

Education Collaboration Framework

Business, labour and civil society initiative to support the
National Development Plan and the Education Sector Plan

2013

PREFACE

During the last quarter of 2012, a number of individuals involved in the education sector met to discuss how they could assist the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to realise its vision as encapsulated in the Action Plan Towards 2014 and implement the National Development Plan (NDP) for the education sector. This collective agreed to initiate a national discussion, commencing with a Leadership Dialogue in December 2012, to reflect on what has gone well and not gone so well in education over the past few years and what needs to be done going forward. The collective worked with the Minister of Basic Education to convene the Dialogue.

The objective of the proposed initiative was to establish a common mission among key stakeholders committed to putting the NDP and the education sector plan into effect.

Prior to the December Dialogue, a number of education stakeholders and academics were interviewed on the state of play in education and what is needed to improve the sector's effectiveness in the short, medium and long term. A report representing the consolidated views of the interviewees was compiled and provided a basis for the Dialogue.

During the first quarter of 2013, JET Education Services, in its capacity as the Dialogue's secretariat, informed education stakeholders of the initiative and solicited the opinions of some on the proposal to develop a collaboration framework. A reference group was also established to assist in charting the collaboration framework.

All stakeholders interviewed supported the idea of developing the collaboration framework and provided useful insights about how to go about designing and supporting Government differently in its endeavours to improve the quality of education. The interviewees provided useful lessons from the past 18 years and sounded warnings about the danger of engaging in the same interventions of the past two decades and expecting different outcomes.

MEMBERS OF THE CONVENING COMMITTEE

Sizwe Nxasana	:	CEO of FirstRand Limited and Chairperson of the Zenex Foundation (Chair)
Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka	:	Chairperson of the Umlambo Foundation, Former Deputy President of the RSA
Futhi Mtoba	:	Executive Chairperson of Deloitte
Godwin Khosa	:	CEO of JET Education Services (Secretary)
Ihron Rensburg	:	Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg and member of the National Planning Commission
Thobile Ntola	:	President of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union
Basil Manuel	:	President of the National Professional Teachers' Organisation of SA
Mugwena Maluleke	:	Secretary-General of the South African Democratic Teachers' Union

REFERENCE GROUP MEMBERS

Gugu Ndebele	:	Department of Basic Education
Granville Whittle	:	Department of Basic Education
Percy Moleke	:	National Planning Commission
Gail Campbell	:	Zenex Foundation
David Harrison	:	DG Murray Trust
Graeme Bloch	:	Mapungubwe Institute
Nkosiphendule Ntantala	:	National Professional Teachers' Organisation of South Africa
Xolani Fakude	:	South African Democratic Teachers' Union
Thero Setiloane	:	Business Leadership South Africa
Matakanya Matakanya	:	National Association of School Governing Bodies
Colin Matjila	:	Congress of South African Students





THE NDP'S CALL FOR INTER-SECTORAL CO-OPERATION TO IMPROVE EDUCATIONAL OUTCOMES

The National Development Plan (NDP) provides the vision for South Africa's future as well as useful beacons that will guide us to the attainment of that vision. Within this vision, the NDP takes forward Government's commitment to seeing education as an apex priority. The NDP recognises that the South African education system needs urgent action. It suggests that building national capabilities requires focus on early childhood development, basic education, further and higher education. [It further points out that ECD should be defined broadly and that]...the priorities in basic education are human capacity, school management, district support, infrastructure and results-oriented mutual accountability between schools and communities. (NDP:295)

The plan suggests that the interests of all stakeholders should be aligned to support the common goal of achieving good educational outcomes that are responsive to community needs and economic development. The plan proposes a national initiative involving all stakeholders to drive efforts to improve learning outcomes in schools, starting with the worst performers. The focus should be on improving schools and districts and addressing weaknesses in teaching, management, administrative support and accountability.

The following are proposed by the NDP as the focus areas over the next 18 years:

- Improving literacy, numeracy/mathematics and science outcomes;
- Increasing the number of learners eligible to study maths and science-based degrees at university;
- Improving performance in international comparative studies;
- Improving learner retention.

It is against this background that the Education Collaboration Framework was developed.



WHAT IS THE EDUCATION COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK?

The Education Collaboration Framework (ECF) is a partnership initiative involving Government and social partners which is aimed at increasing cooperation among the stakeholders involved in education improvement with a view to improved educational outcomes in South Africa. The ECF seeks to influence and support the implementation of the education reform agenda.

Neither the ECF nor the Trust established through this framework is intended to replace civil society and business projects and initiatives aimed at improving education quality. Rather, the ECF seeks to improve the coordination of these projects, ensure their integration with the Government reform agenda and increase their effectiveness and value.

Central to the ECF is the need to set up effective mechanisms for driving the collaboration envisaged in the NDP.

Equally important to the ECF is the need to improve on the historic performance of partnership initiatives in terms of their efficiency, impact, value for money and sustainability. The ECF notes that improvements in the performance of partnership initiatives will be achieved through interventions that:

- Have an increased focus on priority areas;
- Allow for stronger integration between non-governmental and government interventions couched within the reform agenda and frameworks provided by Government;
- Exhibit increased efficiency;
- Carefully identify and capture the key conditions for success;
- Create avenues for mainstreaming lessons from Government-social partner interventions;
- Capitalise on the gains of the past 18 years;
- Address systemic challenges in education.

Based on the founding purpose, objectives and principles cited above, the ECF presents:

- A collaboration model which outlines the roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders;
- Guidelines for educational programmes supported by social partners and funded in the main by the corporate sector;
- An implementation vehicle for the ECF in the form of a Trust;
- Specific priority intervention programmes that can be implemented as part of the collaboration under the auspices of the Trust;
- A plan of action and pledges made by the various key stakeholders.



Image: Jet Education Services



THE COLLABORATION MODEL UNDERPINNING THE FRAMEWORK

These aspects of the ECF are summarised in the following sections.

The ECF presents a collaboration model that comprises two spheres of actors in education improvement, namely, Government and social partners. The intention of the model is to lay the basis for making the parties in each sphere appreciate each other’s unique authorities, roles and responsibilities, and capabilities, as well as what their joint responsibilities in the context of a collaboration could be. The model’s aim is to dispel any confusion and possible tensions arising from such confusion and to standardise collaborators’ expectations of each other in a broad way, thereby creating a basis for stronger synergies among education improvement activities. Ultimately, the model creates a common language and remains a hypothetical arrangement, the application of which will depend on the various contexts that arise.

The model assumes that

- Both the governmental and the non-governmental groupings have a common goal of improving the quality of education, but do not as yet share a common understanding of the roles that they expect of each other or have to play towards achieving this common goal. Thus the framework seeks to help to delineate and define these complementary roles.
- Government, as a large organisation, is designed to establish and maintain the education system and to continuously define the reform agenda; thus Government is best positioned to maintain stability and sustain gains, rather than bring about change quickly.
- The non-governmental sphere, in its multiplicity and networked forms, is able to innovate and accelerate delivery of aspects of the education system. This sphere is thus best suited to supporting and complementing the maintenance and reform sphere which anchors the education improvement agenda.

Following this understanding, the model provides for a collaborative space in which the two spheres can be integrated. The ECF sets out the rules of engagement for the collaboration.

These rules are presented in Table 1 in the form of a matrix clarifying roles and outlining the values of the NECT:

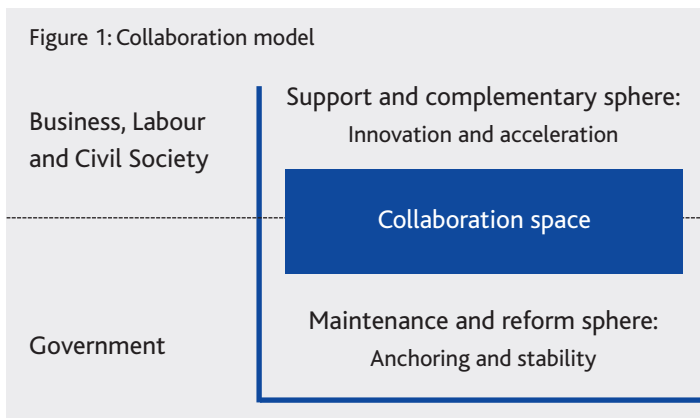


Table1: Roles and values matrix

	Maintenance and Reform Sphere (Government)	Support and Complementary Sphere (Business, labour and civil society)
Unique authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carries the constitutional responsibility to provide public education • Establishes and maintains the education system • Sets the reform agenda through policies and programmes • Quality assures content in the system • Serves as the anchor of the collaboration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Has a moral obligation to support the provision of public education • Exercises authority over the additional resources provided to education
Unique capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintains the education system • Spells out the reform agenda • Undertakes systemic development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to develop and test innovations • Quick turnaround times • Flexibility in engaging a wide range of expertise and implementation capacity quickly
Responsibilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensures the minimum conditions for success are in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Compliance with minimum standards • Avoid causing disruptions in the education system
Joint relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing programmes and interventions • Designing tools and instruments • Programming of interventions to avoid inappropriate and duplicate interventions • Rolling out of interventions • Resourcing interventions • Monitoring and evaluation of interventions' impact • Accountability to the ECF for the implementation of joint programmes 	
Values	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and maintenance of trust and mutual respect between stakeholders • Courageous, honest and transparent engagement among the stakeholders 	
Principles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open communication and clear feedback loops • Ownership by all stakeholders • Involvement of all levels up to top management and the executives of all formations concerned • Independent organisational structure for implementation of joint programmes • Accountability of the social partners to each other and within stakeholder formations • Appreciation that being the anchor does not imply being a senior partner • Results-based management and evidence-based programmes • Flexibility to allow permutations in designs and programme rollouts to allow for quick actions in response to new evidence and changing circumstances 	



THEMATIC FOCUS AREAS OF THE EDUCATION COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK

To achieve sustainable systemic improvements in education, the ECF proposes focusing its support on the following themes which are linked to the aims of the NDP and Action Plan to 2014. Six themes have been identified to serve as the focus of the envisaged collaboration interventions. These, together with their associated conditions for success,

are presented below. The understanding underpinning the ECF is that if the success conditions are not sufficiently addressed by all partners before and during implementation, the partnership activities stand a limited chance of producing tangible and sustainable effects in the education system.

THEME 1: Professionalisation of the teaching service

(Action Plan goals 14, 16, 17 and 18)

The NDP and Action Plan set targets for improving the quality of teaching through pre-service and continuous teacher development. The Report of the Ministerial Committee on Teacher Education revealed that many role-players see teacher development efforts as being badly coordinated, poorly monitored, confusing and burdensome. The department therefore developed and in 2011 adopted the Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTE). The ISPFTE sets out a coherent, evidence-based approach to teacher development with clear priorities and Government commitment to channelling available funds to address these priorities.

The ECF will support Government to:

- Set up the frameworks and materials required to implement the ISPFTE;
- Train teachers and support them in their classrooms;
- Build the necessary capacities at the school management and district levels to support and monitor teachers, starting with underperforming schools and their feeder schools.
- Improve the effectiveness of teachers and education officials.

The following conditions must be in place in order to achieve the desired outcomes:

- Agreement achieved with unions on the protocols for classroom visits;
- Agreement achieved with unions on the protocols for teacher knowledge assessment;
- Development of coordinated training plans;
- Integration of professional development time into the school calendar and timetables;
- Recruitment and retention of good and sufficient numbers of district directors, curriculum heads and principals;
- Improvement in the way misconduct is dealt with in the schools and districts;
- Acknowledgement of good performance by school and district officials;
- Teaching positioned as an attractive profession which attracts and retains the best talent;
- Improved quality of teacher training, including more practical on-the-job training;
- Improved working and living conditions of teachers;
- Pedagogy that keeps up with the latest trends to meet the demands of the 21st century, including the use of technology in teaching;
- Performance measurement and development of teachers by linking academic success of learners directly with teacher success;
- The appointment of principals and school management teams based on merit.



THEME 2: A call for courageous and effective leadership

In preparation for the Leadership Dialogue of 6 December 2012, interviews were conducted with selected stakeholders and experts. Several of those interviewed cited 'courageous leadership' as a critical but missing requirement for the necessary improvement in education to occur. Calls were made by interviewees for more courageous leadership across political and bureaucratic spheres.

Political leadership was called for specifically in contexts where hard, unpopular decisions have to be made concerning groups or structures that undermine the implementation of programmes or that engage in activities that are not in the interest of the nation. The cases of the closing down of schools in the Northern Cape in 2011 and the disruption of schools by unions were cited as examples of actions that undermine national interests. The necessary implementation of the Post-Provisioning Model in the Eastern Cape was mentioned as an example of an unpopular programme that has to be faced head-on for the benefit of the nation.

The ECF is committed to exploring, with the relevant structures in society, the following actions:

- Promoting more active roles by civil society organisations to keep a check on actions that undermine schooling;
- Delivering widespread training on good governance at school, district and provincial levels;
- Taking actions to empower managers to make decisions and to be accountable for the decisions they make;
- Assisting leaders to set examples and provide models of behaviour for officials and learners to follow;
- Reviewing the institutional governance framework which includes school principals, school management teams (SMTs) and school governing bodies (SGBs).

THEME 3: Improving government capacity to deliver

(Action Plan goals 15, 21, 23 and 27)

Government recognises the importance of efficiency in the provision and utilisation of teachers so that excessively large classes are avoided. This situation requires that proper management processes and systems are implemented in all schools and that the district offices, including circuit offices, provide frequent and good quality monitoring and support services to schools.

To support the implementation of these ideals the ECF will support the government to:

- Develop a national framework and materials for the implementation of the envisaged annual school management and district monitoring processes;
- Implement training and support programmes to assist schools and districts to build the necessary capacities to implement the support and monitoring systems;
- Investigate the current teacher provisioning model and develop and roll out a more effective one;
- Provide additional school monitoring and support capacity in the form of mentors and coaches, particularly in understaffed districts.

The following conditions must be in place in order to achieve the desired outcomes:

- Agreement to improve the current teacher provisioning model in order to achieve a workable allocation and optimum utilisation of teachers in schools, within districts and in the education system as a whole;
- Co-operation with the teacher unions in rigorous monitoring of the Quality Learning and Teaching Campaign (QLTC);
- Implementation of a common management programme in all schools;
- Timely and full transfers of allocated funds to schools;
- Finalisation and implementation by Government of the envisaged district model/guidelines that will ensure meaningful support and monitoring of schools aimed at improving school performance;
- An audit of the current human resources including management, administration, district officials, principals, SMTs, Heads of Department and teachers.
- A human resources development plan based on a gap analysis which identifies:
 - the gap between the human capital capacity currently in place and the ideal educator capacity which would make South Africa comparative with the best in the world;
 - how we are going to achieve the desired human resources capacity;
- An assessment of the adequacy of the teacher training capacity currently in place in the country and plans to address any shortages.



THEMATIC FOCUS AREAS OF THE EDUCATION COLLABORATION FRAMEWORK (continued)

THEME 4: Improving resourcing to create conducive and safe learning environments: teachers, books and infrastructure (Action Plan goals 19, 20 and 24)

The Action Plan to 2014 commits to making sure that all learners have access to not only the minimum set of textbooks and workbooks, but also to a wide range of media, including computers, to enrich their education. In addition, both the Action Plan and the NDP undertake to provide adequate physical infrastructure in an efficient and cost-effective way.

The ECF will encourage joint actions among stakeholders to:

- Improve the maintenance, retrieval and utilisation of workbooks, textbooks and readers in schools;
- Develop a wide range of African language readers;
- Complement the provision of additional learning and teaching support materials, especially readers and maths and science kits;
- Develop and maintain an infrastructure demand and maintenance system that will inform infrastructure investments made by both government and its partners;
- Increase the provision of infrastructure and ICT resources, prioritising libraries and science laboratories;
- Increase the provision and utilisation of IT resources for teachers and learners.

The following conditions must be in place in order to achieve the desired outcomes:

- Government supplies the minimum required textbooks, stationery and workbooks to all learners;
- Government allocates and utilises sufficient budget for education infrastructure development and maintenance;
- Government provides and maintains sports grounds and facilities.



Image: Jet Education Services

THEME 5: Community and parent involvement (Action Plan goal 22)

In the surveys of stakeholders carried out in preparation for the Leadership Dialogue held on 6 December 2012, several stakeholders expressed a sense of disenfranchisement and lack of engagement with the education system.

A number of those interviewed felt that they were not being sufficiently listened to and that significant capacity and talent in private schools, associations, and churches and amongst traditional leaders remains untapped.

The interviewees also expressed a sense that the coordination of government and civil society activities needs to be improved. With regard to parent involvement, there was a widespread view among the interviewees that parent involvement accounts for the significant difference evident in the performance of middle-class children. While illiteracy is acknowledged to be a hindrance, arguments were made for empowering illiterate parents to carry out basic monitoring of their children's education.

A lot of work needs to be done to improve the levels of parent and community involvement in schools. Therefore the ECF will promote the following actions:

- Utilising the existing talent and capacity that exists outside the confines of the public schooling system to support schooling, particularly literacy, maths and science education. This capacity can be found in traditional and church leaders, private schools and the private sector;
- Rebuilding public accountability through providing parents with checklists of what to expect from schools, teachers and learners and promoting advocacy programmes to reinforce the messages;
- Integrating aspects of active citizenship and ethics into programmes targeting teachers, school managers and governing bodies.

The following conditions must be in place in order to achieve the desired outcomes:

- Review of the practice of school governance in schools so as to encourage much broader participation;
- Continuous provision of regular and credible Annual National Assessment (ANA) results to schools;
- Co-operation of the teacher unions;
- Strengthening of SGBs in governance, ethics and school system functioning through training and development.



THEME 6: Learner support and wellbeing (Action Plan goals 11, 25 and 26)

The Action Plan and the NDP recognise the importance of learner wellbeing to achieve quality learning and teaching. The two documents promote a holistic approach to learning and teaching which includes aspects of health, nutrition, psychosocial support, sport and culture and catering for children with special needs.

The ECF promotes joint activities that:

- Increase the provision in schools of psychosocial services such as eyesight screening and psychological support;
- Complement nutrition in schools;
- Contribute to resourcing school sports and cultural activities.

The following conditions must be in place in order to achieve the desired outcomes:

- Sufficient funding for school nutrition programmes and efficient utilisation of the funds.

Overall, the success of the ECF depends on the following key factors:

- Government agreeing to focus increased attention to the partnership by redirecting resources to the ECF's project activities and affording the activities official status;
- The private sector agreeing to co-fund the partnership activities and to redirect their contributions in Gauteng and the Western Cape, estimated to be 37% of their total contributions to education, to other provinces.
- Labour agreeing to special dispensations necessary to make the partnership activities succeed.

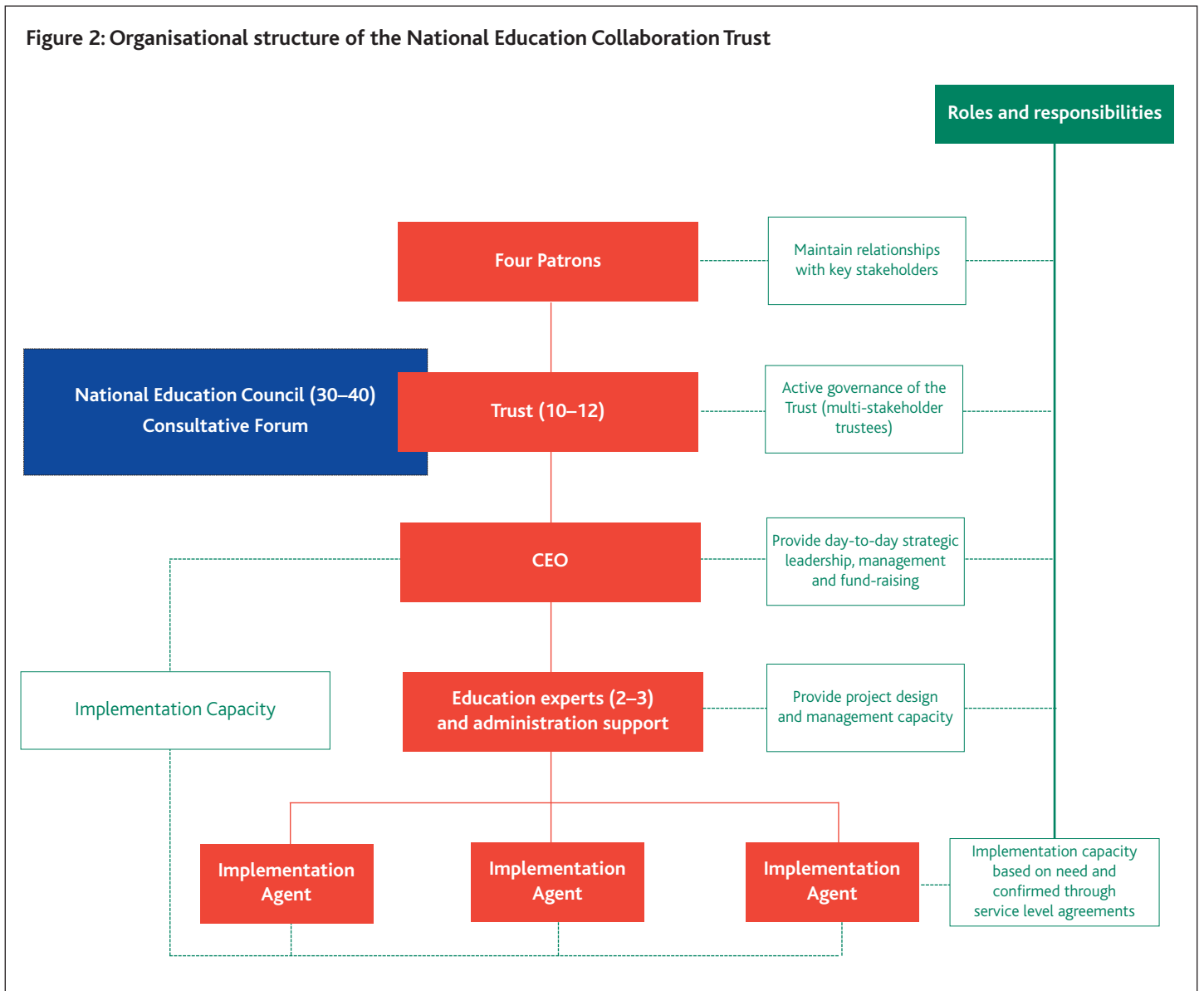


Image courtesy IICD



- The ECF propose to establish a National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) to operationalise the framework. The NECT will perform three functions:
1. Guide and oversee the inclusive participation of civil society and business in education improvement initiatives through the framework.
 2. Provide a co-financing modality, designed specifically to provide an accountable multi-stakeholder structure, allowing for the rapid approval and swift disbursement of funds and offering Government and private sector funders the flexibility of specifying how their contributions to the Trust should be used.
 3. Sustain the Education Dialogue initiated in December 2012.

The organisational structure of the NECT is presented in Figure 2.





FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS

In line with its vision and principles, the ECF will implement programmes and projects organised in five programme areas:

1. District intervention programmes comprising most of the focus areas discussed earlier in the framework aimed at providing a comprehensive and cohesive set of activities based on a common change theory.
2. Systemic change intervention programmes that will be implemented across the districts and provinces, for example, teacher development, youth leadership development, policy review and strategic research programmes.
3. Innovation projects which will allow Government and social partners to design and test new ideas and innovations.
4. Local intervention projects involving support to schools or a cluster of schools provided by business, labour and civil society organisations.
5. National education dialogues aimed at promoting on-going discussions on the state of education and exploring joint actions.

Over the next 10 years, the ECF plans to support Government to bring the number of poorly performing districts down from 37% to less than 10%, and to increase the percentage of medium level performing districts from 43% to 60%.

This will be achieved by implementing a systemic multi-year development programme in 40 districts organised into three cohorts – about half of the education system.

1. District intervention programmes

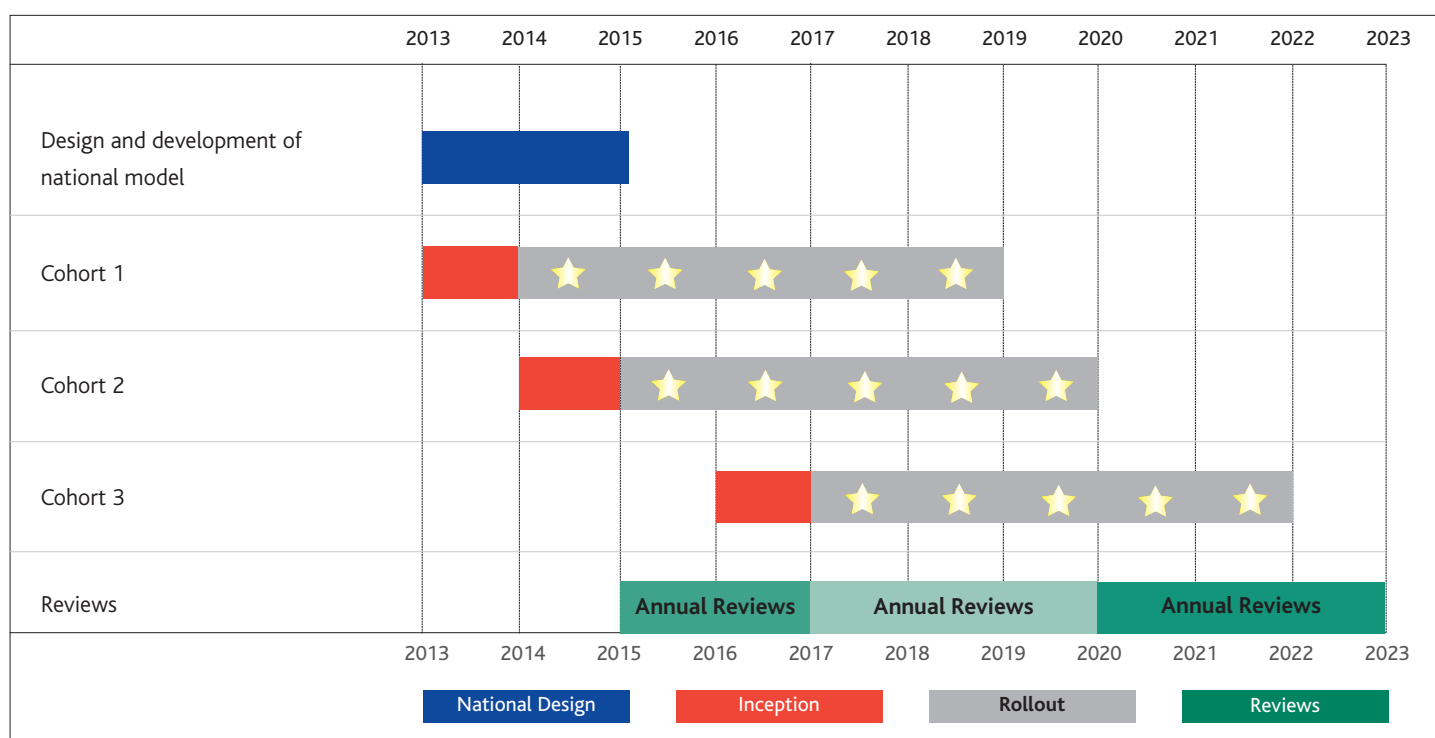
The district level presents the most practical subsection of the system around which to organise the improvement interventions. The state of districts in terms of their performance and socio-economic status differs significantly.

The current state of the 86 education districts is as follows:

- 31 districts are in the poor performing category: This group of districts has a combined learner population of 3.3 million (26.93% of the total learner population);
- 38 districts are in the medium performing category and are responsible for 49.85% of the total learner population;
- 17 districts are in the high performing category and are responsible for 23.21% of the total learner population;
- The largest number (23) of the poor performing districts are in the Eastern Cape (16) and Limpopo (7) provinces;
- The best performing districts are largely in Gauteng and the Western Cape provinces.
- 16 districts are high-poverty districts, 39 have a medium level socio-economic status and 31 are affluent.

The ECF makes provision for education improvement interventions in 40 districts over the next 10 years. The rollout plan is presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2: Proposed rollout of the district intervention programme





FRAMEWORK FOR NATIONAL PROGRAMMES AND PROJECTS (1. District intervention programmes continued)

- The inception phase preceding implementation of interventions in each district will entail a profiling of the district's challenges and successes, target setting, agreements and governance arrangements among local stakeholders, finalisation of implementation plans and mobilisation of implementation capacities and resources.
- District interventions are envisaged to take five years.
- Annual and final reviews will be carried out by an independent team appointed by the Trust.

There are many worthy interventions that can be included in the district intervention programme. However, different forms of interventions have varying potential for bringing about improvements in learning outcomes. To ensure the district intervention activities are focused, correctly prioritised and coherent, the ECF presents a change theory [Table 3] which includes the key drivers of change, priority areas and anticipated outcomes. This common theory will serve as the basis on which the progress, successes and impacts of the interventions are assessed. The outcome of all the interventions is *observable and sustainable improvement in learning*.

Table 3: Change theory

Level	Key change drivers	Priority areas
District	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Using evidence to drive improvement • Building contents knowledge and teaching skills • Improving accountability systems and practices • Increasing resources 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved utilisation of the ANA and SC results for monitoring and evaluation • Development of systems and minimum norms and standards in order to improve the institutional and logistical capacity of districts • Improved communication
School		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reducing the infrastructure backlog • Improved utilisation of the ANA and SC results • Improved management of staff
Classroom		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAPS rollout • Improving content and teaching skills in languages, mathematics and science focusing first and foremost on materials and resources such as workbooks • Improved utilisation of the ANA and SC results • LTSM including technological solutions • Improved quality of Early Childhood Development (ECD) and Grade R
Household/community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved parent involvement and better support of learning and teaching • Improved utilisation of the ANA and SC results
Anticipated outcomes: Observable and sustainable improvement in learning outcomes		



2. Systemic change intervention programmes

These projects will be carefully chosen and programmed into three-year projects by the Trust.

3. Innovation programmes

Projects in this category will be decided on by the Trust on an annual basis and programmed accordingly.

4. Local intervention projects

A charter for local and special projects has been developed. Key considerations laid out in the charter are:

- Improved focus on common priorities by ensuring integration of activities with the national reform agenda;
- Minimal duplication of activities;
- Increased value for money;
- Increased sustainable impact of projects;
- Reduction in maintenance liabilities for the beneficiary institutions or the education system.

5. Education dialogues

The ECF envisages that the Trust, in consultation with the Department of Basic Education, will establish a National Education Council (NEC) through a process of public nominations.

The NEC will serve as a consultative forum and will meet twice a year. The NEC will:

- Conduct dialogues on the issues and challenges in education. The dialogues will take the form of the National Education Dialogue of 6 December 2012. The intention of the dialogues is to create an avenue for open, honest engagement among key stakeholders such as the teacher unions, student organisations, civil society organisations, business and Government. The dialogues will be apolitical and inclusive, giving all organisations the opportunity to explore joint societal actions;
- Consider the reports of the NEC regarding the implementation of the Education Collaboration Framework and make recommendations regarding changes to the programmes of the Trust in accordance with new evidence that may arise.



Image: Jet Education Services



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