



MICTSETA |

Media, Information And
Communication Technologies
Sector Education And Training Authority

SHAPING SKILLS, PIONEERING INDUSTRIES, EMPOWERING FUTURES

VISION

“Cutting edge future skills”

MISSION

“To strategically lead the MICT sector skills development system in support of meaningful economic participation of our beneficiaries, for improved socio-economic conditions”

RESEARCH AGENDA

2024/25

Contents

1. Introduction and Policy context	2
2. Purpose of the Research Agenda.....	2
3. Research themes	3
3.1 Current and future MICT workforce needs	3
3.3 Quality assurance of education and training	3
3.4 Participation in education, training, and work.....	4
3.5 Workplace learning.....	4
4. Research focus areas.....	4
4.1 Forecasting skill demand and supply	5
4.2 Analysing skills mismatch.....	5
4.3 Skills needs in the sub-sectors.....	5
4.4 Monitoring and evaluation	5
4.5 Impact of Covid-19 on the sector	5
4.6 The impact of loadshedding in the sector	5
5. Dissemination of research	6
6. Conclusion.....	7

1. Introduction and Policy context

The Media, Information and Communication Technologies Sector Education and Training Authority (MICT SETA) is established through the Skills Development Act, (Act 97 of 1998). It facilitates skills development in the Information Technology, Electronics, Advertising, Film and Electronic media and Telecommunications subsectors.

The SETA is responsible for post-school education and training within the Media, Information and Communications Technology sector, and as such coordinates efforts to develop a highly skilled knowledge-based information society. Key legislative frameworks influencing the MICT SETA are the National Skills Development Plan (NSDP), National Development Plan (NDP), New Growth Path (NGP), Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP), Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) 2019-2024, White Paper on Post Schooling Education and Training, the National Integrated ICT Policy White Paper, and the Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan (ERRP) together with its Skills Strategy. These policies have an overarching theme of promoting skills development to improve employability of the workforce, productivity of enterprises and inclusiveness of economic growth.

The research agenda of the MICT SETA embraces the changing landscape of the country and is geared towards unearthing blockages in the skills pipeline for the sector to inform the strategic direction of the funding system.

The research agenda is grounded on a stakeholder led process. These include national research institutes, fellow SETAs, employers, professional bodies, learners and education and training providers. Employer participation specifically, is critical to the implementation of the SETA's research agenda and research plans. Thus, the MICT SETA's research agenda is premised on the following assumptions:

- Education, training and lifelong learning are fundamental, but by themselves insufficient to help individuals gain decent jobs.
- Training and skills development must form an integral part of broad economic, social and labour market policies to sustain economic and job growth and social development.
- Training and skills development policies should promote equal opportunities for previously disadvantaged groups and help alleviate poverty.

2. Purpose of the Research Agenda

The purpose of this research agenda is to help organise and prioritise research that might otherwise be disjointed or not integrated into strategic planning and decision making, and to improve the quality of the data and information used by the SETA. The process for developing and using a research agenda is equally as valuable as the research agenda itself. It serves as a vehicle for dialog and a way in which to move beyond a culture of evidence to a more integrated culture of inquiry. More importantly, it provides a mechanism for building research capacity throughout the MICT SETA rather than isolated pockets of the organisation.

In general, the MICT SETAs research agenda shall provide the overall direction in the pursuit of research activities in aid of policy, planning and decision making on skills development issues for the MICT sector. Specifically, it aims to achieve the following:

- To support policy and program initiatives to ensure accessible and quality skills development interventions in the sector.
- To strengthen the role of the MICT SETA as an authority in post school education and training through relevant and research-based policies.
- To strive for equilibrium between supply and demand - all training programs will be guided by a job-skill matching paradigm, both in terms of quantity and quality set by the sector, especially in scarce occupations and areas where there is high demand.

3. Research themes

The research agenda identifies five research themes for stronger national development:

3.1 Current and future MICT workforce needs

The foundation for economic growth in the country is an education and training system that meets the growing demand for a skilled workforce. Research in the area of projected occupational demand and labour supply, occupations and industry trends, and skills shortages and gaps will provide benchmark information to build a better understanding of the workforce situation of the different regions of the country and of the key factors involved in delivering interventions. As such, the MICT SETA will dwell more into producing a credible labour market information that accurately identifies occupations in high demand through its Sector Skills Plan (SSP) that will be updated annually. Moreover, there will be topical research that focuses on 4IR or converging technologies, examining international and national trends; the determination of typical business practices and skills opportunities, challenges, and development approaches; and the forecasting of volumes of required skills in the short, medium and long term.

3.2 Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs) as drivers of economic growth

Small, Medium and Micro Enterprises (SMMEs), also referred to as small business, play an important role in an economy. They can be key drivers of economic growth, innovation and job creation. Thus, the MICT SETA recognises their importance, hence, research on SMMEs as Vehicles for 4IR Development in South Africa becomes important. The SETA will conduct research on SMMEs, entrepreneurship and community-based organisations, particularly in relation to 4IR cross-sectoral partnerships and projects for sustainable growth. The research will assess their involvement in the development, implementation and support of 4IR products in South Africa, as well as opportunities that exist to contribute to import substitution, export growth, and job creation through 4IR.

3.3 Quality assurance of education and training

Several research opportunities are present in the area of measurement of quality of the processes and the outcomes of education and training and skill development. Research in

these areas will raise awareness of the necessary links between policy making, innovation efforts and system performance.

3.4 Participation in education, training, and work

Developing and harnessing human capital for resource productivity and sustainability is a critical determinant for economic growth and social development. Research in this area will help build an understanding of the practical ways individuals and employers can identify suitable employment and future career prospects, develop new pathways to transition from the education setting into the workplace, and build new opportunities to participate in continuous education and training. In this context, the MICT SETA will research enabling qualifications and learning pathways for 4IR occupations, this will be essential to define learning pathway scenarios, and timeframes, associated with the identified 4IR occupations. Furthermore, the study will look at both public and private colleges. It will further try to understand the current supply system, including its successes and shortcomings, and match that against demand. Likewise, it will also focus on increased and focused skills development for rural and marginalised communities to ensure inclusivity through technology skills development. A project topic in this regard will be for the SETA to conduct a rural skills needs assessment study which will be about an examination of the skills development needs of potential learners in rural and marginalised communities.

3.5 Workplace learning

Workplace learning has become a prominent issue for employers and policy makers concerned with the recognition of formal and informal learning taking place within the organisation structure. Current research in this area focuses on the impact on the employees' occupational positioning and status within the organisation; the way organisations dismantle obstacles to participate in learning; and the opportunity created to encourage engagement in workplace learning in order to further knowledge, skills and competencies in the workforce. Research by the SETA will be on increased access to, and delivery on occupationally directed priority programmes that link education and the workplace. This will be supplemented by a tracer or an impact study which will seek to understand whether the programmes achieved their intended purpose, with the intention of distilling lessons learnt that can inform future programmes.

4. Research focus areas

To identify and anticipate future skill needs and potential skill mismatches, the MICT SETA will undertake various sector level research activities. It will produce regular skills supply and demand forecasts and will analyse the potential labour market imbalances. The MICT SETA will also investigate skills and competence needs across the sub-sectors and explore an approach to enterprise surveys on changing skill needs. A comprehensive research programme has been identified and will encompass the following:

4.1 Forecasting skill demand and supply

The MICT SETAs skill supply and demand forecasts provide comprehensive information on future labour market trends. The forecasts act as an early warning mechanism to help to alleviate potential labour market imbalances and support different labour market actors in making informed decisions.

4.2 Analysing skills mismatch

The MICT SETA investigates skills mismatch in the sector and policies that can prevent them. This explores how different labour market and economic trends shape skill needs, how learning contributes to skill supply and to what extent education and training systems, the labour market and other institutions interact to mitigate skill mismatch.

4.3 Skills needs in the sub-sectors.

The MICT SETA looks into selected sectors of the economy to identify new and emerging skill needs. This looks into the sub-sectors to identify the latest trends and skill needs. It investigates future skill needs but mainly the emergence of new skill needs which are not (yet) covered by related policies and statistics. This information is necessary for future-oriented policies, defining and validating skills, knowledge and competences and implementing them in curricula, training regulations, and qualification standards as well as using them for vocational guidance.

4.4 Monitoring and evaluation

The MICT SETA monitors and evaluates the sector skills strategy as it is being implemented, with particular focus on the effect or impact of interventions on beneficiaries.

4.5 Impact of Covid-19 on the sector

The MICT SETA continues to monitor the post pandemic era on the sector, assessing the recovery of businesses, the impact on employment patterns, operations, revenue, productivity as well as impact on training implementation in the sector.

4.6 The impact of loadshedding in the sector

The SETA continues to monitor the impact of loadshedding on the sector, the patterns, challenges pertinent to be document for better strategic response, establish partnerships where necessary to promote skills development.

5. Dissemination of research

The programme for 2024/25 will be geared towards research projects that will plug into DHET's Sector Skills Plan Framework. In particular, it will flash out the following areas:

- Sector Profile
- Key Skills Issues
- Extent of Skills Mismatches
- Sector Partnerships
- Skills Priority Actions

The research outputs from the research agenda, including instruments, design protocols, research and evaluation guidelines and reports will be shared timeously through the repository accessible from the MICT SETA website. Sharing of research will occur in several ways including publications, conferences, seminars, email circulation and workshop presentations. It is important that this research is packaged in fit-for-purpose ways to reach all stakeholders. Additionally, the outputs will be made available to the LMIP repository.

Planned Research Projects

The research projects planned by MICT SETA align closely to the skills priority actions identified in the SSP. These research projects are described in the table below, with an indication of the link to associated skills priority actions.

Skills Priority Action	Research Project	Description	Timeframe
1. Credible labour market information that accurately identifies occupations in high demand	Sector Skills Plan (SSP)	The SSP involves a yearly in-depth study into the trends of the sector, with regard to capturing, analysing, and distilling meaningful insights from skills supply and demand data. The SSP is a consultative document that reflects the collective experiences of employers, industry bodies, training providers and research institutions in piecing together an accurate picture of the sector labour market. Using quantitative and qualitative methods, including literature and database reviews, surveys, interviews, and focus groups, the SSP provides credible information on hard to fill vacancies and skills gaps in the market. This information informs key strategic documents such as the Strategic Plan and Annual Performance Plan, which determine the SETA's planning priorities and, ultimately, strategic direction. Thus, the SSP is important in charting a path to responding to labour market shortages and changes.	February 2024-August 2024
2. Increased access to, and delivery on occupationally directed priority programmes that link	Tracer/Impact Study on Learning Programmes	The Impact Study on Learning Programmes will be a summative evaluation study looking at the outcomes and impacts achieved by the priority programmes the SETA offered. The study will seek to understand whether the programmes achieved their intended purpose, with the intention of distilling lessons learnt	2024 August to February 2025

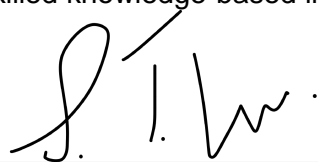
Skills Priority Action	Research Project	Description	Timeframe
education and the workplace		that can inform future programmes. Ultimately, the study will provide insights on what worked well and what could be improved with regards to linking education and the workplace.	
3. Support growth of the public college system through sectoral partnerships in the delivery of learning interventions	The Use of Technology in Facilitating Personalized Learning in Post-School Education	This study will look at both public and private TVETs, signal skills match on demand and supply. The study will seek to understand the use of technology facilitating personalized learning, assessing the use of MOOCs. This will enable better planning for the partnerships the SETA needs to promote to support TVET education.	2024 February - August 2024
	Challenges and barriers faced by educational institutions and skills development organizations due to loadshedding	This study will investigate the impact of loadshedding on learning institutions, from an operational cost, business continuity and new technology investment.	2024 October - February 2025
4. Support for SMMEs, Entrepreneurship and community-based organisations, particularly in relation to 4IR cross-sectoral partnerships and projects for sustainable growth	Assessing the Importance of Entrepreneurship Education in Post-School Setting	The aim will be to assess if young entrepreneurs have access to the relevant skills, knowledge, values, and attitudes needed to develop and create their own businesses. If the MICT SETA programmes are coordinated to help in this regard.	August 2024- November 2024

6. Conclusion

The MICT SETA research agenda is a key component of the drive to enhance the collective capacity of stakeholders to better understand the skills needs of the sector. Access to new research will support the development of policies, planning, and decision-making while the strategic and operational agenda will be strengthened and continually informed by relevant research and enabled through ongoing organisational learning. Together with the partner participants from academia, private business, the community, and other government institutions, the MICT SETA through this process has been able to identify the priorities for research in order to improve skills planning and ultimately enhance its vision of being recognised as the leader in the development of a highly skilled knowledge-based information society.



Mr. Matome Madibana
Chief Executive Officer: MICT SETA



Mr. Simphiwe Thobela
Chairperson: MICT SETA Board