

Outsourced Insight cc.



EVALUATION OF THE NATIONAL EDUCATION COLLABORATION TRUST (NECT)

NECT Reference Group Meeting

18 January 2022

PURPOSE OF THE ASSIGNMENT, AND EVALUATION TEAM

- **Purpose**

- Evaluation of achievements and systemic contributions of the NECT against its mandate
- Recommendations for improvement: structure, processes, and strategic positioning
- Report-back to NECT stakeholders

- **Evaluation team**

- 3 Lead Evaluators (Profs Unterhalter, Molefe, Tom)
- DCES, HSRC (16 evaluators) (PI: Dr Michael Cosser; Co-PI: Dr Wilfred Lunga)
- Citofield (two evaluators) (PI: Philip Browne)
- Outsourced Insight (4 evaluators) (Co-PI: Dr Stephen Rule)

METHODOLOGY AND SEQUENCING

- **Methodology**

- Mixed-methods approach involving

- *Qualitative data* collection (KIIs with NECT, NECT stakeholders, NGOs, education officials (DBE national, district), and principals, and FGDs with teachers (primary, secondary: maths/science/language))
- *Quantitative data* collection (NECT Schooling Survey, DBE-supplied learner performance data, NECT-supplied teacher and learner performance data, NECT reports and presentations)
- *Academic and grey literature* (books, journal articles, reports)

- **Sequencing**

- Inception workshop
- NECT management interviews
- NECT data collection (reports, etc.)
- Fieldwork (school visits, April and May 2021)
- NECT Schooling Survey
- Further NECT data collection
- Draft report
- Validation workshop with NECT
- Final report
- Presentations to: FREF Board; NECT Reference Group; NECT Board

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

NECT PROGRAMME	FOCUS AREA (FA)	KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS
Programme 1: District Improvement Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Area 1: Teaching, teacher development and curriculum Focus Area 2: School leadership and management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Suitability (FA) Effectiveness (FA) Level of outcomes (FA) Sustainability (FA) Reach (FA) Adoption (FA) Institutionalisation of NECT interventions (FA)
Programme 2: Systemic intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Area 4: Capacity of the state Focus Area 1: Teaching, teacher development and curriculum (data collection, storage and management) 	NECT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact on state capacity (FA) Long-term impact on state capacity (FA) Impact on district development (FA) Lessons learned for building state capacity (FA)

ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORK

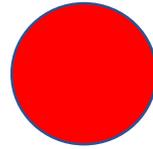
NECT PROGRAMME	FOCUS AREA (FA)	KEY EVALUATION QUESTIONS
Programme 3: Innovation programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Focus Area 1: Teaching, teacher development and curriculum (DSCs) Focus Area 4: Capacity of the state (Edhub) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact to date Long-term sustainability of NECT innovations
Programme 5: Education DialogueSA		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact to date, and likely impact of post-dialogue action
Programme 6: Governance & finance	Focus Area 5: Governance and resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Governance contributions/hindrances to NECT success (FA) Lessons learned from NECT governance (FA) Cost effectiveness (FA) Resource mobilisation and use (FA)
Programme 7: Strategic partnerships	Focus Area 3: Partnerships, collaboration and stakeholder relations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collaboration model outcomes & relevance (FA) Educational improvement through stakeholder mobilisation (FA) Stakeholder inclusion/exclusion (FA) Partnership sustainability (FA) Partnership and educational improvement institutionalisation (FA)
Programme 8: Monitoring & evaluation	Focus Areas 1, 2, and 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Impact of M&E in provinces at district and school level

HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

NECT PROGRAMME	WORKING WELL	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
Programme 1: District Improvement Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Capacity development of teachers and principals Building of networks and collaboration at district level effective 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devote more attention to assisting DBE to embed training and support interventions in schools, given poor learner outcomes in quintile 1 and 2 schools, especially in Mathematics and Science Devise and use criteria for scaling interventions Build coherence through strategic planning and use of synthesised evidence from MQA unit
Programme 2: Systemic intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Systemic change through ICT shows impact on DBE operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Expedite embedding of ICT interventions (especially SA-SAMS) across the education sector
Programme 3: Innovation programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NECT has led innovation in education EdHub work is highly innovative, straddling institutional and non-institutional contexts to embed change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accelerate innovative change for transformation of education sector
Programme 5: Education DialogueSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Effective in addressing key challenges of the education system while influencing key stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resolve issue of dividedness over action-oriented nature of dialogues Consider using follow-up actions from dialogues to support the work of Programme 1

HIGH-LEVEL FINDINGS

NECT PROGRAMME	WORKING WELL	NEEDS IMPROVEMENT
Programme 6: Governance & finance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective governance model with strong Board support for implementation of NECT interventions • Effective in terms of collaborations built with funders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attain appropriate balance between core and special funding allocations • Collect and use baseline- and systematic routine data to enable determination of value for money of all Programmes
Programme 7: Strategic partnerships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work is evolving and responsive to changing needs and pressures within education sector • NECT a key strategic partner to the DBE 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review focus on special projects that put strain on NECT 'core business' • Determine middle- to longer-term trajectory of NECT on the basis of the extent to which teaching and learning gains are embedded
Programme 8: Monitoring & evaluation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective monitoring in provinces in which NECT work is concentrated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step up work on evaluation, synthesis, results review, and critical engagement • Reflect critically on results of testing of teachers and learners to improve interventions • Embed M&E in schools to enhance sustainability and improve learning outcomes



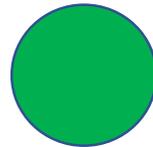
PERFORMANCE IS WEAK

Outcomes of this Programme are falling below expectations



PERFORMANCE IS SATISFACTORY

Outcomes of this Programme are being achieved, but there is room for improvement



PERFORMANCE IS STRONG

Outcomes of this Programme are being successfully achieved

Programme 1: District Improvement Programme			
Programme 2: Systemic intervention			
Programme 3: Innovation programme			
Programme 5: Education DialogueSA			
Programme 6: Governance and finance			
Programme 7: Strategic partnerships			
Programme 8: Monitoring and evaluation			

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. National strategic concerns for delivering on the NDP and enhancing institutional collaboration

1. *Develop capacity as a think tank able to give strategic direction to the DBE and realise potential as a complex organisation undertaking strategic planning for the education system to 2030*
2. *NECT and DBE should devise a strategic plan for complementarity of work between them*
3. *NECT should appoint a gender and social inclusion specialist at senior management level*

2. Technicalities to enhance the work of NECT

4. *Develop overarching Theory of Change for Programme 1*
5. *Define criteria for scaling interventions*
6. *Develop approach to continuous professional development for teachers in quintile 1 and 2 schools*
7. *Expand range of senior management roles in NECT, taking gender representivity into account*
8. *Capacitate MQA unit*

3. Financial and collaborative issues to enhance the work of NECT

9. *Review stakeholder collaborations to realise inclusivity imperatives of ECF*
10. *Increase budget allocation to core funding to enable greater focus on core activities*