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**Human Sciences Research Council**

**Monitoring and Evaluation of  
DANIDA Support to Education and Skills Development (SESD)  
Programme**

**BASELINE STUDY**

**Synthesis Report**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

### 1. The scope and design of the baseline study

The study established the baseline status of institutions that will be supported by the SESD programme, namely the national Department of Education's FET Directorate, provincial FET Directorates and designated colleges in the provinces of KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Western Cape, as well as the SAQA Southern Regional Office. The regional Department of Labour in KwaZulu-Natal was not included, as relevant structures are still in the process of being established. It is anticipated that this site will be included in the next evaluation. <

The study was designed to take account of the influence of contextual factors within the current phase of policy implementation. A team of eight evaluators visited a total of 26 sites. In addition to interviews with FET college management, a baseline questionnaire was completed by individuals and groups at campus and college level, as well as by staff in FET directorates. This enabled systematic triangulation of baseline ratings at the different levels, in order to obtain a balanced outcome.

FET colleges and campuses were rated on seven dimensions of practice, each with a number of characteristics in which improvement is sought as a result of the SESD programme. These are: *Values and Vision; Leadership and Management; Knowledge Sharing; Institutional Health; Responsiveness; Teaching and Learning; Learner Support*. A rating scale with three categories, namely *weak, emerging* and *strong* was used, with a range of scores attached to each category to allow for improvement within and across categories over the three-year evaluation period.

### 2. Presentation of the data

Data is presented in a synthesis report and an accompanying source file, which contains full baseline reports on all colleges and campuses. The source file is not intended for public circulation, but the information will be useful to those closely involved with the SESD programme.

### 3. Average baseline status of colleges and campuses

No dimension emerges as *strong* at either college or campus level. The effect of previous capacity building interventions may account for the fact that *Leadership and Management* rates as the highest *emerging* dimension at college level. This also indicates confidence in the newly merged institutions, even though controversies around the appointment or delays in appointment of CEOs have clearly had an impact on how the issue of institutional leadership is perceived. At campus level *Institutional Health* has the highest average rating in the *emerging* category. At both levels *Responsiveness and Learner Support* rate as the *weakest* dimensions.

An interesting finding is that *Knowledge Sharing* rates as an *emerging* dimension at college level but as a *weak* dimension at campus level. Narrative data confirms the pivotal role of FET college management with regard to the dissemination of knowledge. Campuses do not have nearly as much access to information and opportunities for communication as those higher up in the knowledge chain.

#### **4. Comparative analysis of baseline ratings across the three provinces**

In a comparative analysis across all sites baseline ratings at provincial level was included. In overall terms *Learner Support* again emerges as the area most in need of improvement. The ratings in the other dimensions tend to cluster around the boundary between *weak* and *emerging*. This convergence is deceptive as the narrative data shows that while ratings may be similar, the contextual factors that account for the ratings vary significantly.

The degree of convergence and divergence between provincial and college ratings shows how the vantage point from which an assessment is made, influences the outcome. In comparative terms the KwaZulu-Natal average rating for FET colleges in the province is the highest, followed by North West province and then by Western Cape province. This finding should not be interpreted as signalling that FET colleges in KwaZulu-Natal are out-performing colleges in the other two provinces. No rating is definitive and it may simply mean that the evaluator was positively influenced by the individual ratings at provincial level. A finer comparative analysis of each dimension shows a broader range of meanings and interpretations.

#### **5. Baseline status of provincial FET Directorates**

The baseline status of provincial FET directorates needs to be interpreted against a background of re-visioning and a shift in strategic focus. Directorates are in the process of building capacity, with some further along the way than others. In many areas of SESD implementation policies are not yet in place and college practices tend to be *ad hoc* rather than systematically planned, implemented and evaluated.

Narrative data shows that colleges tend to expect more from the provincial level than the capacity that exists at this level. What may be at issue here is contestation around the autonomy of FET colleges and the need for more distinct role definition between the two levels. In their own right provincial FET directorates are, however, endeavouring to correct negative internal and external perceptions of the college sector through strategic and practical activities.

#### **6. Baseline status of FET Directorate in National DoE**

The SESD national implementation plan is closely aligned with the overall DoE strategy. In implementing its broader strategy, the DoE has moved ahead of the SESD programme in some areas, such as in strategic planning and evaluation and the design of a national communication and advocacy strategy for FET. In other areas, significantly in the management of the SESD programme, progress has been slower. While the capacity of the national DoE is widely seen to

have strengthened over time, concerns about understaffing and the likely impact on the DoE's leadership role in the SESD programme are evident. These concerns feed into a deeper point of tension, namely the difference in national and provincial understandings of their respective roles in the management and facilitation of the FET college sector. The national role of setting up the new FET system is deemed to have been largely successful and provinces see the key role of implementation as now being in their domain. Resolution of different perceptions in this regard is required.

Narrative data provided by colleges and campuses in relation to provincial and national support for college transformation identifies curriculum specification, examination and moderation of programmes and the issuing of national certificates and diplomas as areas of concern. The fact that the centrally administered NATED 191 programmes and their forms of assessment are not yet NQF-aligned creates a division between these programmes and SETA-related curriculum initiatives. In this regard the negative effect of what were perceived to be poor inter-departmental relations between DoE and DoL, as well as with the newly established Umalusi, was also raised as an issue.

Communications between the various levels of the FET college system are deemed to have strengthened over time, although challenges remain.

#### **7. Baseline status of SAQA Southern Regional Office**

Although the provincial perspective is that the SAQA Southern Regional Office is an extension of SAQA at national level, this office argues that a distinction needs to be drawn between policy processes at national level and a regional role in terms of advocacy and communication, as well as support for SAQA processes of standard setting, quality assurance and quality management. It is not deemed appropriate to attribute problems or blockages, whose origins lie elsewhere in the system, to the regional office.

Within this context a set of *impact* outcomes was developed, in relation to the SAQA Southern Regional Office's planned participation in the SESD programme. These outcomes relate to 3 systemic levels: to the two targeted FET colleges in the Western Cape; to the FET directorate in the province and the WCED more generally and to SAQA at national level. In this way differences in perceptions about the roles and functions of this office can be accommodated.

Narrative data shows that FET colleges and campuses generally have mixed views on NQF-alignment as a whole and provision of learnerships in particular. While there is enthusiasm for the opportunities offered by NQF-accredited courses and linkages with SETAs, there is also ambivalence about uncritical adoption of outcomes-based methods and the time taken by curriculum development activities. The low average ratings with regard to learnerships refer to reluctance to get involved in an area which is viewed as procedurally complex, as well as scepticism about active and continued support by employers. The contribution to the SESD

programme by the SAQA Southern Regional Office will be vital in terms of finding ways of assisting FET colleges to understand and use the NQF system.

#### **8. Orientation towards SESD Programme**

Provincial Steering Committees (PSCs) have been established in all provinces and Provincial Technical Advisors (PTAs) have been appointed. There is strong overall commitment to the SESD programme, with the addition of PTAs viewed as adding strength to directorates. Most colleges and campuses have some understanding of the SESD programme and its envisaged implementation. Even though this awareness is uneven all sites are looking forward to implementation.

#### **9. Overall conclusions**

The purpose of a baseline study is to describe a social context prior to policy or programme interventions, to note key environmental conditions and to assist in the identification of problem areas. As the assessment of relative strengths and weaknesses in relation to a series of performance dimensions has been the focus of this study, the main conclusion follows from the finding that the overall average ratings show a picture of *mainly emerging and a few weak dimensions*. The low ratings in the areas of *Responsiveness and Learner Support* are not unexpected as these are both areas in which colleges have traditionally not been proactive or particularly innovative. In the light of the developmental and immediate objectives of the SESD programme it is reasonable to conclude that planned interventions in these areas should be high on the list of priorities.

A further conclusion is that ratings need to be understood with reference to contextual differences highlighted in college and campus baseline reports. Too strong an insistence on uniform interventions across all colleges and provincial FET directorates will undervalue the fact that there are different needs and different reasons for what appear to be similar ratings.

At a deeper level, tensions between different levels of the FET system has emerged as potentially a constraint to SESD programme implementation. It is not unusual to find that a "gap" exists between policy planning and formulation at the higher levels of the system and policy implementation at the ground levels. This common phenomenon in policy implementation contexts will always be present but it can be managed in a positive way.

The overall baseline picture is thus both realistic and encouraging. It shows where the main challenges lie and it also points to what has already been achieved. The support offered by the SESD programme will go a long way towards meeting identified challenges and thereby strengthening the FET college sector in South Africa.

## SECTION ONE

### The scope of the SESD Programme<sup>1</sup>

#### 1.1 Introduction

This report records the baseline status of the institutions selected for support in terms of the Support to Education and Skills Development (SESD) Programme of cooperation between Denmark and South Africa. The SESD programme will run from late 2002 to early 2006.

The SESD Programme is closely aligned with the policy positions on education and skills development of both the Danish and South African Governments. In the Danish case, the project reflects the position of the 1994 *Vocational Education and Training* policy paper of Danida. Although conceptualised prior to the launch of the subsequent draft *Skills Development* policy paper of 2002, the SESD programme is very much in keeping with the realigned focus of Danida. In particular, there is a clear concern in the SESD programme with contribution to broader poverty reduction goals, as well as with Danida's cross-cutting concerns in areas such as gender, democratisation and HIV/AIDS. Given South Africa's history, specific focus is placed on issues of redress and equity. In operational terms, the SESD programme is also shaped by the 1996 *Guidelines for Sector Programme Support*.

The SESD Programme is also clearly aligned with the policies and priorities of the South African Government that seek to address four key issues, namely redress, access, equity and quality. The programme seeks in particular to support the *National Strategy for Further Education and Training* (1999) and the *New Institutional Landscape for Public Further Education and Training Colleges: Reform of South Africa's Technical Colleges* (2001); building directly on the latter by support to the national and provincial departments and selected colleges in operationalising the newly merged colleges envisaged in the *Landscape* document.

Support will be provided in three selected provinces, namely KwaZulu-Natal, North West and Western Cape, as well as to the National Department of Education. The programme is expected to build on the experience gained through related activities during the period from 1996 to 2001.

#### 1.2 Objectives of the SESD Programme

The aim of Danish assistance to education and skills development in South Africa (2002– 2006) is set out in a broad development objective and two immediate objectives. They are:

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<sup>1</sup> Information provided in this section was obtained from SESD programme documents made available to the HSRC, i.e. Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danida (2002) *Support to Education and Skills Development, Volumes 1 – 5*.



#### DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVE

The SESD Programme will increase the employability of male and female youth and adults through supporting the delivery of practical and labour market oriented education and skills training provided mainly within the FET band.

#### IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 1

*The institutional and financial sustainability of the FET colleges in general and the targeted provincial clusters in particular will be enhanced through the establishment of a supportive and conducive enabling environment, which will also serve to advance the objectives of the NQF.*

#### IMMEDIATE OBJECTIVE 2:

*The FET colleges in general and the targeted clusters in particular are directly supported to deliver quality programmes responsive to the needs of the world of work including the SMME sector, in accordance with the needs of the society at large.*

The importance of the notion of employability is that it focuses on the colleges' ability to prepare learners more effectively for the world-of-work, rather than on the more questionable ability to directly insert them into jobs. The SESD programme will contribute to the process of moving towards the development objective through a strengthening of the FET college system at all levels. Performance improvement at national and provincial department level, as well as at college and classroom levels will meet the immediate objectives and thus the development objectives of Danida and the South African Government.

It must, however, be remembered that the Danish intervention is one of several that seek to support policy processes and practices that are owned by the South African Government. It will thus be difficult to discern any specific Danish effect within a broader framework of partnership. The long-term nature of the objectives and the challenges of external factors, such as those in the economy and the labour market, will also work against impact being directly attributable to the SESD Programme.

### 1.3 Programme components

The SESD programme has 5 components. Each is briefly summarised below.

#### 1.3.1 Support to the National Department of Education's FET Branch

The programme aims to provide assistance to the national Department of Education (DoE) in the following areas:

- Provide technical advice to the FET branch of DoE on issues relating to the merger of the technical colleges, especially on planning, managing and monitoring the process.
- Assist the FET branch in environmental scanning, including needs assessment in relation to the transformation of the technical colleges.

- Advise on the development and implementation of funding formulas and mechanisms for the FET colleges.
- Assist in developing plans for capacitating provincial DoE staff, so they can play an effective role in the transformation of the FET college sector.
- Assist in developing plans for capacitating FET college management and staff.

The SESD programme will also assist in the development of learnership curricula. The developed curricula will benefit the Department of Labour (DoL) and its constituencies (for example, the selected SETAs) as well as the selected FET colleges.

### **1.3.2 Support to the FET divisions of Provincial Education Departments**

The SESD programme will provide similar systems development and capacity building support to the provincial Departments of Education as that described above for the national DoE.

### **1.3.3 Support To Three Provincial College Clusters**

The bulk of the aid offered by the SESD programme will be focussed on a number of selected FET colleges in three provinces. The programme will be implemented in two FET Colleges each in the Western Cape and KwaZulu-Natal and in all three FET colleges in the North West Province. This totals seven FET colleges.

Four common programme elements are proposed for each of the three Provinces. These are:

- Re-structuring of the FET Colleges
- Skills development and SMME growth
- Mathematics, Science and Technology
- HIV/AIDS

Key issues to be covered in provincial support programmes include:

- Governance and legislative requirements and management best practices
- The upgrading of lecturers' professional and pedagogical skills
- Learnership and skills programme development and implementation

The programme will also seek to put in place a Learner Affairs and Support Unit. These units will hopefully drive the HIV/AIDS interventions.

More specific goals include:

- Training of college councils and senior and middle management in governance, change management, financial management and strategic planning.
- Support to FET colleges to develop advocacy interventions targeting learners, parents and the world of work.
- Support to the selected FET colleges to build a new institutional culture and identity.

- Upgrading of the professional and pedagogical skills of FET college lecturers, including gender-sensitive practises and ICT, and, capacity building in the areas of needs analysis, forging links, programme planning and implementation.
- Capacity building for implementing learnerships and/or skills programmes with key partners.
- Capacity building of lecturers to plan and implement HIV/AIDS awareness initiatives under the auspices of the Learner Affairs and Support Units.

#### **1.3.4 Capacity building of Department of Labour staff in Kwa-Zulu Natal**

The aim of this intervention is to provide support to two divisions within Department of Labour (DoL) to fulfil their key functions in relation to the unemployed. These divisions are the Employment, Skills and Development Services (ESDS) unit and the 16 Labour Centres. The overall aim would be to assist the new DoL structures in promoting employment and economic growth.

#### **1.3.5 Establishment of a SAQA regional office in Western Cape**

A SAQA office for the southern region has been established in the Western Cape, in part supported by the assets of the National Access Consortium, which in the past has received Danida financial support. The SESD programme will provide support to this regional office.

### **1.4 Programme Management**

The SESD programme will be managed by a national steering committee (NSC), with provincial steering committees established in the three provinces to ensure co-ordination among the involved parties. A Danida SESD Chief Technical Adviser (CTA) has been appointed at national level, with responsibility for daily management and administration of the programme. At provincial level technical advisers (PTAs) have also been appointed.

### **1.5 Monitoring and Evaluation**

The purpose of the monitoring and evaluation system is to *capture the impact of the transformation process in FET colleges and of Danida support to the targeted FET colleges*. Findings and conclusions should be able to inform national and provincial debates on the "optimal roles, functions and institutional arrangements for the FET colleges and on the design of the SESD programme" (SESD, Volume 1, 2002:53-54).

This report gives effect to the establishment of a baseline study for the SESD programme.

## SECTION TWO

### Evaluation Design and Methodology

#### 2.1 Introduction

In this section the overall framework for the monitoring and evaluation study is discussed, followed by an explanation of the fieldwork done during the baseline component of the study and an explanation of data presentation.

#### 2.2 Evaluation framework

The SESD programme enters the FET arena at a moment where merged FET institutions are moving from being a strategic concept on the policy drawing board to becoming an empirical reality. In this regard the work of Kruss, Sayed and Badat (2001) is pertinent. Drawing on contemporary policy literature they argue that policy implementation is characterised by struggles 'within' and 'between' different levels of an educational system. The space for manoeuvre at each level is both shaped and constrained by struggles at previous levels. A national policy may therefore look very different when it is implemented at the institutional level.

A second issue that is relevant to the ongoing evaluation of the SESD programme is how *impact* should be conceptualised. It has become common to use the concept 'best practice' to refer to exemplary or improved organisational performance, but the term is open to interpretation. In this regard Katarobo draws a useful distinction between best practice in the management of public and private enterprises. In business contexts, where companies compete for customers, notions of a contest are evoked by the term, with productivity measured in terms of efficiency and effectiveness as the major indicator. In the public sector, where the best use of public resources for development is the aim, best practice often refers to institutions *that faced and overcame significant challenges* (1998:1). It is not so much a notion of contest that drives this version of best practice; it is a matter of pride for public managers, politicians and citizens of a territory.

The extent to which best practices can be generalised is a point of dispute. Some view best practice as a generic practice that is applicable, irrespective of institutional and structural differences. The most valuable best practices are those that are generic and without limit to their applicability (Katorobo, 1998:4-5). A contrasting school of thought points out that contextual factors always play a role in how 'best practice' is implemented (Cole, 1989; Schon, 1971; Tidd and Hull, 2002). In this view any study of 'best practice' needs to take contextual factors into account. Local re-inventions of policy intentions are to be anticipated and not to be regarded as aberrant behaviour.

It is appropriate to investigate *impact* with a grounded understanding that the current context of policy implementation both shapes and constrains what occurs in implementation sites. The interpretative framework for the baseline study and subsequent evaluations is driven from this position.

## **2.3 Evaluation design**

### **2.3.1 Evaluation model**

An incremental evaluation model will be employed over the first three years of the SESD programme. This will take the form of a baseline study, a series of formative evaluations at approximately six-monthly intervals and a summative evaluation. The purpose of each form of evaluation is briefly described below.

**A baseline study** seeks to describe a social context prior to policy or programme interventions. Key environmental indicators noted during a baseline study allow progress to be measured at regular intervals once the policy interventions have begun. The baseline study has diagnostic value as it helps to identify where the problems are.

**A formative evaluation** is an evaluation of the implementation of a programme (or any other kind of social intervention) with the aim of improving it. Many large programmes use formative evaluations at regular intervals during the life of the programme to measure progress in relation to the original aims of the project and to ensure that the intervention adapts appropriately and timeously to any changes in social reality.

**A summative evaluation** occurs after an intervention and seeks to gauge whether the intervention was successful in meeting its primary aims and objectives. Successful programmes may then be replicated elsewhere. Flawed programmes may be corrected prior to replication. Summative evaluations also help in generating approval from governments, funders and community participants who will then give support to further interventions of a similar nature.

In addition to the above forms of evaluation **continuous monitoring of the implementation** of the programme adds valuable information and data to formative evaluations, which occur at more periodic intervals. Continuous monitoring is to be undertaken by the national and provincial technical advisors, as well as by Danida-appointed specialists.

### **2.3.2 Evaluation Sample**

The evaluation covers four levels of the FET system:

Level 1	National DoE: FET Directorate for Public and Private Colleges (Pretoria)	1 site
Level 2	Provincial DoE: FET Directorates in KwaZulu-Natal (Ulundi), North West (Mafikeng), Western Cape (Cape Town)	3 sites
Level 3	FET colleges	7 sites
Level 4	FET campuses	14 sites

At the first three levels sampling is not required as all identified beneficiaries are to be evaluated. At the fourth level two campuses per FET College have been selected as evaluation sites. The FET Directors in each province nominated the campuses to be included in the evaluation. The rationale for the selection of campuses was that the two campuses together should reflect the range of FET delivery in each merged institution and the contexts in which different institutions operate. A number of reasons were given for the selections made, with some campuses included for more than one reason. In some instances the previous distinction between state and state-aided technical colleges influenced selection. The sample also includes a previous Department of Manpower Training Centre and a previous College of Education. Geographical location influenced selection as the potential for the establishment of links and partnerships with business varies within a geographical area. Where a college covers a large area, some campuses are closer to industrial and commercial development than others. Cultural differences were also cited as a reason for the distribution selected.

The college/campus sites are:

PROVINCE	FET COLLEGE	CAMPUS SITES
KwaZulu-Natal	Mthashana	Vryheid Nongoma
KwaZulu-Natal	Inanda	Ntuzuma Pinetown Kwa-Mashu
North-West	Taletso	Lehurutshe Lichtenburg Mafikeng
North-West	Vuselela	Jouberton Klerksdorp Potchefstroom Taung
North-West	Orbit	Brits ODI Rustenburg Temba
Western Cape	Central Metropole/College of Cape Town	Athlone Cape Sivuyile Western Province
Western Cape	South Cape	Mossel Bay George Oudtshoorn Outeniqua

*It should be noted that more campus sites have in the mean time been added in various college clusters. This has occurred where satellite campuses have been included as campuses, or where skills training centres have been renamed as campuses. In some cases the names of campuses have also been changed. As these configurations have not been confirmed the list used here is the one originally presented to the HSRC.*

The SAQA Southern Regional Office and the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Labour make up the complete sample to bring the total number of sites to 27. The KwaZulu-Natal Department of Labour was, however, not included in the baseline study. Permission was obtained from the National Technical Adviser to exclude this site from the first round of evaluation, as the relevant structures are still in the process of being established. It is anticipated that the baseline status of this site will be ascertained in the second round of evaluation.

### 2.3.3 Operational variables for the measurement of impact

Seven key variables or dimensions were identified in which improvements at the college level are likely to result in better education and better employability of learners. A 'best practice' outcome was stated for each dimension to indicate the optimum end result envisaged. It is assumed that both the national and provincial Departments of Education can play an important facilitatory and developmental role across all seven dimensions and that their contribution to the SESD programme can be evaluated on this basis.

Within each dimension, a number of characteristics were identified as important elements that provide the basis for the evaluation of impact. Over the three years of the evaluation cycle changes occurring in the rating of each dimension and its related characteristics should point to the way in which change is occurring in the FET college sector and, crucially, how this is impacting upon the overall performance of the system.

The initial set of dimensions was submitted to the National Technical Adviser for onward dissemination to the provinces. The table below details the finally approved set.

Dimensions	Outcomes	Characteristics
<b>Values and Vision</b>	A strong vision and a lived set of values drive colleges' transformation processes towards fulfilling their developmental mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practices guided by a clear institutional vision</li> <li>Inculcation of a value system throughout the institution</li> </ul>
<b>Leadership and Management</b>	Strategic leadership, supported by effective management and governance systems, operationalises the transformed vision of the FET college system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-functioning systems of governance, including college councils and academic boards</li> <li>Effective institutional leadership</li> <li>Effective management systems</li> </ul>
<b>Knowledge Sharing</b>	College and system performance enhanced through better flows of knowledge horizontally and vertically within the system, as well as with external stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective vertical knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system</li> <li>Effective horizontal knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system</li> <li>Effective external knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system</li> </ul>
<b>Institutional Health</b>	The financial health and physical infrastructure of colleges contribute to their proper functioning in supporting employability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The establishment and maintenance of financial health</li> <li>Adequate infrastructure</li> <li>Enhanced human resource capacity</li> <li>Quality assurance system</li> </ul>

<b>Responsiveness</b>	Employability enhanced through colleges' greater responsiveness to the needs of learners, their communities and the labour market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good relationships with business</li> <li>• Good relationships with local communities</li> <li>• Good relationships with other state bodies</li> <li>• The development, provision and evaluation of learnership programmes</li> <li>• The development, provision and evaluation of SMME programmes</li> <li>• The development, provision and evaluation of short courses/ skills programmes</li> </ul>
<b>Teaching and Learning</b>	A culture of learning promotes both employability and personal development. Strong systems of curriculum development, classroom pedagogy and staff development support quality learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functioning curriculum development processes</li> <li>• Quality curricular delivery</li> <li>• Well-functioning staff development processes</li> </ul>
<b>Learner Support</b>	Learner support systems improve labour market and life outcomes through support to learners' health, learning and insertion into the labour market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development, implementation and evaluation of academic support programmes</li> <li>• The development, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS awareness interventions</li> <li>• The development, implementation and evaluation of guidance and counselling systems</li> </ul>

For each characteristic a developmental scale was developed that allows for improvement within a category and movement across categories, over the three-year evaluation period. As can be seen below the basic rating index for each characteristic is the same.

<b>A weak characteristic. Mostly not present, or very limited.</b>	<b>An emerging characteristic. It is present but not yet stable or consistent</b>	<b>A strong characteristic. A distinguishing feature.</b>
1 – 3	4 – 6	7-10

An explanatory text describing each category was included for the 24 characteristics, in order to guide respondents in their interpretation. (See Appendix 1 for an example of the baseline questionnaire.)

Ratings given are obviously indicative of the views held by individual respondents, so a process of triangulation was followed to overcome the analytical dilemma of playing off one vantage point against another. Triangulation *per se* does not necessarily overcome researcher bias, nor does it increase the reliability and validity of information-gathering and interpretative processes. However, when more than one person examines the same situation it serves to "lessen recourse to the assertion of privileged insight" (Fielding *et al*, 1986: 25). In the final instance the accuracy of any method comes from its systematic application. In the next sub-section fieldwork methods will be explained in greater detail to show how systematic application was achieved.

### 2.3.4 Fieldwork

Fieldwork for the baseline study was conducted by a team of evaluators. Although it was originally agreed that only previously identified HSRC researchers would be used, the resignation of one of the HSRC researchers and the subsequent re-allocation of work within the HRD Research Programme made this impossible. Permission was obtained from the National Technical Adviser to draw on a pool of experienced external evaluators. Four consultants were used, in addition to four HSRC personnel.



The advantage of this change was that more evaluators could be deployed simultaneously, which decreased the amount of time spent in the field.

The table below details the field activities undertaken in each province.

MAP OF SITE VISITS				
KWAZULU-NATAL	Visit 4 campus sites	Interview FET College management	Visit Provincial DoE	Visit Provincial Dept. of Labour offices, Durban*
NORTH WEST	Visit 6 campus sites	Interview FET College management	Visit Provincial DoE	Visit National DoE, FET Branch, Pretoria
WESTERN CAPE	Visit 4 campus sites	Interview FET College management	Visit Provincial DoE	Visit SAQA Southern Regional Office, Cape Town

\* This visit was not undertaken during the baseline study

In order to provide a context to each baseline rating a campus/college/provincial/national profile was sent out in advance of each visit. This document provided a description of the socio-economic context of the site as well as a statistical profile, extracted from the *Quantitative Overview of the FET College Sector (2002)*, as prepared by the NBI/CCF. Respondents were asked to check the information provided, provide up-dated information where possible and identify trends.

#### *Campus visits (two days)*

Each campus visit entailed the following:

- First interview with the campus head, to verify the accuracy of socio-economic information and statistical data in the *Campus Profile* and to obtain up-dated figures where possible. It was requested that emerging trends and explanatory comments be noted.
- Second interview with the campus head on general issues such as the current status of the merger, knowledge sharing, NQF-readiness. (See Appendix 2 for an example of the College/Campus questionnaire.)
- Individual completion of the baseline questionnaire by the campus head and at least two members of campus management/senior staff.
- Focus group discussion of individual baseline ratings by the above group to reach a combined group rating and establish the rationale for each rating.
- Individual completion of the baseline questionnaire by a group of at least four lecturers. This group needed to be balanced in terms of race and gender, as well as include both senior and junior staff
- Focus group discussion of individual baseline ratings by the above group to reach a combined group rating and establish the rationale for this group's ratings.

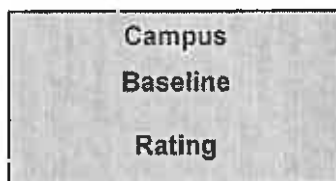
- Student/learner focus group discussion, where a representative group of five to ten students completed a short questionnaire and discussed their answers with the evaluator.
- Classroom observation: The evaluator had to observe two class sessions that represented the main areas of study at the campus, with preference given to Mathematics and Science if these were offered by the campus.
- Campus tour: The evaluator had to request a campus tour, including satellite campuses if possible, to observe facilities and support services available.

Triangulated information obtained from the above activities provided the evidence considered by the evaluator, when making a final decision about the campus rating for each characteristic. Tape recordings/notes were made during group discussions to assist the evaluator to provide comment about each rating.

The next diagram shows the triangulation process.

Group baseline rating: campus management

Independent assessment by evaluator



Group baseline rating: lecturers

Student/Learner views

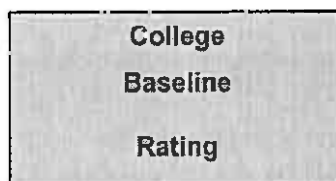
*College visits (half day)*

The first four activities detailed above were repeated at college level. Here the baseline group had to consist of the CEO, or Acting CEO, or Acting Rector (whichever was applicable), plus two others; preferably a member of the College Council and a member of the Academic Board. In some instances senior staff members at college level were also included.

The next diagram shows the triangulation at college level:

Group baseline rating: College management

Independent assessment by evaluator



Baseline Rating: Campus 1

Baseline Rating: Campus 2

*Visits to FET Directorates at provincial Departments of Education (one day)*

The following topics were discussed during the visits to the FET Directorates in the provinces:

- ❑ Baseline status of the FET Directorate itself
- ❑ Baseline status of the FET colleges in the province, from the perspective of the FET Directorate. Here the process of individual baseline ratings and a group baseline rating, as described above, was followed
- ❑ Baseline status of relations with the national Department of Education (DoE), from the perspective of the FET Directorate
- ❑ Baseline status of relations with the SAQA Southern Regional Office, from the perspective of the FET Directorate [For Western Cape province only].

Views expressed about other parts of the FET system were triangulated with the views expressed by the parties themselves, as will become clear in the main body of the report. Socio-economic information and statistical profiles were also prepared at provincial level. Verification or updating could, however, not be done, as EMIS systems at provincial level do not yet hold this data.

*Visit to the FET Directorate at the national Department of Education (half-day)*

During the visit to the national DoE the following was discussed:

- ❑ Baseline status of the national DoE in relation to the national implementation plan for the SESD programme

Information was obtained through an interview with the Director of Public and Private FET Colleges. Time pressures within the national FET Directorate did not allow for participation by other officials, or for verification of socio-economic and statistical data

*Visit to SAQA Southern Regional Office (half day)*

The following topics were discussed with the Regional Manager and Deputy Regional Manager:

- ❑ The role and functions of the SAQA Southern Regional Office
- ❑ Infrastructure and capacity: implications for the success of the SESD programme
- ❑ Views on the current situation in FET colleges
- ❑ Views on the scope of the SESD intervention by the SAQA Southern Regional Office

Against this background a set of recommendations was developed for the evaluation of the impact of this component of the SESD programme.

**2.3.5 Presentation of the baseline data**

FET colleges are not yet fully operational and when respondents talk about 'the college', they are often referring to a particular campus rather than to an FET college as a whole. Data is therefore presented at both college and campus level. The two levels of data present a more realistic picture than would be obtained from reporting at college level only.

Baseline information is presented in two documents, namely a *synthesis report* and a *source file*. The *synthesis report* presents findings on the baseline status at national, provincial and college levels. It includes a section on the baseline status of the SAQA Southern Regional Office. The source file contains baseline ratings of FET colleges at provincial level, as well as comprehensive baseline reports for all colleges and campuses included in the study.

In addition to the baseline ratings two further categories of baseline data are presented in the *source documentation*.

- A socio-economic profile provides background information that situates each college and campus in a particular context
- A statistical profile sketches out the quantitative baseline situation at each college and campus: in terms of programmes offered; enrolment figures; average pass and throughput rates; gender and racial profiles of learners; educator profiles. The updated figures provided in the statistical profiles establish the basis for quantitative progress monitoring over the three-year evaluation cycle.

The documents contained in the source file are not intended for general circulation. The file will, however be made available to provincial FET Directorates, to the FET Directorate in the national DoE, to the National Technical Adviser and to the SAQA Southern Regional Office.

Individual baseline reports contain insightful contextual data that enable a more in-depth understanding of baseline conditions than offered by the overview in the synthesis report. As these reports will provide the starting point of the next round of evaluation, they will be sent back to each participating college and campus.

The section on NQF/SAQA in the college baseline reports will also be of particular interest to staff members in the SAQA Southern Regional Office as many of the problems that colleges are currently experiencing, as well as their NQF-related needs are discussed.

## SECTION 3

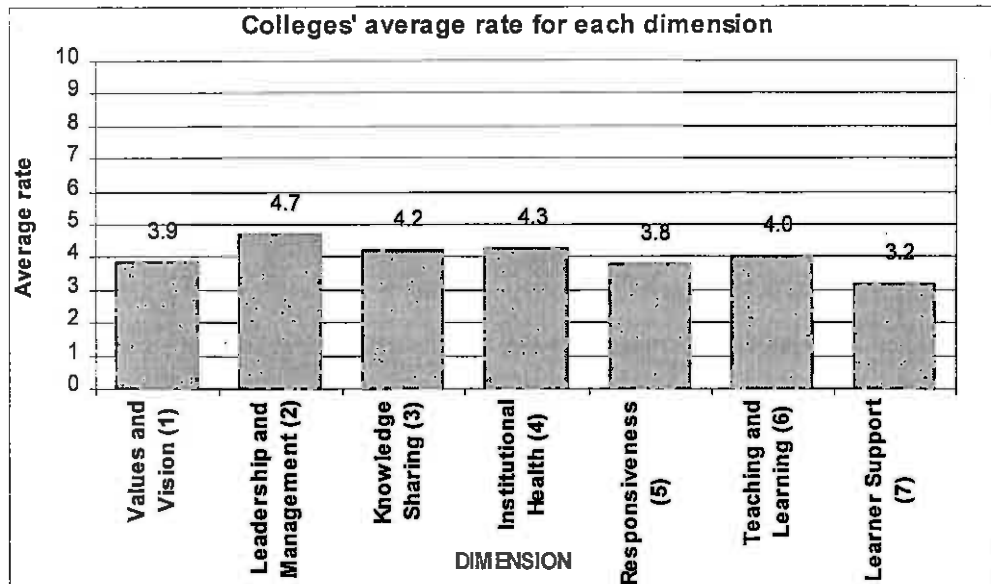
### Average Baseline Status of FET Colleges and Campuses

#### 3.1 Introduction

In this section a composite picture of the average baseline status of each dimension and its related characteristics, prior to the SEDS programme, is presented. At the current stage of the merger process it is useful to depict average ratings for colleges and campuses separately. Even though campuses are only represented by two sites per college, they offer a 'view from the bottom' that balances the 'view from the top' to achieve a realistic overall perspective. Points of convergence and divergence between the two levels are important nodes of interpretation as they show how perceptions of *quality* differ, depending on the vantage point. A score of 0 would reflect a dimension or characteristic deemed non-existing and a score of 10 would be the strongest indication possible.

#### 3.2 Overall average baseline status

The following graph reflects the average baseline rating at college level.



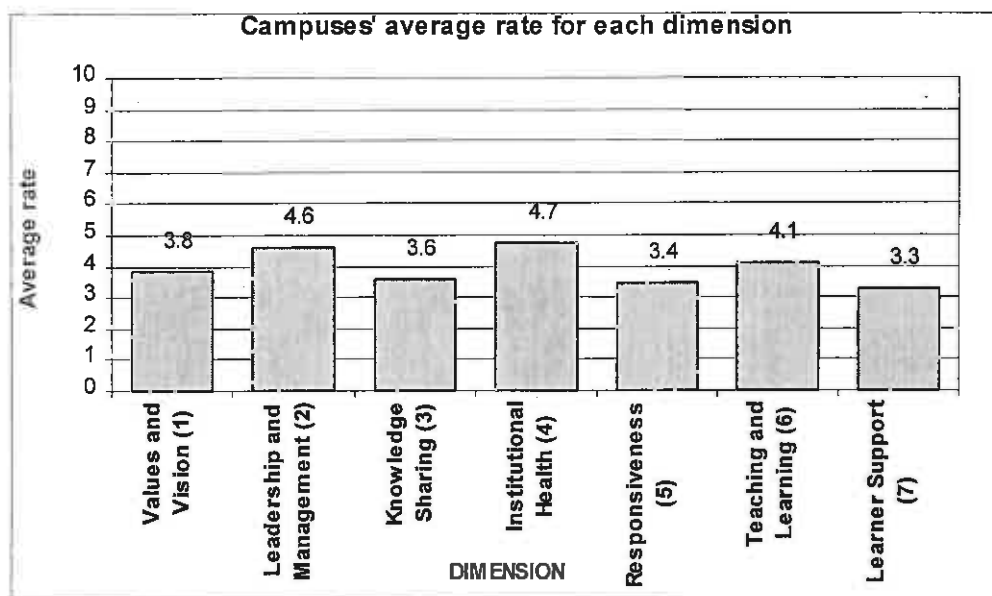
No dimension presently rates as 'strong'. *Leadership and Management* is the strongest of the 'emerging' dimensions. This indicates confidence in the merged institutions and also reflects the positive effect of previous capacity building interventions.

*Institutional Health*, *Knowledge Sharing* and *Teaching and Learning* are also rated as 'emerging' dimensions. All four these dimensions rate at the lower end of the 'emerging' scale. This means that

even though they are not yet stable or consistent components of the overall system, there is positive evidence of activity.

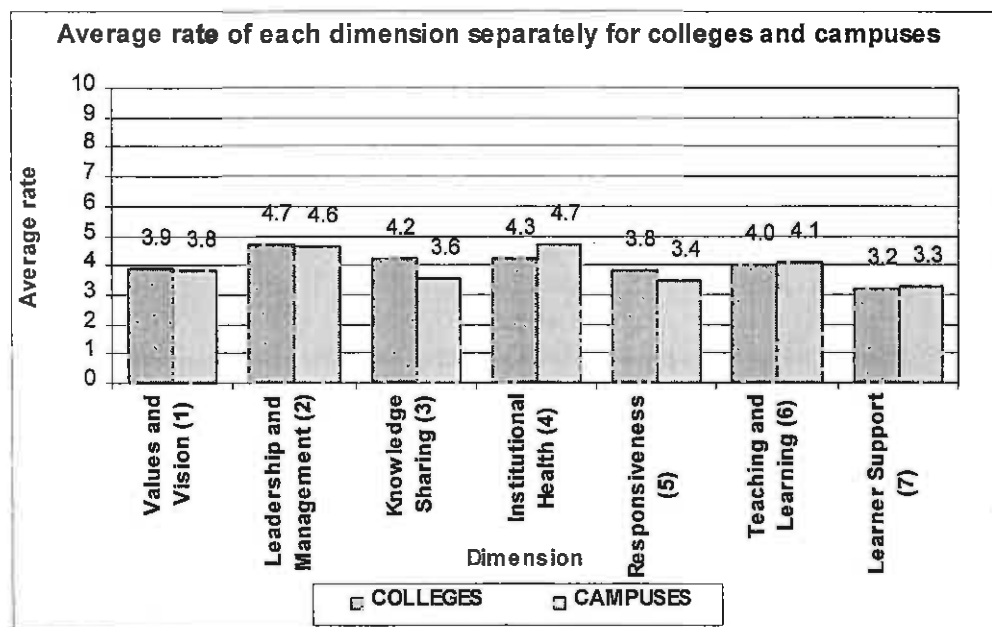
*Values and Vision*, *Responsiveness* and *Learner Support* rate as weak dimensions, with *Learner Support* the weakest. There is some activity in these areas, but significant challenges lie ahead.

At campus level the average ratings are slightly different.



Again, no dimension emerges as 'strong'. At campus level, three dimensions are rated as 'emerging': *Institutional Health* is the highest, followed by *Leadership and Management* and *Teaching and Learning*. *Knowledge Sharing* moves into the 'weak' category, with *Vision and Values* also in this category and *Responsiveness* and *Learner Support* again achieving the lowest ratings.

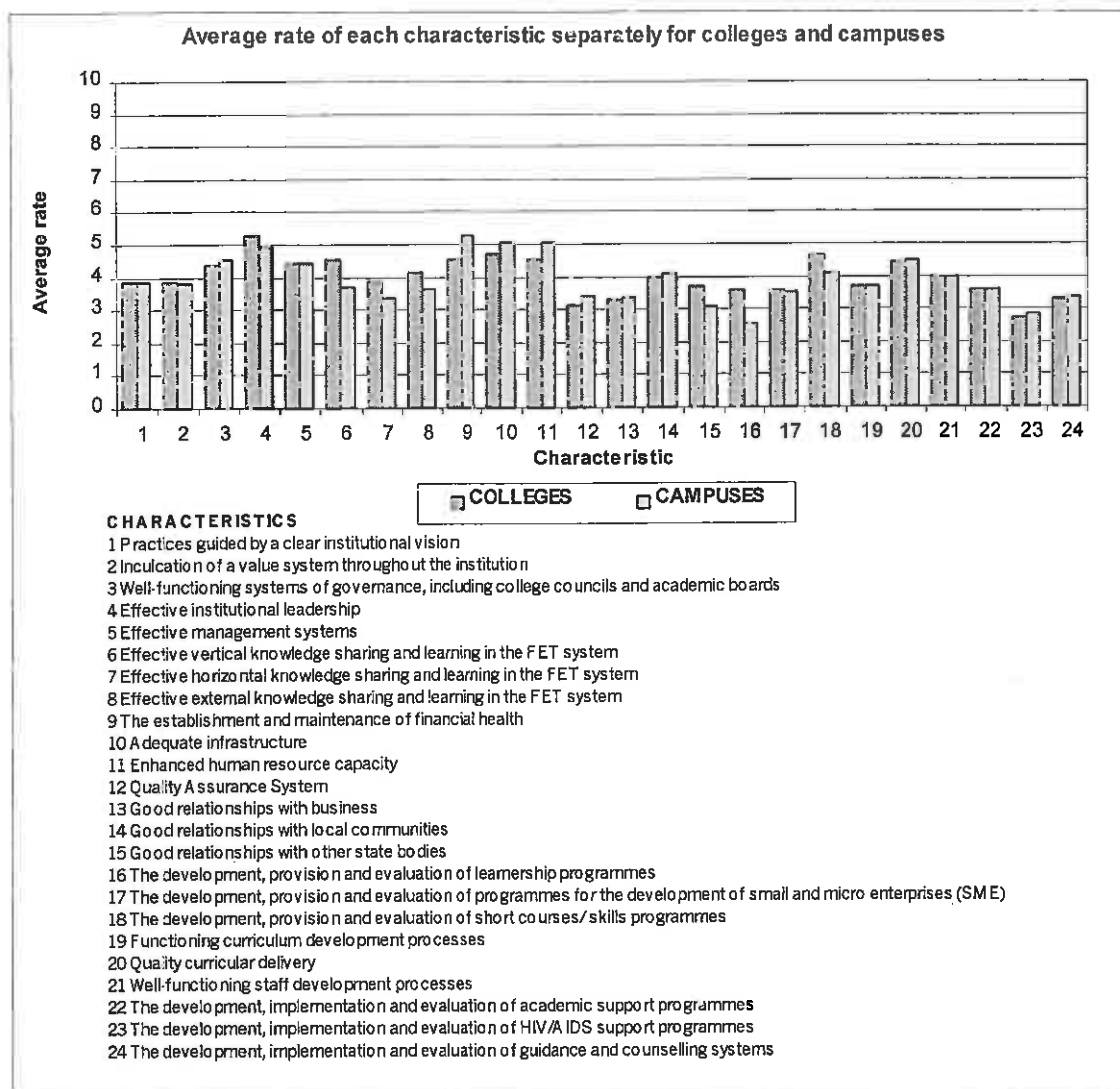
The third graph shows the average college and campus ratings together.



On four dimensions the ratings are remarkably similar. In three areas there are differences. At campus level there is a stronger sense of *Institutional Health* than at college level. This may be because campuses are not as aware of the financial implications of merging, or because they have a more positive view of human resource capacity and quality assurance.

*Knowledge Sharing* and *Responsiveness* rate lower than at college level. *Knowledge Sharing* is the only dimension where there is a difference of category between the two ratings. At campus level *Knowledge Sharing* moves down into the 'weak category This shows how the knowledge sharing chain weakens the further it moves from the centre (national DoE).

The final graph on the next page presents a composite picture of each characteristic to show a more finely grained picture than that which emerges when averages are presented at a higher level of generality.



On the positive side there are four ratings higher than 5. At college level *effective institutional leadership* (C4) is the only characteristic to rate over 5 (at an average of 5.3). At campus level three of the four characteristics under the dimension *Institutional Health* score over an average of 5. The characteristic *establishment and maintenance of financial health* (C9) rates an average of 5.3, with *adequate infrastructure* (C10) rating an average of 5.1 and *enhanced human resource capacity* (C11) rating an average of 5.1.

A stronger conception of institutional leadership at college level than at campus level is in keeping with the current phase in the merging process. Campus leaders are no longer solely in charge, but report to college leadership. They may therefore not yet have the same degree of confidence in institutional leadership. The campus-level average rating of 4.9 is, however, not far behind and is significantly also in the 'emerging' category.

With the exception of *quality assurance systems* campuses have a more positive sense of their own institutional health than the rating at college level. Given the newness of the concept FET College, as referring to a cluster of campuses, this is not surprising.



Of note is the low rating given by campuses for the *development, provision and evaluation of learnership programmes* (an average rating of 2.6). This is a full percentage point lower than the rating at college level (an average of 3.6). The discrepancy may mean that campuses have high expectations of learnership implementation and are therefore more critical of lack of progress. College ratings may refer more to policy vision than to empirical reality.

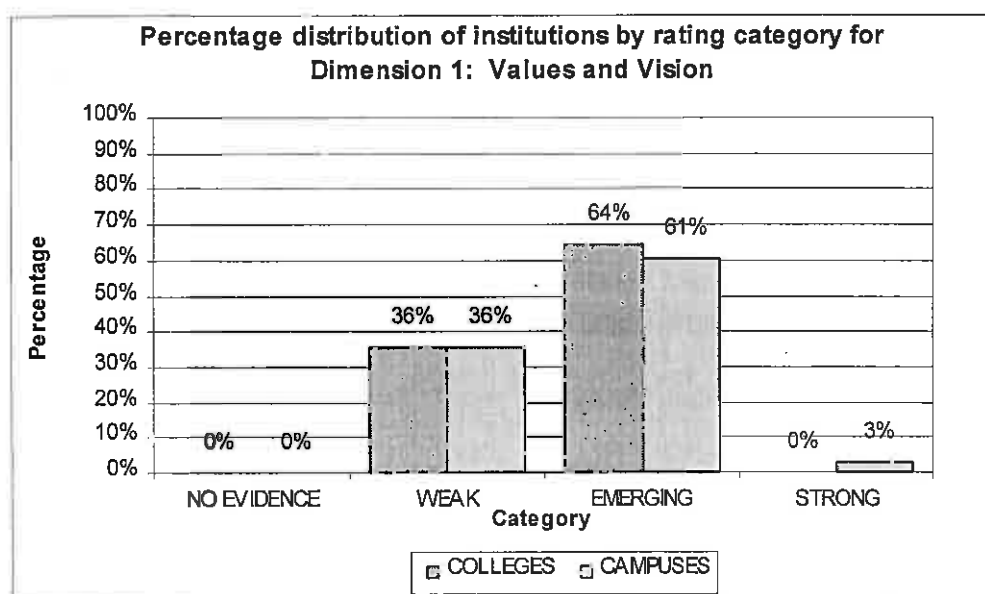
The very low ratings at both college (an average rating of 2.7) and campus (an average rating of 2.9) level for the *development, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS support programmes* indicate how institutions are grappling with this issue. The narrative data shows that it is not as if nothing is being done, rather that efforts are *ad hoc* and not yet considered effective.

### 3.3 Baseline analysis of each dimension

The next set of graphs provides a more detailed interpretation to show how each dimension rates at college and campus level. A percentage distribution indicates the overall predominance of a particular dimension as *weak, emerging or strong*. While the dominant category is the central feature of each graph it is important to note the full distribution range.

#### 3.3.1 Values and Vision

Outcome	Characteristics
A strong vision and a lived set of values drive colleges' transformation processes towards fulfilling their developmental mission.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Practices guided by a clear institutional vision</li> <li>Inculcation of a value system throughout the institution</li> </ul>

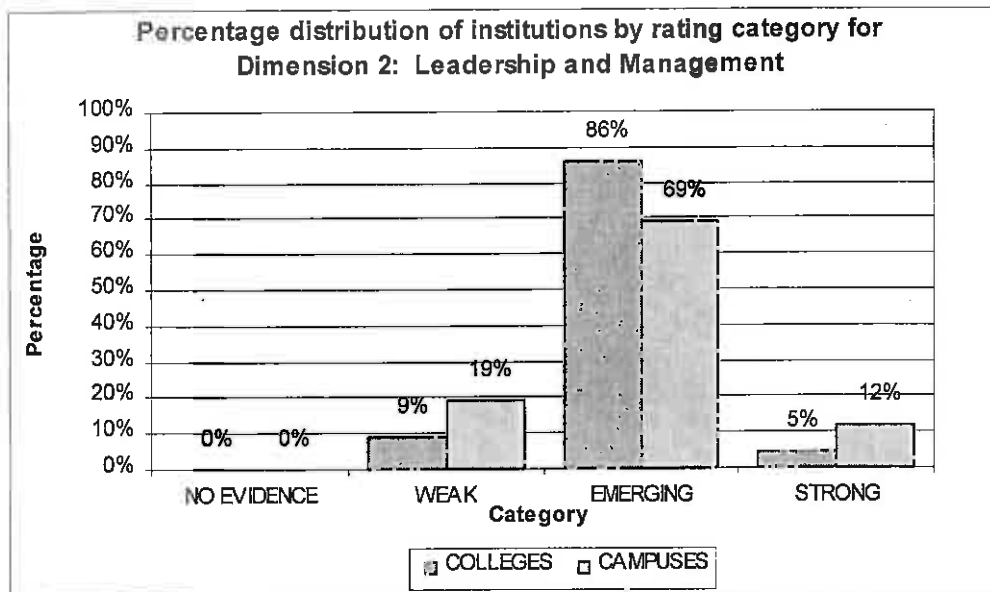


*Values and Vision* is predominantly rated as *emerging dimension*, with a close correspondence between college and campus ratings. While this dimension rates as *emerging* in over two-thirds of institutions, it rates as *weak* in more than one-third of institutions. Narrative data shows that campuses are still making the transition from their own vision and value statements to new formulations. The off-

repeated comment that the new vision and values still exist “mostly on paper” shows that realisation in practice is a challenge that lies ahead.

### 3.3.2 Leadership and Management

Outcome	Characteristics
Strategic leadership, supported by effective management and governance systems, operationalises the transformed vision of the FET college system.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Well-functioning systems of governance, including college councils and academic boards</li> <li>Effective institutional leadership</li> <li>Effective management systems</li> </ul>

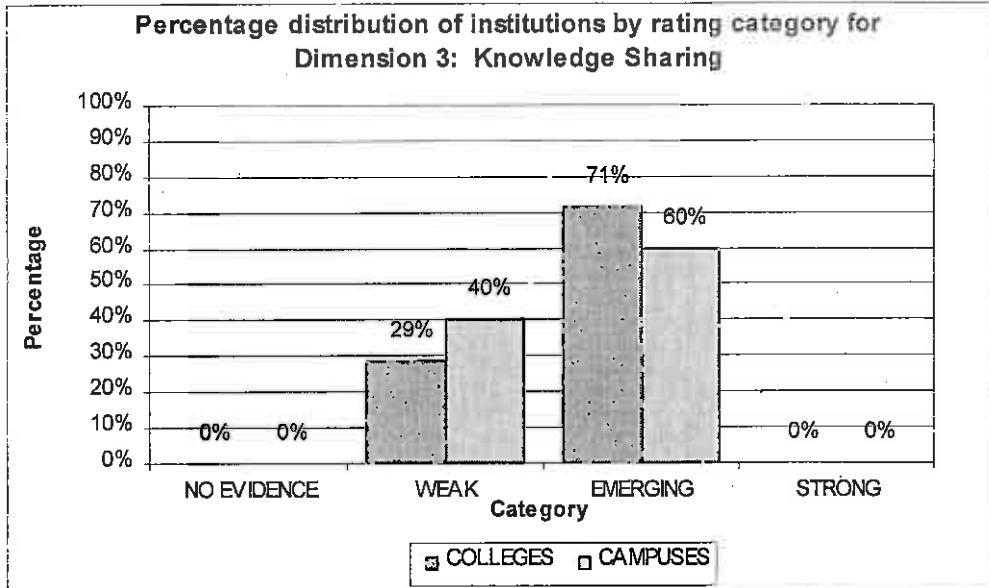


**Leadership and Management** rates predominantly as an *emerging dimension*, but there is considerable divergence between colleges and campus ratings. The high percentage distribution in the *emerging* category at college level may be attributable to positive self-rating at this level, not necessarily shared at campus level.

It is also significant that 12% of campuses show a *strong* baseline rating for this dimension. This is a positive sign, even though a need for further improvement clearly remains.

### 3.3.3 Knowledge sharing

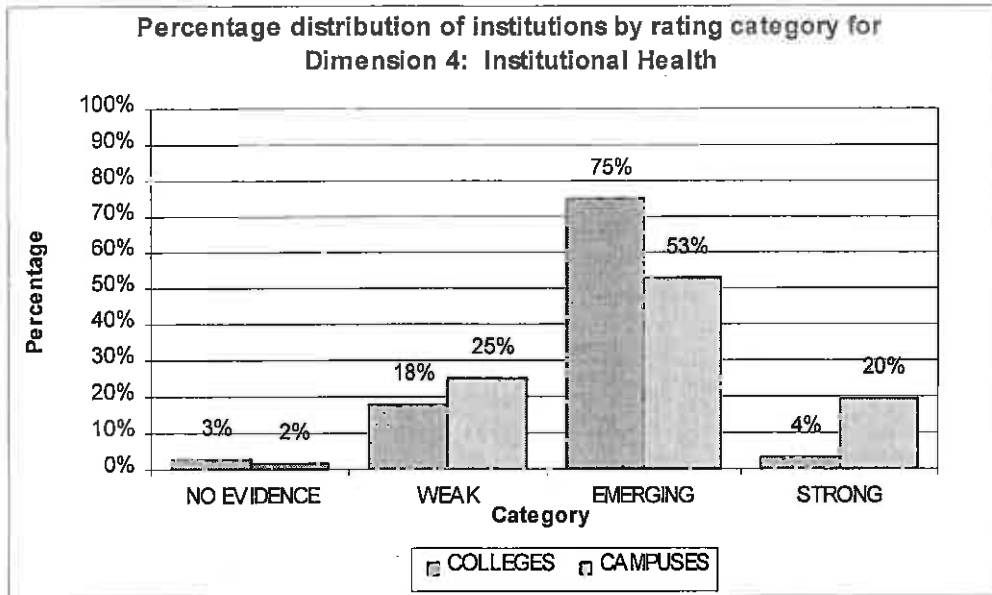
Outcome	Characteristics
College and system performance enhanced through better flows of knowledge horizontally and vertically within the system, as well as with external stakeholders.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effective vertical knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system</li> <li>• Effective horizontal knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system</li> <li>• Effective external knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system</li> </ul>



**Knowledge Sharing** rates predominantly as an *emerging dimension*, with no rating in the strong category at either college or campus level. The substantial campus rating in the weak category shows that the dominant emerging rating does not present the full picture of the overall baseline distribution of this dimension. Breakdowns in communication still seem to be a common feature of the vertical knowledge chain, with horizontal knowledge sharing occurring on an individual and *ad hoc* basis rather than systematically. There is also general agreement that the wider community is not yet sufficiently aware of the existence and core business of FET colleges. Acknowledgement that outreach and sharing of knowledge about FET is a priority emerges from most of the college and campus reports.

**3.3.4 Institutional health**

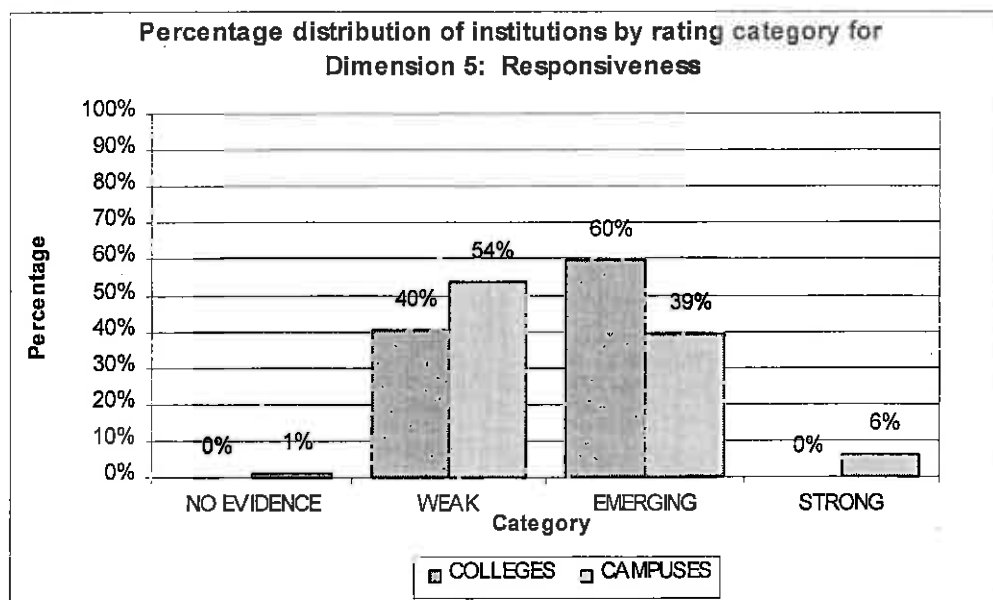
Outcome	Characteristics
The financial health and physical infrastructure of colleges contribute to their proper functioning in supporting employability.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The establishment and maintenance of financial health</li> <li>• Adequate infrastructure</li> <li>• Enhanced human resource capacity</li> <li>• Quality assurance system</li> </ul>



*Institutional Health* rates predominantly as an **emerging dimension**, but again there is considerable divergence between college and campus ratings. Given the historical disparities between state and state-aided technical colleges now grouped as FET colleges, the 75% *emerging* rating at college level shows a positive acceptance of disparities. The much lower *emerging* rating of 53% at campus level and the fact that the full range of categories are employed, show the degree to which individual campuses differ in terms of finances, infrastructure, human resources and quality assurance systems.

### 3.3.5 Responsiveness

Outcome	Characteristics
Employability enhanced through greater responsiveness of colleges to the needs of learners, their communities and the labour market.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Good relationships with business</li> <li>• Good relationships with local communities</li> <li>• Good relationships with other state bodies</li> <li>• The development, provision and evaluation of learnership programmes</li> <li>• The development, provision and evaluation of SMME programmes</li> <li>• The development, provision and evaluation of short courses/ skills programmes</li> </ul>

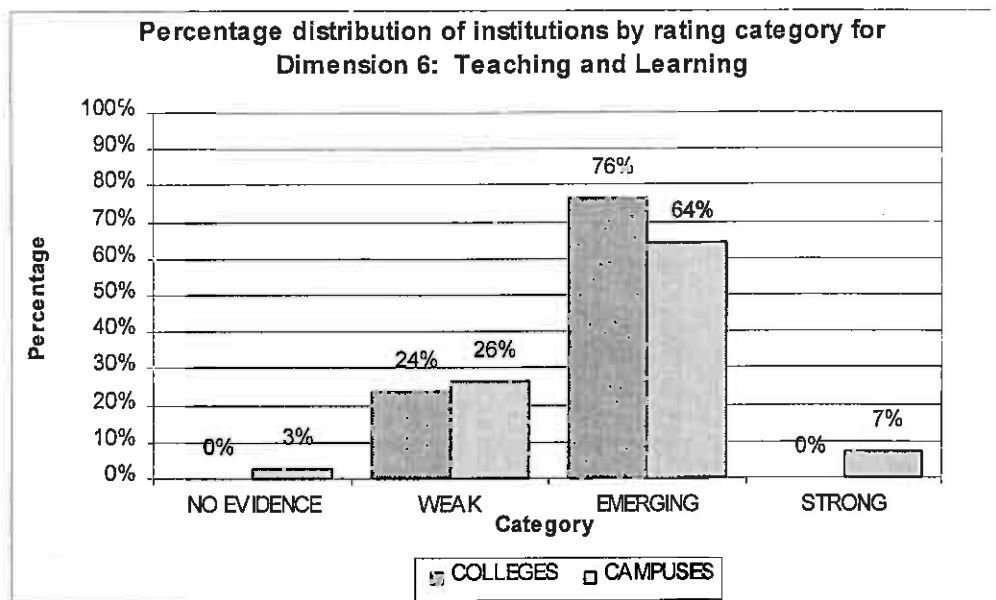


**Responsiveness** rates predominantly as an *emerging dimension at college level*, but the average campus rating places this dimension predominantly in the *weak category*. Of note, however, is the small percentage of campus-level ratings in the *strong* category. This bodes well for the future.

This dimension covers a range of linkages and relationships and there is general acknowledgement that a strong effort is required in all components of this dimension. Good relations with SETAs and activity in the provision of short courses were reported in many instances. Evidence of learnerships was also reported, although many of these activities are still in the planning or pilot phases and sustainability has not been tested. While some institutions have definite and unambiguous views about who their community partners are, others are grappling with the concept. This is particularly the case in urban environments where the notion of a 'local community' in the geographical sense is not self-evident. Activities around SME development still revolve to a large extent around offering Entrepreneurship as a formal course of study, although informal initiatives by individual lecturers are also in evidence. Staff development in the teaching of entrepreneurship courses by the Foundation for Economic and Business Development (FEDBEV) was mentioned.

### 3.3.6 Teaching and learning

Outcome	Characteristics
A culture of learning promotes both employability and personal development. Strong systems of curriculum development, classroom pedagogy and staff development support quality learning.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Functioning curriculum development processes</li> <li>• Quality curricular delivery</li> <li>• Well-functioning staff development processes</li> </ul>

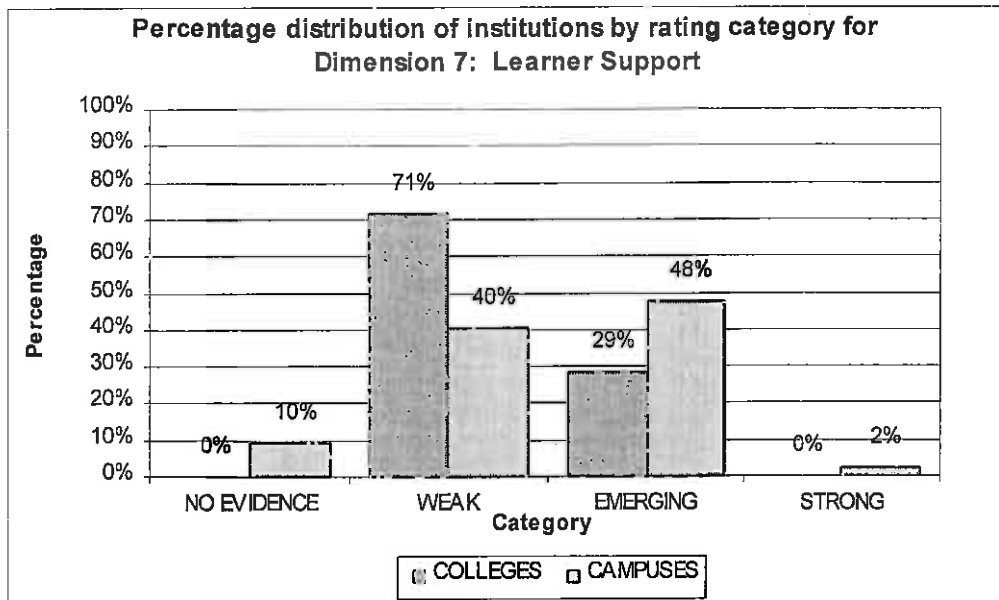


*Teaching and Learning* rates predominantly as an **emerging dimension**, but around 25% of ratings at both college and campus level places this dimension in the 'weak' category.. While it appears as if college ratings are far more strongly represented in the *emerging* category than are campus ratings, the 7% campus distribution in the 'strong' category narrows this gap considerably.

NQF-alignment is a pressing concern in this area, not only because curriculum development has not traditionally been a college/campus activity but also because lecturers are experiencing considerable time pressure in this regard. The relationship between theory and practice remains a concern. New unit-standard based qualifications are expected to focus more on the practical side but there is a concern that understanding at the level of principle may suffer if a balance is not maintained. The idea that colleges/campuses tend to be purely results-driven is not corroborated by the evidence. The development of critical and independent thinking came up repeatedly as an important aspect of teaching and learning. Staff development is generally regarded as insufficient and the hope was expressed that the SESD programme will have a positive impact in this regard.

### 3.3.7 Learner support

Outcome	Characteristics
<p>Learner support systems improve labour market and life outcomes through support to learners' health, learning and insertion into the labour market.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The development, implementation and evaluation of academic support programmes</li> <li>• The development, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS awareness interventions</li> <li>• The development, implementation and evaluation of guidance and counselling systems</li> </ul>



**Learner Support** rates predominantly as a *weak dimension* at college level, but as an *emerging dimension* at campus level, even though the *ad hoc* nature of most of the activities in this area is mentioned in all college/campus baseline reports. Policies and formal systems are mostly not in place and most institutions mention lack of capacity as a reason for poor performance in this area. There are some notable exceptions where individuals and institutions are putting in a great deal of effort. General acknowledgement of the need for a proactive approach shows that the need has been identified, if not yet sufficiently acted upon.

#### 4. Conclusions

Triangulation of the data highlights a number of issues. The averages of ratings show a combination of *emerging* and *weak* dimensions, but the percentage distribution graphs show a more positive picture. In the latter interpretation all dimensions, except two, fall into the *emerging* category at both college and campus level. Dimensions where divergence occurs, are *Responsiveness* and *Learner Support*. At college level *Responsiveness* is an *emerging* dimension but at campus level it is a *weak* dimension. The position is reversed for *Learner Support*, which is *weak* at college level but *emerging* at campus level. The average ratings, however, place these two dimensions in the *weak* category. Given that both dimensions are areas in which colleges are now expected to be far more proactive than in the past, the finding is not surprising and indeed consistent with the new policy trajectory.

While the overall picture may, at first glance, seem somewhat dismal, it offers a realistic representation of the challenges that lie ahead. It shows that the SESD programme has correctly identified vulnerable areas in need of support. The predominance of ratings in the *emerging* category shows a positive orientation to the implementation of new policy requirements and augurs well for the future.

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## SECTION 4

### A comparative analysis of baseline ratings across the three provinces

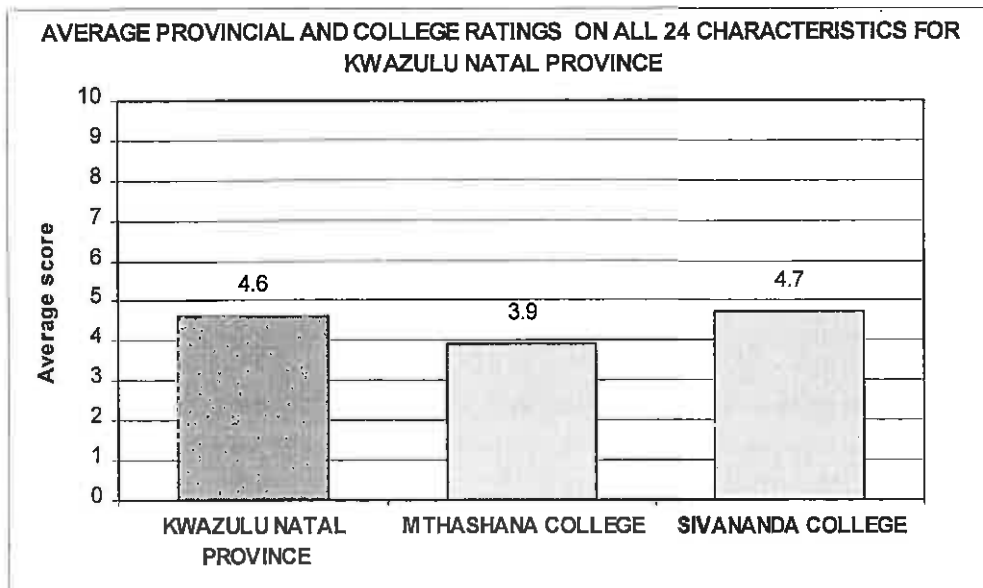
#### 1. Introduction

In this section the baseline findings are presented in a comparative format. Members of staff in FET Directorates also completed the baseline questionnaire to rate the current status of FET colleges from a provincial vantage point. In the first composite set of graphs the average overall rating at provincial level is compared to the average overall rating at college level, in each of the three provinces.

The second set of graphs shows average provincial and college ratings across all provinces for each dimension. During the fieldwork colleges and campuses frequently mentioned that they would like to be able to compare themselves to their counterparts in other provinces. These graphs allow for such comparison. They also show the convergences and/or divergences that exist between ratings at different levels of the FET system.

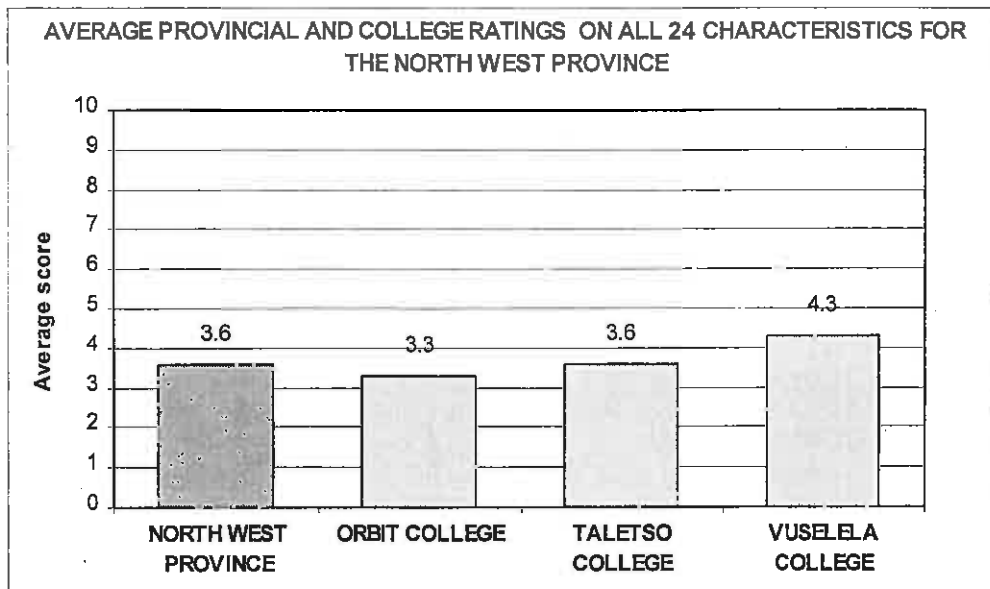
#### 2. The baseline status of FET Colleges, from the perspective of provincial FET Directorates

##### 2.1. KwaZulu-Natal Province



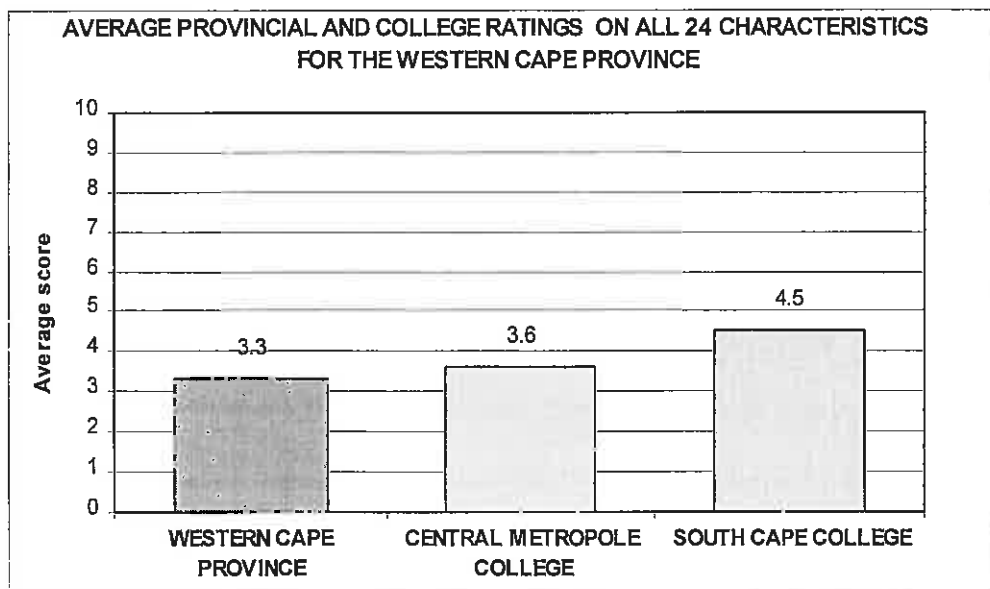
The provincial rating closely matches the Sivananda College rating in the *emerging* category. Mthashana College just misses falling into this category and rates at the upper end of the *weak* category.

## 2.2 North West Province



In North West province the provincial rating of *weak* converges with the ratings of both Orbit College and Taletso College. Vuselela College rates higher and falls into the *emerging* category.

## 2.3 Western Cape Province



In the Western Cape province the provincial rating of FET colleges is lower than both the college ratings. What is pertinent about this rating is that all staff in the FET Directorate completed the baseline rating individually, with the combined rating agreed in a focus group discussion facilitated by

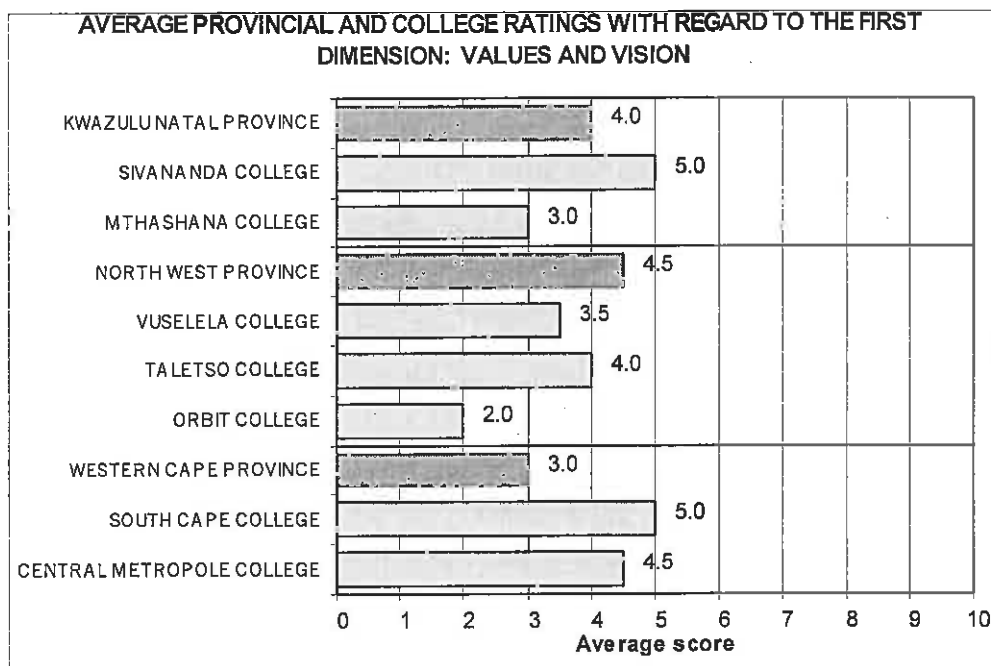
the SESD Provincial Technical Adviser. In this instance it is truly an FET Directorate rating and not a rating given by the external evaluator (as is the case with the other two provincial ratings).

The rating for Central Metropole/College of Cape Town is slightly higher than the provincial rating but still in the *weak* category. The rating for South Cape College falls into the *emerging* category.

### 3 Average provincial and college ratings with regard to each evaluation dimension

In the next set of graphs the overall average rating is broken down into an average rating for each dimension.

#### 3.1 Values and Vision

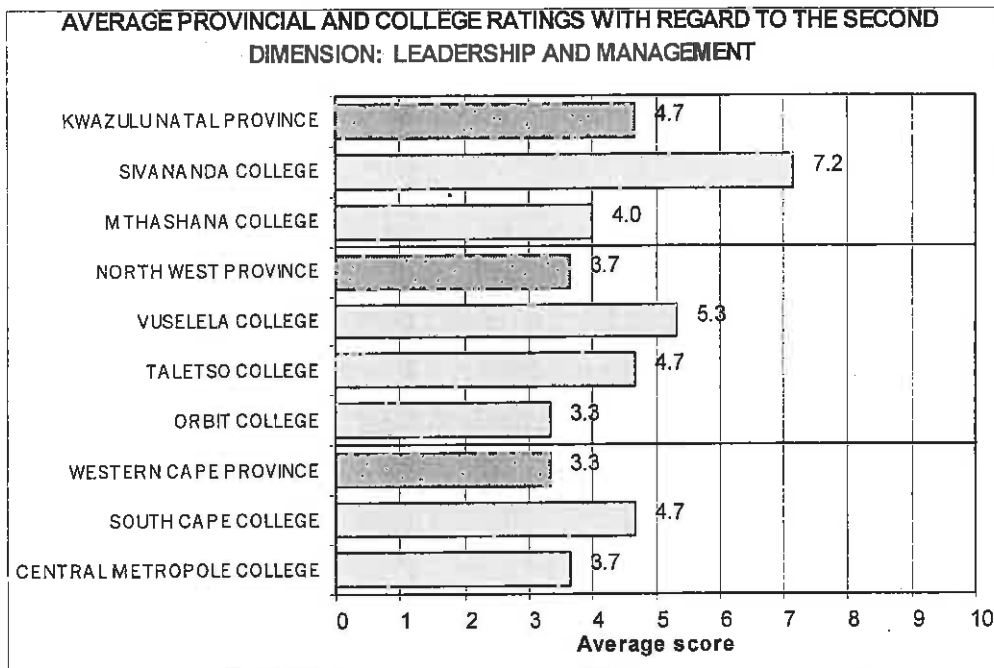


Provincial ratings for this dimension range from *emerging* in KwaZulu-Natal province and North West province to *weak* in the Western Cape province. In KwaZulu-Natal the provincial rating is halfway between the ratings of the two colleges; in North West the provincial rating is higher than the ratings at college level; and, in the Western Cape the provincial rating is lower than the ratings at college level. In the latter two provinces there is thus a degree of divergence between how provincial departments rate colleges and how they rate in their own terms.

A factor that may have a bearing on this dimension is the current position with regard to the appointment of CEOs in the colleges. Acting Rectors are in place in KwaZulu-Natal, while CEOs have just been appointed in North West. CEOs have not yet been appointed in the Western Cape. Narrative data shows that the presence or absence of a CEO as a unifying force has influenced provincial and college ratings for *values and vision*, as well as ratings for *leadership and management* in FET colleges. The management style in each province may also account for the differences in the

ratings. In some provinces colleges appear to be more closely controlled from the provincial centre than in others. Perceptions of the relative ability of colleges to operate semi-autonomously may be a further factor influencing ratings at each level.

### 3.2 Leadership and Management



One province, KwaZulu-Natal, rates this dimension as *emerging* while the other two provinces, North West and Western Cape, rate this dimension as a *weak* feature of FET colleges in their province.

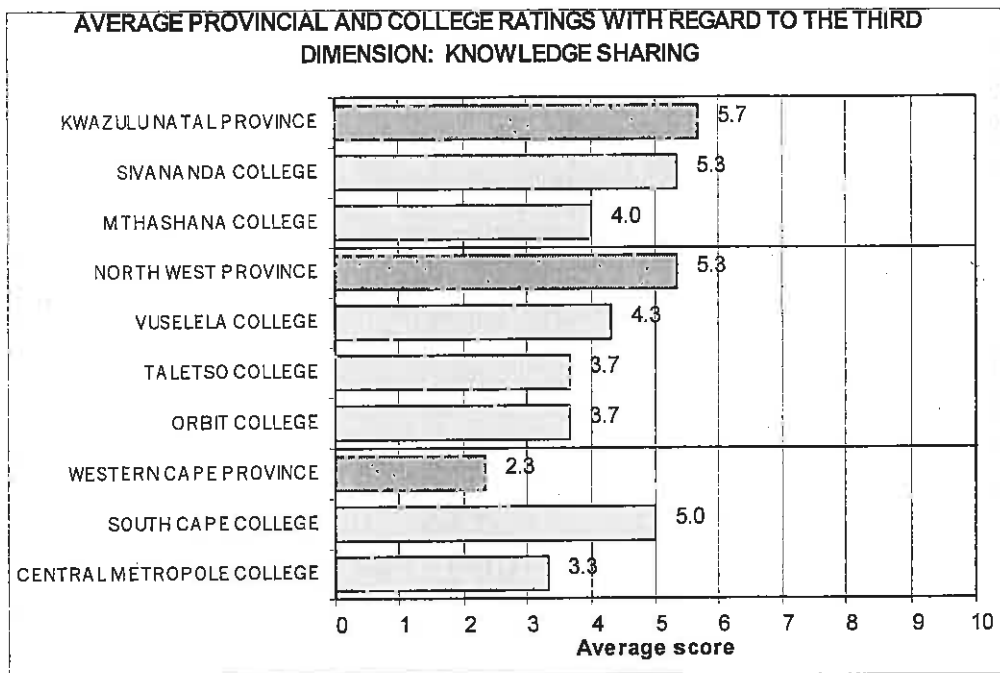
The KwaZulu-Natal provincial rating again falls between the two college ratings, with Mtshashana rated as *emerging* and Sivananda rated as *strong*. (This is the highest rating achieved by an institution on any dimension)

In North West the provincial rating is higher than Orbit's *weak* rating but significantly lower than the ratings for Vuselela and Taletso, which both fall into the *emerging* category on this dimension.

In the Western Cape the provincial rating of the presence of this dimension in FET colleges is *weak*, with Central Metropole/City of Cape Town's rating also *weak* and South Cape higher up in the *emerging* category. The provincial rating is again much lower than the college ratings.

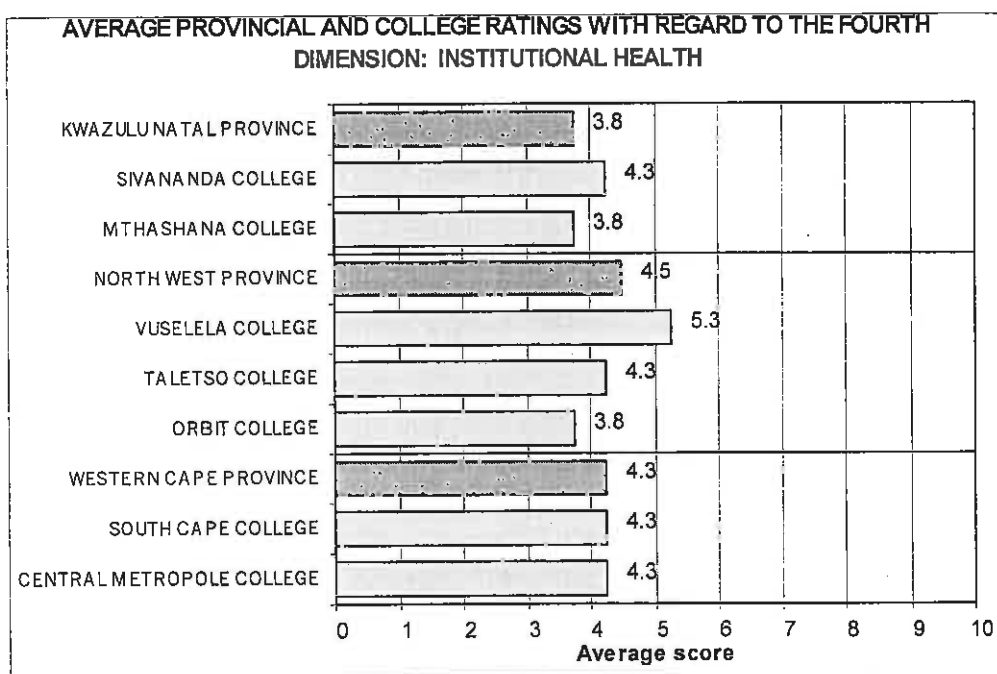
When the ratings for these two related dimensions are compared at provincial level it is interesting to note that KwaZulu-Natal rates as *emerging* and Western Cape rates as *weak* on both dimensions. North West, however, shifts from *emerging* on the first dimension to *weak* on the second.

### 3.3 Knowledge Sharing



Two of the provincial ratings, namely that of KwaZulu-Natal and North West, fall into the *emerging* category and both exceed the mid-point score of 5. These provincial ratings are consistently higher than the ratings at college level. In contrast, Western Cape has a *very weak* rating at 2.3, with the rating significantly lower than the ratings of the two FET colleges in this province. As this dimension includes *vertical and horizontal knowledge sharing* as two of its characteristics it is not surprising that struggles over meaning and interpretation of communication between and within the various levels of the FET system are evident.

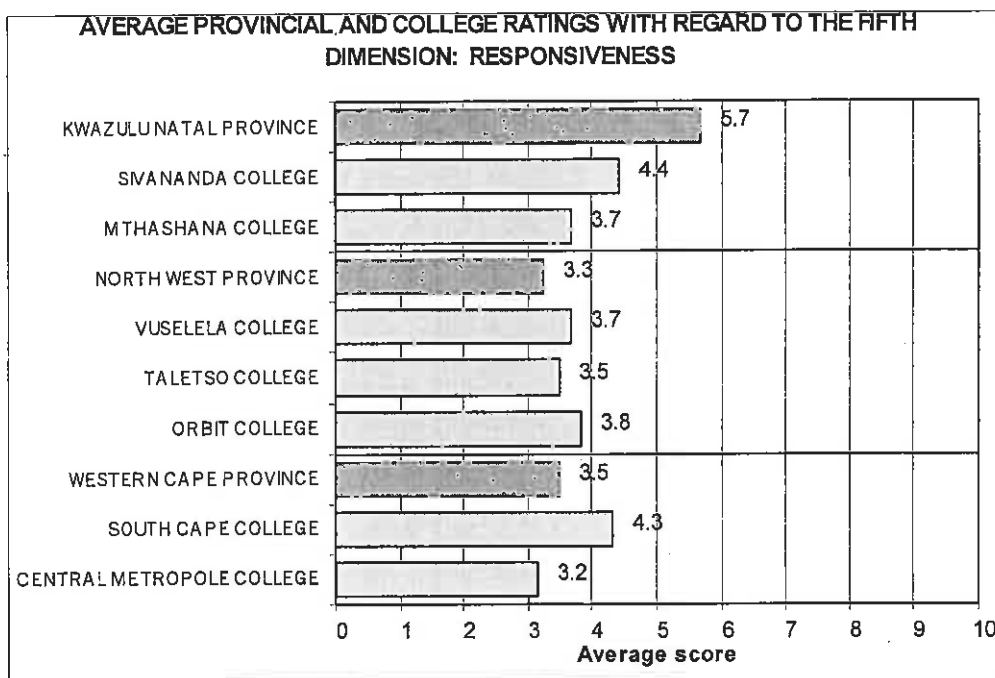
### 3.4 Institutional Health



In two provinces, North West and Western Cape, this dimension rates as *emerging* and in KwaZulu-Natal it rates as *weak*. A notable feature of the findings presented in this graph is the convergence of the ratings in the Western Cape, with provinces and colleges showing exactly the same rating in the *emerging* category.

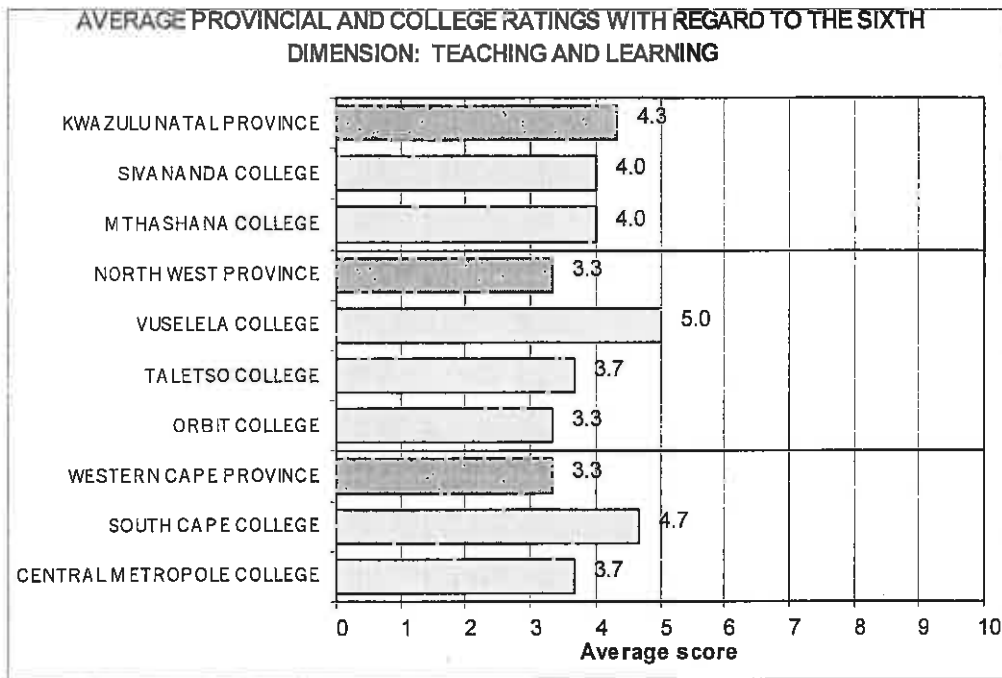
A similar situation is evident in KwaZulu-Natal, although not to the same extent, with Sivananda rating in the *emerging* category and the rating for Mthashana and the province *weak* (both have the same average score). In North West the provincial *emerging* rating falls between the ratings for the three FET colleges. Orbit has a *weak* rating and does not fall into the same category as the other two colleges in North West province.

### 3.5 Responsiveness



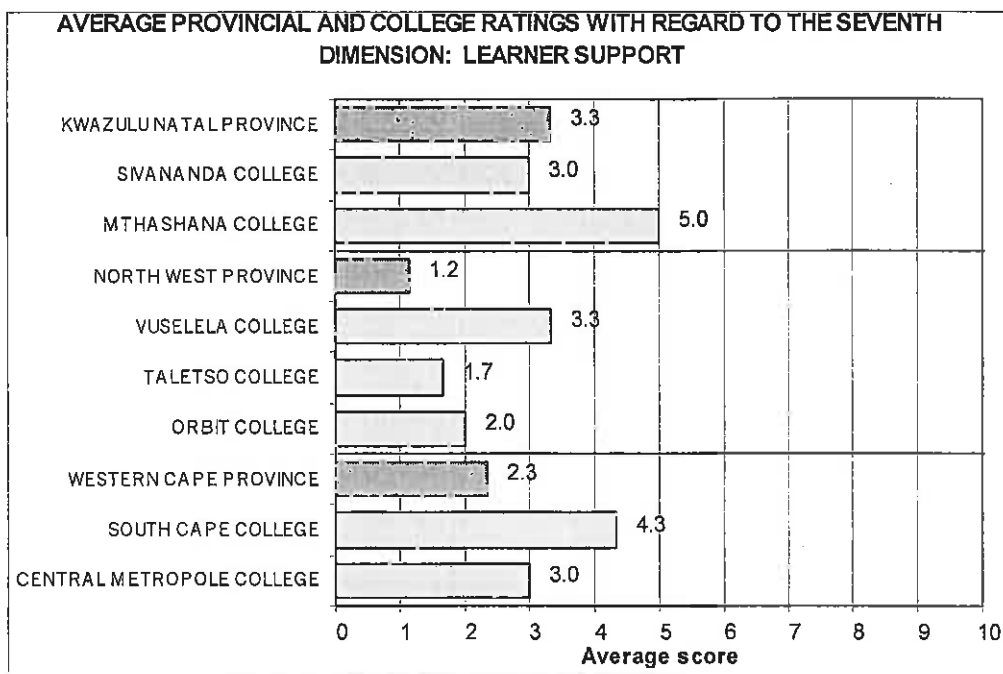
One province, KwaZulu-Natal rates this dimension as *high emerging*, with North West and Western Cape rating it as *weak*. There is significant divergence with regard to provincial ratings. There is also significant divergence between the KwaZulu-Natal provincial rating and the ratings at college level. If one looks only at college ratings they are similar across provinces in that they converge around the boundary between the *weak* and *emerging* categories.

### 3.6 Teaching and Learning



Two provinces, North West and Western Cape, have the same *weak* rating of 3.3, with KwaZulu-Natal's rating of 4.3 falling into the *emerging* category. Provincial ratings for both North West and Western Cape are lower than the ratings for colleges in the two provinces, with KwaZulu-Natal's provincial rating slightly above identical ratings at college level. Of the seven colleges three have weak ratings, two just fall into the *emerging* category and two have *high emerging* ratings. The requirement for NQF-alignment may have had an influence on the ratings. A generally stated need for staff development and a stated concern about lack of integration of theory may also be pertinent.

### 3.7 Learner Support



All three provinces show this as a *weak* and even *very weak* dimension, with college ratings generally converging with provincial ratings. Exceptions are Mthashana and South Cape where the characteristics '*academic support programmes*' and '*guidance and counselling*' attracted higher ratings.

This dimension has the lowest ratings of all seven the dimensions, with provincial ratings mostly lower than ratings at college level. The emphasis that the SEDS programme places on learner support is confirmed by this graph.

#### 4. Conclusions

In an inter-provincial comparison across dimensions the differences between provinces in the overall averages show up clearly.

KwaZulu-Natal rates FET colleges as *emerging* in all dimensions, except in *Institutional Health* and *Learner Support* where the ratings are *weak*.

North West province rates FET colleges as *emerging* in three dimensions, namely *Values and Vision*, *Knowledge Sharing* and *Institutional Health*, but *weak* in the other four, namely *Leadership and Management*, *Responsiveness*, *Teaching and Learning*, and *Learner Support*.

Western Cape province rates its FET colleges as *weak* in all dimensions, except in *Institutional Health*, which rates as *emerging*.

At college level there is similar variation in the ratings:

- *Values and Vision* ratings vary between a *very weak* rating of 2 and an *emerging* rating of 5
- *Leadership and Management* ratings vary between a *weak* rating of 3.7 and a *strong* rating of 7.2
- *Knowledge Sharing* ratings vary between a *weak* rating of 3.3 and an *emerging* rating of 5.3
- *Institutional Health* ratings vary between a *weak* rating of 3.8 and an *emerging* rating of 4.3. This is the dimension where there is the greatest convergence between ratings
- *Responsiveness* ratings vary between a *weak* rating of 3.2 and an *emerging* rating of 4.4
- *Teaching and Learning* ratings vary between a *weak* rating of 3.3 and an *emerging* rating of 5
- *Learner Support* ratings vary between a *weak* rating of 1.7 to an *emerging* rating of 4.3, with only one college in the *emerging* category.

Even though the implementation plans for the three provinces are very similar in their implementation intent, the baseline conditions in the different provinces are not the same. Contextual factors may, to a large extent, account for variations. Such factors may similarly influence the impact that planned SEDS interventions are likely to have.



## SECTION 5

### Baseline status of FET Directorates in Provincial Education Departments

#### 5.1 Introduction

Throughout the history of technical colleges jurisdiction over them has moved between the national and provincial departments of education (Behr and Macmillan, 1966). Pre-1994 responsibility for technical colleges was a national competence, resorting under the House of Assembly, the House of Representatives, the House of Delegates and the Department of Education and Training. After the democratic elections in 1994 responsibility for education at all levels (excluding tertiary education) was promulgated as a functional area of concurrent national and provincial legislative competence in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996).

What has perhaps not been entirely clear in documents on the SESD Programme and its provincial implementation, is just how new the FET directorates in the provinces are and how their roles and functions have shifted under the new policy dispensation. It is therefore understandable that the three directorates that will receive support under the SESD programme are all undergoing change and transformation. Just like the newly merged FET Colleges they are engaged in re-visioning and role shift. Their baseline status reflects this context. While the baseline status of FET Directorates across the three provinces is uneven, awareness of policy requirements and intent to help colleges to succeed was evident to all three the evaluators who undertook this component of the fieldwork. In certain areas much has been achieved already and plans are afoot to address weak areas.

An issue, which emerged somewhat unexpectedly during provincial interviews relates to the fact that FET directorates find it easier to concentrate on colleges "out there" than to reflect on their own capacity and performance. This is understandable when their recent establishment is taken into account, but it also points to the need for a clear distinction between their own focus and responsibilities and those of FET colleges themselves, as well as those of the national DoE. Implementation of the SESD programme will provide opportunities for the provincial focus to be sharpened

In this section the baseline status of provincial FET directorates in relation to Provincial Implementation Plans for the SESD Programme is outlined. A table in the first sub-section summarises the main findings. Thereafter a more detailed report is presented.

## 5.2 Summary of baseline status of FET Directorates in relation to Provincial Implementation Plans for the SESD Programme

AREAS OF ACTIVITY	KWAZULU-NATAL	NORTH WEST	WESTERN CAPE
Capacity building in the FET Directorate	EMERGING	EMERGING	EMERGING
Supporting mergers	EMERGING	EMERGING	EMERGING
Communications and knowledge sharing	HIGH EMERGING	WEAK TO EMERGING	WEAK TO EMERGING
Linkages and responsiveness	HIGH EMERGING	EMERGING	WEAK TO EMERGING
Learnerships	WEAK	WEAK	WEAK
FET college staff development	EMERGING	WEAK	EMERGING
Staff development in mathematics, science and technology	VERY WEAK	VERY WEAK	WEAK
Learner Support	WEAK	WEAK	WEAK
HIV/AIDS	WEAK	WEAK TO EMERGING	WEAK

The combination of 'weak' and 'emerging' ratings is consistent with the current stage of FET Directorate development.

## 5.3 Baseline status of FET Directorates in relation to Provincial Implementation Plans for the SESD Programme

### 5.3.1 Capacity building in the FET Directorate

Capacity is still being developed in all provincial FET Directorates, notably in KwaZulu-Natal and North West, but current activity justifies an *emerging* rating across all three provinces.

A major change that is in place, at provincial level, is the shift in focus from programme monitoring and support, with specialist subject advisers acting as "custodians of the national DoE curriculum", to a dispensation where programme development is college-based. The role of directorates now relates to institutional design and effectiveness, especially in creating dialogue and continuity between strategic planning at college, provincial and national DoE level and ensuring that FET policy is implemented. Emphasis on effective implementation of national policy is reflected in the division of labour within the various directorates. In addition to broader governance and management functions new portfolios have been created at Chief Education Specialist (CES) and Deputy Chief Education Specialist (DCES) level to reflect changes in the role of directorates. While some of these areas are a continuation of previous work, new priorities and new activities, such as *skills development and skills*

*needs assessment*, as well as *quality management systems* are included. Understaffing is, however, deemed a problem. FETMIS systems are also underdeveloped.

Staff induction is taking place. However, staff development will need to be ongoing. In some directorates it was mentioned that the issue is not so much taking staff from outside the civil service and inducting them into civil service norms, as moving existing civil servants away from traditional bureaucratic mindsets and towards becoming more dynamic. In other instances staff members who have been there for a long time were described as ensuring stability and continuity. It was also stressed that newer staff members have provided the capacity to give leadership in new areas and have played an important part in the reconceptualisation and refocusing of directorates. In North West province the number of young women in the directorate's personnel is a particularly pleasing feature.

Provincial Steering Committees (PSCs) have been established in all provinces and Provincial Technical Advisors (PTAs) appointed. The addition of PTAs is viewed as adding strength to directorates especially in relation to processes around SAQA and the NQF. Nonetheless, capacity is still in the process of being developed to face new challenges and opportunities.

### **5.3.2 Supporting mergers**

In terms of support for mergers all three FET Directorates are rated as *emerging*. All colleges are merged on paper, although CEOs have not been appointed in all provinces. Full Section 9 councils are still in the process of being established. These councils must represent the public and council members must be as knowledgeable as the CEO about the business of the college. It was mentioned that there was a lot of 'rubber-stamping' in the past, with the distinction between governance and management not clearly understood or practised. Council membership also tended to be static. The fixed term of office prescribed in the FET Act will ensure that "new blood" enters the FET sector on an ongoing basis. Capacity building for college councils includes the establishment of quarterly forums, in-house workshops and courses. Some of these interventions are still in the planning stages.

At college level similar capacity building interventions are planned. In KwaZulu-Natal the Tirisano fellowship programme is deemed as having been important in developing middle management. Building on one of these fellowships, a formal linkage with Deeside College (Wales) is being finalised as a way of building capacity in college managements, including in the area of strategic planning, which is currently little developed. In North West there has been significant contestation at the level of middle management around who should be campus managers and who should be represented on the college councils. Antagonisms around consensual strategic planning are hindering effective governance capacity in this province. In Western Cape strategic linking of all levels of the FET system is deemed a major challenge. Colleges are in the process of preparing their strategic plans for presentation to the directorate, with additional training provided where necessary.

### **5.3.3 Communications and knowledge sharing**

In this area of activity there is divergence in the provincial ratings. KwaZulu-Natal rates as *high emerging*. In this province well-developed plans are in place for better communication between the FET directorate and the colleges, as well as between colleges. There is strong advocacy of the need for provincial level seminars and conferences to share 'best practice'.

North West and Western Cape both rate as *weak to emerging*. In North West there are few structures in place geared to effectively coordinate dialogue between colleges, the relevant parts of the world of work and other educational institutions. Current structures are mostly involved in vertically disseminating understandings of the provincial strategy. A major challenge for the directorate is to inform the rest of the department and the legislature about the long neglected college sector in the province.

In Western Cape province structures such as the Merger Operational Task Team (MOTT) are deemed as having been very useful in facilitating inter-provincial communication during the initial stages of the restructuring process. Even though this structure is no longer in operation, communication within and across provinces at the level of principals remains intense. There is, however, little communication from the directorate directly to lecturers and other staff, unless it is on a specific task. Selective reporting by college/campus leaders further impede the knowledge sharing process. There is a strong need for the sharing of knowledge, both vertically and horizontally, in ways accessible to staff at all levels. A provincial communication strategy to reach the broader public is viewed as important, as it is felt that there is little public awareness of FET in the province.

### **5.3.4 Linkages and responsiveness**

In this area of activity there is considerable divergence. KwaZulu-Natal rates as *high emerging*; North West rates as *emerging*; Western Cape rates as *weak to emerging*.

In KwaZulu-Natal a Linkages and Programmes Unit has been established, which is beginning to establish its activities. Colleges have been persuaded to set aside funds for a provincial level development fund, which has paid for staff to go to Deeside and elsewhere to study linkages. The provincial policy of developing skills centres in rural areas, targeted at adult learners, has meant that it has a particular expertise in working with communities. This has been paralleled by the crucial position of Amakhosi in getting anything done in rural areas. KZNDEC has a strong vision of short skills courses to meet development needs. It sees the NQF as poorly designed to help with such issues and will not seek to align its short programmes with the NQF. However, linkages with industry have not been pursued as strongly by KZNDEC and this is an area in need of more work. From the start of the new financial year, KZNDEC will give colleges money, rather than staff for new posts, so that the decision can be more easily made to appoint staff for special posts in the area of linkages.

In North West FET colleges are at different stages of development with regard to linkages. Some colleges have managed to harness the efforts of business and social partners to respond to their respective responsibilities and mandates. Most campuses and sites, however, remain out of synch with other social and business partners. Importantly, this mindset is also prevalent among the social and business partners, who resolutely do not pursue formal linkages.

The provincial policy of developing skills centres in rural areas (targeted at adult learners) has shaped the programmes of colleges in how they deal with the needs and available expertise available in various communities. In this regard, NWDEC has a strong vision of short skills courses to meet development needs. It similarly sees both the NQF and boards like Amalusi as poorly designed to help with issues linked to poverty and development and have resolved not to presently align short programmes with the NQF. It has been difficult to formulate linkages with industry around rural-based and development issues and will require considerable intervention and emphasis from the NWDEC. There are however a number of good practice examples in North West that can serve as useful indicators of how to forge contacts and linkages.

In Western Cape province most colleges are deemed as not yet having made the shift in mindset towards a market approach and the business orientation required under the new dispensation. Colleges need to respond to labour needs and know how to cost their services to achieve a profit. It is argued, however, that this shift should not occur at the expense of sound educational principles.

When colleges in the Western Cape put different kinds of partnerships in place, on a bigger scale than is currently the case, it would be regarded as one of the breakthroughs in achieving the new dispensation. The Linkages and Programme Planning Unit to be established in each of the lead colleges, will be the central point that will direct the building of stronger links with the world of work, with SETAs, with HE institutions and with small and micro-enterprises (SMEs). Some campuses have already dedicated posts to such activities, but co-ordination at college level is required, supported by the SESD Programme. The WCED acknowledges that it has a strong role to play in facilitating partnerships. The portfolio for Skills Development and Skills Needs Assessment has commenced with activity in this regard.

### **5.3.5 Learnerships**

The provision of learnerships rates as *weak* in all three provinces. KZNDEC is of the view that learnerships will be essential to the performance of the FET college sector in the future. However, it is also acknowledged that there has been too little support for colleges in this area to date. Whilst it is KZNDEC's position that much of the blame must lie at the national level, the department does acknowledge that it must do more in this area.

In North West province learnerships are viewed as essential to the performance of the FET college sector in the future. In this regard, a number of FET colleges in the province are involved in the

piloting of learnerships. There has however been too little support for colleges around learnerships, which is attributed to lack of synergy in the respective visions of the Department of Education and the Department of Labour. The NWDEC does concede though that it also must do more in developing a coherent plan around the notion of learnerships.

In Western Cape province there has been some piloting and more fully-developed provision in this area, but further expansion of current learnerships and the addition of new learnerships are required. There is a need to involve business more actively in learnership development and to sort out blockages in the system that make colleges reluctant to go this route. SME is not an organised sector so linkages are difficult. Learnerships will be a key strategic activity of the new directorate portfolio for Skills Development and Skills Needs Assessment in order to strengthen support.

#### **5.3.6 FET college staff development**

Support for staff development, in FET colleges, rates as *emerging* in KwaZulu-Natal; *weak* in North West and *emerging* in Western Cape.

In KwaZulu-Natal province the Tirisano programme and the Deeside link have been important tools. KZNDEC has also commissioned the University of Natal to carry out research into staff development needs for both schools and colleges. There is a developing relationship with ETDP SETA.

In North West province the notion of technical assistance to professional staff in colleges has not been embraced as yet. There is, however, an acknowledgement that a better understanding of the role of technology in the world of work will facilitate the training of educators in the province.

In Western Cape province it is acknowledged that colleges need to attract people from the business world, but the salaries that can be offered are often not market-related. Current staff need greater exposure to the world of work, while all staff, whatever their backgrounds, need to be good educators. There are significant developmental needs in terms of both these requirements. It is felt that the training and development of FET teachers is a critical area that must be addressed by Higher Education institutions. Colleges have made some effort towards assessor training and OBE methodologies but a more coherent approach at both provincial and college level is required.

#### **5.3.7 Staff development in mathematics, science and technology**

In two provinces, namely KwaZulu-Natal and North West this area rates as *very weak*, while rating as *weak* in Western Cape.

In KwaZulu-Natal province there has been no significant development to date of programmes for improving science, mathematics and technology capacity amongst college staff. Again, the limited progress at the national level, in this case in the field of curriculum development, was identified as a major constraint on progress. Nonetheless, it is acknowledged that KZNDEC has much to do in this area.

In North West province there has similarly been no development to date of programmes for improving the capacity of college staff in science, mathematics and technology. While not negating the lack of support offered by the provincial FET directorate in this regard, limited progress in curriculum development at the national level was identified as an obstacle.

In Western Cape province academic competence in mathematics and science is regarded as an area where capacity building is urgently required. Delivery in these subjects varies, with some colleges offering maths and science up to an N6 level and other colleges not offering these subjects at all. Many learners struggle with maths and science and the trimester system leads to a fast pace.

Curriculum development in mathematical literacy is a new development that is currently underway. Technology is another area deemed to require attention, if it is not to be just another term for traditional science teaching.

### **5.3.8 Learner Support**

Learner support is rated as *weak* in all provinces. In KwaZulu-Natal province there is no policy as yet that can provide guidance to colleges. However, in the absence of a national policy an interim provincial policy is due to be developed soon. It is likely that a proposal will be made for top-slicing college funds to deliver on this essential focus. In North West province the situation is similar, with career counselling and the development of core learner support mechanisms requiring urgent attention. In Western Cape province learner support is viewed as a complex area. It is argued that and institutions need to grapple with what it means and how it should be implemented. Despite a significant increase in previously disadvantaged learners activities still tend to occur on an individual or ad hoc basis. Although there is no uniform system in place there is, however, evidence of study groups, formal mentoring and remedial classes in some FET colleges.

### **5.3.9 HIV/AIDS**

This is another weak area in all provinces, although slightly better developed in North West province. In KwaZulu-Natal the KZNDEC is committed to development of HIV/AIDS relevant practices in colleges. It has proposed that each college should have a dedicated post in this area. In North West province the NWDEC is equally committed to the development of HIV/AIDS-relevant practices in colleges, but there is no firm policy in place. Given that the rate of HIV/AIDS in the province is high, there have been many interventions at institutional level, where educators, lecturers and student representative council members have been trained in counselling and related issues. However, such commitment still needs urgent building upon. In Western Cape province FET colleges do not have dedicated HIV/AIDS policies in place and current activities in this area revolves mainly around awareness raising. This occurs on an *ad hoc* basis, with little follow-through and much of the work done by outside counsellors. The FET Directorate has little capacity to be of assistance in this area, but intends to endeavour to provide stronger support.

#### 5.4 Conclusions

While 'capacity building in FET directorates' and 'support for mergers' rate as *emerging* in all three provinces, 'learnerships', 'staff development in FET colleges' - especially in the areas of mathematics, science and technology – and 'learner support' achieve a uniformly *weak* rating. Other areas show greater divergence. A *weak* rating should not be interpreted as no activity, but rather as an indication of either lack of a clear policy in a particular area, or lack of consistent implementation.

All provinces are very committed to the SESD programme and appear to have a genuine vision and desire to develop FET colleges in the province as part of a broader strategy of poverty and unemployment reduction and social development.



## SECTION 6

### **Baseline Status of National Department of Education Directorate for Public and Private FET Colleges**

#### **6.1 Introduction**

The baseline report in this section is based on an interview with the Director, Public and Private Further Education and Training Colleges. Due to time pressures within the DoE, it was not possible to interview the other DoE officials who have been part of the SESD process, i.e., the Deputy Director-General: FET and the Chief Director: FET Institutions and Programmes. It is also informed by interviews with provincial directorates, where staff members were asked to comment on the national picture.

#### **6.2 Baseline status of the Department of Education in relation to the National Implementation Plan for the SESD Programme**

##### **6.2.1 Background**

The SESD programme needs to be located within the broader context of the national strategy for public FET colleges, which it is intended to support and strengthen. The SESD programme was designed in the light of national strategy and is consistent therewith. However, due to delays in the launching of the SESD programme, the DoE notes that elements of the SESD activity plan, necessarily, have become somewhat detached from the overall work plan of the FET Branch of DoE. In some cases this has meant that elements the programme is supposed to support, have already been started by the DoE as part of its broader activities. There is no evidence, however, of a major dissonance in terms of vision or activities between the SESD programme and the DoE's work and the programme still seems likely to strengthen overall DoE activities.

##### **6.2.2 Establishment of the National Management Unit**

The Chief Technical Adviser has been appointed and has established an office within the FET Branch in DoE headquarters. The establishment of a fully functioning National Management Unit (NMU), however, has been delayed. A decision has recently been made that confirms its establishment and which mandates the Chief Director: FET Institutions and Programmes to chair the NMU. It is envisaged that the establishment of a fully functioning NMU will, in turn, lead to progress on developing a fully functioning National Steering Committee for the SESD programme.

### **6.2.3 *Strategic planning and capacity building for the Public and Private Further Education and Training Colleges Directorate***

As was highlighted in the background paragraph above, there has been some slippage between the roll-out of the SESD Programme and the overall DoE strategy. In the case of strategic planning, this has meant that the directorate has already engaged on a strategic planning exercise prior to the beginning of the SESD Programme. A programme for on-going monitoring and review of strategic plans is in place.

As the original Implementation Plan for DoE makes clear, capacity within the directorate is an area of concern. The agreed staff establishment for the directorate can be questioned for its match with the major demands on the unit and, moreover, posts remain vacant. Furthermore, the fit between the staff in posts and the functions they are expected to fulfil is far from optimal. Whilst the directorate is clearly engaged with the tasks mandated to it, its ability to deliver is compromised by its staffing limitations.

Against this, it must be noted that the national FET directorate has moved to address some of its specific capacity building needs, for instance in the areas of developing a funding formula and a FET management information system.

### **6.2.4 *Design of a national FET communications and advocacy strategy***

A process in this regard has taken place independent of the SESD programme and a new strategy is in place.

### **6.2.5 *Evaluation of FET colleges' three-year plans and one-year operational plans***

Again, a process in this regard has taken place independent of the SESD intervention, with support from KPMG and the Colleges Collaboration Fund. The DoE is collaborating with provincial departments in the operationalisation of this activity.

### **6.2.6 *Facilitation and monitoring of programmes for building colleges' capacity for management and governance***

The development of a change management programme for college managers is in progress. There was to be a meeting with provinces on 26 March, 2003 to discuss the first round of provincial plans in this regard. Subsequent to this meeting, strategies for implementation, monitoring and dissemination will be addressed. Equally, programmes for the capacity building of college councils will be developed from the provincial plans.

### **6.2.7 *Dissemination of best practice***

There are already structures in place for such dissemination independent of the SESD programme. It is envisaged that key lessons will be presented at the Capacity Development Working Group of the Heads of Education Committee (HEDCOM) - the national forum for communication between the national and provincial Departments of Education.

The annual national conference envisaged in the SESD implementation plan is likely to be subsumed under the DoE's existing national FET college conference to be held in October. The structure and content of that conference will be designed to take account of the lessons and needs of the SESD programme.

#### **6.2.8 *Coordination of provincial activities with national SAQA and Department of Labour structures***

The DoE is committed to coordination and communication with SAQA and DoL at the national level. However, these processes have not yet begun within the SESD programme for two reasons. Firstly, the provincial implementation is only just beginning, and is well behind schedule in the case of DoL in KwaZulu-Natal. Secondly, the national structures for the SESD programme are not yet fully functioning. In addition, it should be remembered that any DoE attempt to ensure coordination with these other national structures will also depend on those agencies' capacity to engage actively in the programme. The appropriate mechanism for coordination has not yet been developed.

#### **6.2.9 *Development and implementation of a national FET strategy for HIV/AIDS***

The DoE has made a strong and unambiguous public commitment to addressing the challenge of HIV/AIDS in the education system. As a result, the SESD programme's commitment to national strategy clearly reflects the DoE's own commitment. Given the time lag in operationalisation of the SESD programme, the DoE has gone ahead with work in this area, independent of the programme and with the support of DFID. This process is ongoing and the SESD programme should be able to complement its continuing work.

#### **6.2.10 *Overall comments***

The DoE sees the SESD programme as closely aligned with its own strategic vision. In some cases this has led the department to make progress on elements of the programme's implementation plan prior to the programme's initiation, due to the delays in the programme's launch. The SESD programme will, however, contribute substantially to the overall work of the DoE.

Other areas, however, have not progressed as quickly. These most directly relate to the elements that are specifically to do with the management of the SESD Programme. Whilst some of the slowness does reflect problems caused by the delay in programme initiation, or factors outside the control of the DoE, it is important to note that the process of establishing the NMU has been slow. This has had a knock-on effect on some other elements of the programme's roll-out. There is some need to recover lost ground, although the programme is still at an early stage and the delays are not yet critical to overall delivery.

Whilst it is not a reflection on the capacity and performance of the DoE in establishing the SESD programme to date, it is important to note that the programme **does** highlight some of the differences in perception between the national and provincial levels regarding the respective competences of

these two levels. Across interviews such different perceptions manifested in provincial views. One such perception is that provinces are being slowed down by having to wait for national decisions; whilst the national position in some areas is that provinces are showing insufficient initiative. Provincial concerns are also evident about the establishment and activities of Umalusi.

It can be argued that the national and provincial implementation plans contribute to this problem by inadequately laying out the respective functions of the National and Provincial Management Units and, on occasion, by using shorthand expressions that do not show sufficient sensitivity to the constitutional division of competences between the two levels in the FET sector. At a more general level the development of a common perception of the respective roles of national and provincial departments could be an important contribution both to the performance of this project and the FET system more generally.

### **6.3 The provincial FET Directorates' views of the baseline status of relations with national Department of Education (DoE)**

#### **6.3.1 Overview**

Responsibility for FET colleges has always had provincial and national elements, and the relationship between these two has often changed. It is not surprising, therefore, that there appear to be tensions between provincial and national understandings of their respective roles in management and facilitation of the FET college system.

It is from this vantage point that provincial directorates raised certain concerns about current relations between national and provincial FET levels.

#### **6.3.2. Supporting college transformation**

The national role of setting up the new FET system is deemed to have been largely successful and the key role of implementation is now seen to lie more with the provinces. The responsibility for appointing consultants to assist in ongoing processes (as envisaged in the implementation plans) is seen by both national and provincial levels to be within their domain. This may be one of the areas where resolution of differing perceptions is required.

However, provinces seem to reflect quite accurately the frustration felt at college level about the tensions that exist in the policy arena between DoE and DoL policies, and amongst the various positions of SAQA, Umalusi and the SETAs. Provincial departments look to the national DoE for solutions to policy contradictions and colleges feel that their performance is unduly affected by policy incoherence. However, it is clearly challenging for the DoE to bring about the desired level of policy coherence. Specific concerns were also raised about the role of the DoE in addressing staff development in colleges.

### **6.3.3 Communication**

The merger process has been a catalyst in the promotion of communication flows and it is felt that there is now greater interaction between national and provincial levels around a common vision. Further improvement is still necessary as, in the words of a respondent: "there can never be enough attention paid to communication between the different levels of the FET system".

### **6.3.4 Curriculum development, testing and certification**

The setting out of curriculum specifications for DoE- approved programmes (NATED 191), as well as examination and/or moderation for all programmes that lead to the issuing of a national certificate or diploma, is a function held by the national DoE. This function was initially decentralised, when responsibility for technical colleges was designated a provincial matter in 1994. Gauteng inherited the unit that previously performed this function for the House of Assembly, while the Western Cape inherited the unit previously located in the House of Representatives. These provinces were thus in a good position to take over the curriculum and examination function at a provincial level, but other provinces were not so fortunate. After a time the function was centralised in Pretoria, where it is still held. Provinces at first paid a fee for this service (a practice since discontinued).

With NQF-alignment now a policy requirement it is crucial for colleges to have clear direction as to how they should proceed. DoE-approved programme offerings have traditionally formed the basis of the relationship between FET directorates and colleges, with specialist provincial subject advisers as the "custodians of the curriculum". Both provincial and national roles and functions require redefinition in terms of the extent to which curriculum issues remain centralised, or are decentralised.

There is still considerable confusion in this area. The relationships between SAQA, Umalusi and SETA ETQAs are still in the process of development and there remains a lack of clarity about the process through which the relevant primary accreditation body initiates Memoranda of Understanding with other quality assurance bodies. There is also uncertainty at the college level of how the NATED programmes will be transformed into an FET Certificate. Colleges are unsure about how proactive to be in this arena. Some have developed good relations with SETAs but are concerned about the changes that may be required when DoE programmes are finalised.

### **6.3.5 Budgets and finances**

Provinces have to make provision in their budgets for the implementation of national plans in terms of posts. Tensions that exist at the level of MECs (members of the Executive Council in a province) are perhaps especially evident in the Western Cape where provincial government has changed between political parties, but in all provinces it is a factor that impacts on the way in which the provincial-national relationship plays itself out.

### **6.3.6 Leadership of the SESD programme**

At the time of the interviews, the National Management Unit (NMU) had still not been established in its intended format and there is concern at provincial level about the reasons for this. As was noted above, the DoE has now made a clear statement in this regard.

### **6.4 Conclusions**

The SESD national implementation plan is closely aligned with the overall DoE strategy. In implementing its broader strategy, the DoE has moved ahead of the SESD programme in a number of ways. However, elsewhere, it has lagged behind. The most crucial lag has been in the area of the NMU. This is particularly significant given the tensions and ambiguities that do exist in the perceptions of the various stakeholders regarding their respective roles in implementation.

The capacity of the national DoE is widely seen to have strengthened over time. However, there remain concerns about understaffing and its likely impact on the DoE's leadership role in the SESD programme.

Communications between the various levels of the FET college system have also strengthened over time but it is clear that challenges remain in this area.

From the perspectives of provinces and colleges, there is a concern that the DoE could be doing more to address the issue of policy contradictions. Such contradictions have arisen, in part, because the DoE is not the sole player in producing policies. This suggests, therefore, that such a challenge will be a difficult one to meet. Nonetheless, it is clear that college improvement will be obstructed by lack of coherence, and that the DoE will need to see in what ways it can ensure that colleges have clear guidance through the complexities of the new policy terrain.

## SECTION 7

### Baseline Status of SAQA Southern Regional Office

#### 7.1 Introduction

The SAQA Southern Regional Office is newly established. As there appears to be a measure of confusion about the relationship between this office and SAQA itself the role and functions of this office are discussed, together with implications of current infrastructure and capacity for successful implementation of the **SESD** programme. A set of recommended dimensions for the ongoing evaluation of the SAQA Southern Regional Office is outlined.

#### 7.2 The role and functions of the SAQA Southern Regional Office

The Southern Regional office of SAQA was established in February 2002, with responsibility for both the Western and Eastern Cape. Its role in relation to the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) at national level is both proactive and reactive.

On the *proactive* side the main function is:

- To establish SAQA as a regional presence in order to promote the National Qualifications Framework (NQF). This function relates predominantly to advocacy and communication, as well as support for SAQA processes of standard setting, quality assurance and quality management.

Current initiatives include the setting up of an NQF Forum which offers an opportunity to pass on information to regional stakeholders: regional representatives of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), representatives of the Departments of Education (WCED) and Labour (DoL), coalitions of Inset and NGO providers and other public and private providers. A series of capacity building workshops has also been initiated in the two provinces in both rural and urban areas, within the resources available, and will be rolled out through the course of 2003.

On the *reactive* side the main functions are:

- To provide a response to queries and problems experienced by providers, learners, employers and SETA ETQAs in terms of accessing information about SAQA processes, accreditation as providers, the standard or quality of a particular courses or programmes.

Providers can only be SAQA-accredited if they deliver programmes against registered unit standards or qualifications. Current accreditation guidelines do not cater for providers who offer less than a unit standard or qualification. There is also a level of complexity and possibly confusion about processes of registration with the DoE as a private provider and accreditation with the appropriate ETQA as a provider. This applies at both FET and Higher Education levels. Media communication makes it look as if the system is fully in place, but in reality there are still a number of blockages and underdeveloped areas.

What providers and learners want at a regional level is a 'one-stop shop' where they can have all their queries addressed. It is not always possible to provide such service, but the office can usually direct them to the right source, and offer advice on what is available on the SAQA website.

- To provide feedback to SAQA about systems blockages and implementation problems. The brief of the regional office is not to drive policy processes. It has access to policy thinking at the national level and is kept informed of new developments before they enter the public domain, in order to assist with dissemination and implementation. In its turn the SAQA Regional Office contributes to these debates by providing input on the problems and difficulties experienced by SETAs, providers and learners at the regional level.

As the Southern Regional office is the first regional office to be established it has the additional role of model building. Through its engagement in various areas it is developing a model or blueprint for regional SAQA offices. It is also playing a staff development role in this regard.

### **7.3 Infrastructure and capacity: Implications for the success of the SESD Programme**

The link between the SAQA Southern Regional Office and the National Access Consortium Western Cape (NACWC) Western Cape is a key variable in understanding infrastructure and capacity. The regional office occupies the same premises as the NACWC except that the building, previously owned by the NACWC Trust, has been sold and accommodation is rented out to a number of tenants, including NACWC and the SAQA Southern Regional Office.

Staff members currently employed in the regional office were previously employed by NACWC. Some of the SAQA staff members continue to carry out NACWC responsibilities as these relate to the winding down of NACWC contractual commitments (which pertain mainly to a materials writing project and feasibility study). At the same time they fulfil a primary role as the regional presence of SAQA. Even though both areas of work focus on implementation of the NQF, the two identities are not merged. While the work of the NACWC, since 1997, has focussed specifically on broadening access at the FET level for out-of-school youth, SAQA covers all levels of the NQF and the work extends to many more areas. The expertise gained through NQF capacity building interventions in technical colleges under the NACWC nevertheless provides a solid foundation for the work of the SAQA Southern Regional Office in general, and particularly for the work to be done in the Danida SESD programme.

At professional level there are currently seven staff members. Of these two are in temporary positions for 2003, in preparation for setting up a regional office in Kwazulu-Natal and a regional office that will serve the central provinces, namely Free State, North-West and Northern Cape. One position relates to research and planning within the national research function, but with the explicit aim of placing regional issues and perspectives onto the research agenda. That leaves three full-time professional staff: a regional and deputy regional manager and a regional co-ordinator. One additional person offers administrative assistance across all areas.

Given that the work of the Southern Regional Office covers two provinces, as well as the full spectrum of NQF bands, it is anticipated that the office currently has the capacity to allocate about 12.5% of its capacity to the FET sector in the two provinces and about 2.5% of its current capacity to the SESD programme. Whilst financial support under the SESD Programme will make additional capacity available to support specific interventions, the level of support offered by the regional office to the FET



sector as a whole, can, of necessity, not be as comprehensive. An extension of the intervention, targeted at two FET colleges in the Western Cape, to FET institutions in both provinces will only be possible through careful documentation of processes, materials and systems developed. This will enable dissemination to other FET institutions in the Western Cape and other provinces, to provincial Departments of Education and through them to the national DoE, as well as to SAQA at a national level.

Such dissemination is crucial, especially in the light of the general view that policies and systems developed around the NQF and around the Skills Development Strategy (SDS) are not conducive to rapid uptake by FET colleges. SETAs have, up to now, been the main conduits of information to FET colleges and it will be important to ensure that a direct intervention at regional level by SAQA has optimum impact in terms of advocacy more generally, but also in terms of feedback regarding systemic blockages and/or areas in which information and assistance are still required. This will be an important aspect of the intervention, given the particular role and functions of a SAQA presence at regional level.

An active process of writing up and documenting will need to be instituted from the start. Specific responsibility for ensuring that this happens needs to be allocated. The relationship between the SAQA Southern Regional Office and the Western Cape Education Department (WECD) will be crucial in this regard as 'Support to SAQA' is listed in the Terms of Reference of the Provincial Technical Adviser. Whether this support role includes involvement in the creation of an archive of documents, materials and reports relating to the SAQA component of the SESD programme, needs to be clarified.

#### **7.4 Evaluation dimensions**

The SAQA Regional Office's activity plan for the SESD programme details four main activities, with a range of micro activities under each. While progress towards the achievement of these activities will be monitored on an ongoing basis, the question of *impact* is located within the context of systems building through implementation. The NQF system is not yet fully operational and attempts towards capacity building will involve pioneering work, as well as advocacy and communication of what is already in place. Against this background the impact of the intervention by the SAQA Southern Regional Office under the SESD programme needs to be evaluated at three levels:

##### *Level 1: Targeted FET institutions in the Western Cape:*

At a general level impact refers to learners in these institutions (and eventually to learners across the system) having access to quality-assured NQF qualifications at all NQF levels relating to FET. At a more immediate level impact can be measured in terms of an increase in programme and materials development and delivery against accredited standards and/or qualifications. This includes learnerships and skills programmes that support SME-related job growth, as well as learnerships and skills programmes in areas identified by employers in business, industry, local government and other sectors.

The SAQA Regional Office cannot be held accountable for what colleges achieve or do not achieve in this regard as there are too many other variables that need to be taken into account. The examining and certification of NQF-aligned programmes are, for instance, quality assurance issues that must still be sorted out between national and provincial DoE. Both the targeted colleges, in conjunction with SETAs, have already made some progress towards offering NQF-accredited programmes. Further progress in this regard could therefore not be attributed solely to the SAQA component of the SESD intervention.

What the intervention by the SAQA Regional Office must achieve, in terms of impact, is a more uniform competence in relation to NQF policies/systems/practices and the relationship of these to outcomes-based pedagogy and assessment and to; internal quality assurance mechanisms, on all campuses of the two targeted FET colleges. Current deficiencies identified through the initial scoping exercise will provide the baseline for evaluation.

A second measure of impact will be the extent to which materials developed for the SAQA component of the SESD programme are available for dissemination to other FET institutions in the province. Guidelines developed for the targeted colleges; as well as frequently-asked questions and answers should be written up and/or finalised for wider dissemination to other institutions to ensure that the intervention has wider impact and is not a 'once-off'. While dissemination itself does not fall within the parameters of the SAQA component of the SESD programme; and would need to be handled by the FET Directorate (and/or, more specifically, by the Provincial Technical Adviser), the SAQA Southern Regional office must be held accountable for submission of relevant material

*Level 2: Western Cape FET Directorate and the WCED more generally*

Impact at this level relates to the competence of the FET Directorate and of the WCED more generally, in connection with NQF-related quality assurance practices and management. While it should again be acknowledged that the SAQA Southern Regional Office cannot be held solely accountable for the achievement of this outcome, they can be evaluated on the extent to which blockages in the development and implementation of the NQF as a system have been identified and communicated to relevant parties at provincial level. They can also be evaluated on the extent to which they have succeeded in building a quality assurance network that includes the relevant parties involved in quality assurance in FET colleges. The scope and level of their input into this network is a further area of impact.

*Level 3: SAQA at national level*

Feedback to SAQA at a national level about systems problems and blockages is a crucial area of longer-term impact. It may well be found that FET Colleges have found innovative ways of interacting with SETAs and solving staffing and implementation problems. The systematising of such solutions is a crucial area of impact; as is the documentation of and communication about new procedures and

practices that may come about as a result of intervention by the SAQA Southern Regional Office. Evaluation at this level will relate to frequency and quality of feedback to SAQA nationally, as well as to the extent to which follow-up is undertaken and results are relayed back to the FET sector in the province.

### 7.5 Summary of evaluation dimensions

Understanding the context in which the SAQA Southern Regional Office intervention will take place allows the identification of outcomes for which this office can be held accountable. While it is not appropriate to attribute problems or blockages, whose origins lie elsewhere in the system, to this office, the baseline study has identified seven areas of outcome for which this office can and should be held accountable in terms of the activities they intend undertaking. They are:

1. Extent to which a more uniform competence, has been developed at all levels of management and staff on all campuses of the two targeted FET Colleges - in relation to NQF policies, systems and practices; outcomes-based pedagogy and assessment; internal quality assurance mechanisms.
2. The extent to which lessons learned from the SAQA component of the SESD intervention have been documented for dissemination to other FET institutions in the province and to other SAQA Regional Offices.
3. Extent to which blockages in the development and implementation of the NQF as a system have been identified and communicated to the relevant parties at provincial level.
4. Extent to which the SAQA Southern Regional Office has succeeded in building a quality assurance network that includes the relevant parties involved in quality assurance in FET Colleges.
5. Scope and level of the SAQA Southern Regional Office's input into provincial quality assurance networks.
6. Frequency and quality of feedback about system problems and blockages given to SAQA nationally.
7. Extent to which follow-up to SAQA was undertaken and results relayed back to the FET sector.

The responsibilities of the Provincial Technical Adviser and the FET Directorate with regard to dissemination of various aspects of the SAQA component of the SESD Programme should be clarified so that no misconceptions exist in this regard.

If these recommendations are accepted by the Provincial Management Unit and the National Management Unit, they will become the *impact dimensions* against which the SAQA Southern Regional Office will be evaluated on an ongoing basis.

## **7.6 The Western Cape FET Directorate's views of its relations with the SAQA Southern Regional Office**

The FET Directorate feels that the most important brief of the SAQA Southern Regional Office is to "bring SAQA to the people" - so to speak. The SAQA Southern Regional Office has a general responsibility to the region to demystify SAQA policies and procedures. Secondly, the office needs to help institutions to interpret and understand the NQF and its requirements. FET colleges did not feature prominently in the original NQF formulation and the adaptation of their practices - to fit in with SAQA requirements - is an area still in need of clarification at national as well as at provincial and institutional levels. Certain colleges are very involved with the Regional Office, but others have not established contact.

The Southern Regional Office is seen as an extension of SAQA at national level and this is the role they must play in the region. There is at the same time understanding for the system development that still needs to take place, as well as an understanding for the implication that regional office staff may not immediately be able to deal with all the problems that come their way.

It is also acknowledged that a process of relationship building needs to happen in relation to the FET Directorate. Certain blockages need to be addressed in order to realise the full potential of this valuable regional resource.

## SECTION 8

### Recommendations for subsequent evaluations

#### 8.1 Introduction

In this section recommendations for subsequent evaluations are outlined. These recommendations refer to changes in design as well as to areas not addressed in the baseline study.

#### 8.2 Recommendation: Design of the second study

The decision to provide full baseline reports at both college and campus level resulted from the current stage of the merger process. It became evident that, in many instances, colleges are not yet "real places". Respondents not only found it easier to talk about their own campuses, but also wanted to do so. It was also important to obtain up-dated quantitative data from campuses. This data was included at campus level and then included in the data at college level, which referred to all campuses in a particular college.

It is however, recommended that subsequent evaluations will only report at college level. The identified campuses will still be visited but they will be required to respond at college level. This will promote cohesion and strengthen the ethos of ONE college.

#### 8.3 Recommendation: Visits to FET Directorates

The completion of the baseline questionnaire by an FET Directorate focus group took up a considerable portion of the provincial visits. There was thus no opportunity to set up appointments with provincial staff outside of the FET directorates themselves. College and campus visits made it clear that contact between them and the province does not occur only at FET directorate level. Within the provincial departments interest in the SESD programme was also expressed at higher levels in the authority chain.

It is therefore recommended that the next visit should include interviews with at least the Chief Director to whom the FET Directorate reports and, if possible also with the Director General or Head of Education. Triangulation within provincial departments will enable a clearer understanding of systemic relations in the FET system.

#### 8.4 Recommendation: Input by the NTA and PTAs

At the time of the baseline study all PTAs were not yet in place, or had just been appointed. Those in place were very helpful in helping evaluators to find information and to make contact with colleges and campuses. This assistance was rendered on an informal basis.

It is recommended that during subsequent national and provincial visits the NTA and PTAs are formally interviewed to obtain their input on implementation progress. They will be in a good position to comment on various aspects of the SESD programme, as well as on the success of their own interaction with designated colleges, with SAQA Southern Regional Office in the case of Western Cape and with the provincial Department of Labour in the case of KwaZulu-Natal.

#### **8.5 Recommendation: Preparation for the next rounds of evaluation**

The next round of evaluation will be more tightly focussed than the baseline study, which was required to cover the full range of dimensions. It is important that evaluators have a clear idea of implementation activities undertaken in the interim period between evaluations, as they would need to focus specifically on the immediate impact of these interventions and follow up again during subsequent visits.

It is therefore recommended that the National Technical Adviser (NTA) and the Provincial Technical Advisers (PTAs) provide the HSRC with minutes of NMU and PSC meetings, as well as with progress reports received from SESD programme participants. It will not be sufficient for evaluators to rely on information provided only by research sites.

#### **8.6 Further recommendations**

Any other recommendations that the NMU and/or PSC's may have will be included in the design of the next rounds, as far as this is possible and feasible.

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