

Workshop on business' role in shaping skills development policy and partnership facilitation for implementation

REPORT OF THE WORKSHOP HELD ON 5 NOVEMBER 2020

Purpose of the workshop

To ensure that business speaks with one voice on skills development and education policy matters:

- Awareness of current BUSA/business positions
- Process for developing more inclusive future positions

To provide a broad platform for business engagement to:

- Input to national imperatives and debates
- Share best practice and interventions
- Identify opportunities to form partnerships and scale up interventions
- Information sharing on national, regional and international studies and funding opportunities

Business representatives from Seta Boards, BUSA subCET and SocPol members as well as BBC members were invited to the session as well as individuals from GIZ.

Session One: Opening and welcome

Jahni de Villiers BUSA SocPol Deputy Chairperson

Introduction and welcoming. An indication of who was in the workshop was provided.

Purpose of the meeting was explained:

- To create a space where business representatives can come together
- Share insights about the issues that are being considered in the SETAs as well as other skills related structures to ensure that business's input in policy and implementation is broadened to include all of business's voice.

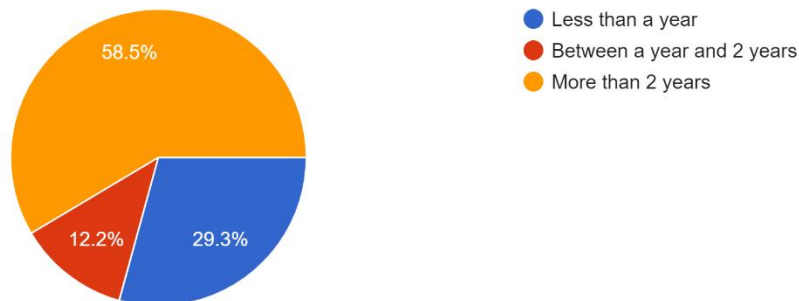
Camel Marock, the facilitator, emphasised the importance of this session for:

- Maximising the participation of the role players on SETA Boards
- Reflecting on what has been done in the space over the past period
- Supporting a coordinative approach.

In order to reach a deeper understanding of who is in the workshop and the different kinds of experience a poll was put up on the google sheet asking participants about how long they have been involved in SETAs.

How long have you been involved in SETAs?

41 responses



Camel highlighted that the poll shows that the majority of respondents (61.1%) have been involved for more than 2 years, whilst 27.8% have been involved for less than a year. Only 11.1% have been involved between 1-2 years. This highlights the diversity in the group – some respondents are quite new, and others have years of experience in SETAs as well as other structures. This creates a basis for collaboration and getting to a shared understanding as the right representatives are in the room.

Session Two: Understanding the AUDA-NEPAD and SIFA Programme

Unami Mpofu: Senior Programme Officer AUDA-NEPAD

This session highlighted the importance of private sector and its role. She explained the African Union Development Agency (AUDA) and the different components of the SIFA programme.

Participants in the workshop were also encouraged to utilise the African skills portal for youth employment and entrepreneurship (ASPYEE) on the AUDA-NEPAD website.

Session Three: SIFA history and projects plus purpose of this forum

Cheryl James Regional Coordinator SIFA

Reiterated the importance of this session in terms of new representatives on the SETA Boards.

Explained that (SIFA) has got a finance component (3 funding windows), and a technical component (including the work that is being done with BUSA).

Indicated the activities that SIFA has undertaken in South Africa as well as regionally. (Presentation attached)

Discussion:

The extent to which the SIFA process encourages engagement with SETAs

Want to understand about the involvement and engagement of the SETAs – as a public/private body - in the SIFA collaboration?

How will this process help the private sector to work more effectively with the SETAs?

This is seen as important to ensure that what is discussed in this forum can be fed into the annual plans that the SETAs have such that the private sector is aware of the priorities and can also contribute to the thinking in this regard.

Response: It was indicated that this session is for all the private sector members who are on a SETA Board or other structures. All the members – for whom contact details were available - were invited to be part of the session. There are over 70 people present and hoping to expand this.

Another respondent indicated that this platform is only for business to allow business to build a platform so that as business we can start integrating all the other social partners to realise effective change. From 2021 SIFA is hoping to start engaging SETA secretariates directly to explore the possibility of an engagement platform and to explore partnerships between the SIFA initiative and the SETAs.

Coaching and Training new Members

The possibility of supporting mentoring and coaching of new people who play a role in the structures – is this something that BUSA could do? Perhaps involved members who have been involved for some time noting that some more experienced members are already playing this role. Suggestion is that it would be helpful to set up workshops for people who are new in these boards or other skills structures in order to explain how it all works. This would allow BUSA to have a common thread and a common vision for skills development – the latter would in fact be useful for all members as even some of the older members don't have a strong sense of the vision.

Response: BUSA clarified that there is an intention to run training workshops and there will be a process communicated to representatives in this regard. This would focus on the priorities emerging from this process and where possible would involve representatives that have expertise in the different areas.

Comments on the focus of this forum

To pull together as business towards a common vision to find a solution to the challenges, we are experiencing because of Covid - this is the kind of platform we want to build because as business we've been so divided in our approach to skills development, yet we have such a vital role to play in this process. This requires a focus

on both ensuring that we are able to get a mandate and to consider how we integrate everything that is being done to make a meaningful change in the country as we go forward.

Another respondent highlighted that a key role of this forum **is to enable business to improve the governance of the SETAs**. The respondent noted that the SETA has four main pillars of corporate governance: the board of directors, management and the internal and external auditors. Business has the opportunity to participate at the level of the board of directors and it is important that this forum will assist to ensure that members are fully aware of their responsibilities and duties as far as the performance of that function is concerned. This requires support from BUSA for business representatives across the different SETAs with a focus on improving the functioning of the SETAs.

And another respondent suggested that there is a need to ensure the **involvement of the private sector - especially associations - in the roadshows that the SETAs implement**.

A respondent stated that it is important that this platform creates a space to share best practice and interventions. However, needs to go beyond policies and **determine how to monitor their implementation**. We can share all the best practices but if we don't go back and look at whether there is success in what we have shared or not then we will be back again in 5 years' time thinking about what can we improve in this policy dialogue so we need to consider what impact measures we are going to put in place to ensure that policies that we put together are properly implemented and successful.

One respondent highlighted that there is **a need for business to address skills planning**: Each SETA has its own sector policy and that's unique to each industry depending on its specific requirement. However, there are certain cross SETA functions and its important that BUSA assists representatives to ensure that the skills policies in each of those are responsive to the unique requirements of each industry and ensure that we've got a sufficient pipeline of the required skills at any given point in time. BUSA could assist with the development of a framework for identifying the required skills and how each SETA will respond to these.

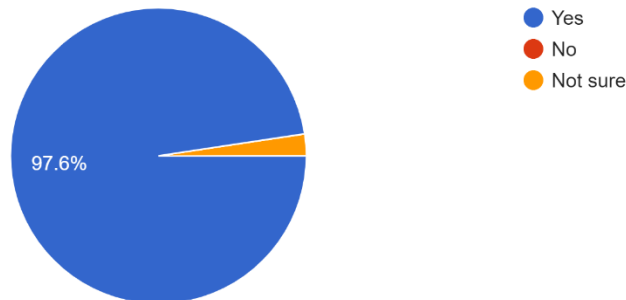
Response: Highlighted that there are three broad areas that the private sector are most concerned with. There is one group of issues that are policy level and formal engagement level. There is a second group of issues around capacity building and the need to ensure that representatives feel that they have the knowledge and confident to represent the views of business. Thirdly, there are thematic issues that we need to look at with regard to skills development issues that are emerging from workplaces. These 3 areas are what this partnership between BUSA and SIFA is trying to develop platforms to address.

Facilitator: Results of Poll re Coordination

The results of the poll on whether participants wish to continue coordinating meetings shows that 97.5% of the participants said yes whilst the remaining participants said that they were not sure.

Do you wish to continue to have coordinating meetings?

42 responses



Session Four: BUSA Position

Sino Moabalobelo Social Policy Director BUSA

Explained the history of BUSA, its role and the structures in which BUSA represents business.

Also indicated the key successes that have been achieved through these engagements. Then detailed the work that BUSA does relating to education and training.

(Presentation attached)

Comments re issues respondents wish to see addressed:

- Addressing youth unemployment and access to workplace experience / internships
- Understanding demand and how to ensure interventions that address these/ improving the way that the SSP, WSP and ATR process allows for demand to be understood
- How can business ensure that it maximises the value of the training that takes place as part of the mandatory grants
- How to ensure learnerships are relevant and meet demand
- Demand-led training for people to enter the workplace (taking into account the changing nature of work)
- Ensuring that we understand impact: How do we use big data to find out what is needed? How do we make sure we are not training for training's sake?

- Reducing the bureaucracy in the system
- Working with business representatives that are involved in quality assurance – SAQA, QCTO
- How to ensure the spending of the levies that are being paid to our SETAs are spent on the things that we believe are strategic (such as addressing demand relating to 4IR or current practical needs) particularly given that there is likely to be pressure on the budgets.

Final thanks were then made by Jahni from BUSA

Agreements reached

1. A report from this session will be provided which highlights both what was said at the meeting in relation to the coordination and the kinds of issues that have been highlighted.
2. The input from this session will inform the focus of future sessions taking into account the kinds of policy decisions and implementation decisions that are required and future topics to be discussed.
3. BUSA/SIFA will also discuss the ideas highlighted here for training and mentoring and ensure that this process includes Subject Matter Experts to ensure that there is policy alignment. Where individuals can contribute to these workshops this will be helpful.
4. BUSA/SIFA will ensure that forums are convened in a regular way to ensure coordination so as to address the issues highlighted by participants and the priorities emerging linked to the legislative and planning processes.

ANNEXURES:

1. Attendance register
2. Full transcript of presenters' inputs
3. Presentation by Cheryl James
4. Presentation by Sino Moabalobelo