coded data was compared with the literature reviewed. By doing this, the researcher was able to identify the trend and practice to be studied which involved various tools and techniques utilised in the application of M&E.

While the benefit associated with the utilisation of the qualitative method has already been clarified, the researcher adopted descriptive information obtained from the participants which was expressed descriptively to present the results collected during the data collection process. The researcher analysed the transcripts and written responses and themes relevant to the study emerged.

5. Ethical considerations

Using pre-existing documents as a form of data also raises fewer ethical concerns than using other qualitative methods (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016). Public records are available for anyone to examine and are often anonymous. Authors of books and articles appearing in newspapers and journals are generally aware that anyone will be able to read their content. (Morgan, 2021). The procedures for obtaining consent are described in the following about data collection:

- a. Request for proof of original consent to store and use the data/samples for future research – i.e., the original informed consent Appendix D: Consent form) The document that was used in the original study was submitted together with the current ethics application, subsequently, an ethical clearance certificate was issued (Appendix C: Ethical Clearance Certificate)
- b. The original consent/ permission letters (Appendix A: letter(s) of permission to conduct the study) together with the objective of the study and protection of the participant's anonymity were forwarded to the three SETA before permission was granted to utilise the organisation.