



26 March 2020

BANKSETA BUSINESS OPERATIONS IN LIGHT OF COVID-19

Dear Stakeholders,

In light of the recent public announcement on 15 March 2020 by the Honourable President, Mr Cyril Ramaphosa relating to nationwide efforts to minimise the potential spread of Coronavirus(COVID-19), the BANKSETA Board, Management and staff have an obligation to heed the call in order to ensure that stakeholders are informed and protected from the potential risk of infection. The spread of Coronavirus has been alarmingly swift and wide- scale, and is now defined as a global pandemic. The number of infections in South Africa is expected to rise as communicated by the Presidency and the Department of Health.

The BANKSETA is not immune to the current challenges faced by the country.

Therefore, the BANKSETA will implement the following measures until further notice:

1. Limit all direct contact meetings;
2. Restrict travel for both local and international travel;
3. Postpone all graduation ceremonies, the Africa Expansion Programme and the International Executive Development Programmes meetings including study blocks; and,
4. Non-participation in career exhibitions.

A decision has been taken that the BANKSETA team will engage with all relevant stakeholders via email communication, video conferencing and telephonically.

As partners in skills development, let us act as a collective in avoiding infection and in fighting the spread of the virus. The BANKSETA has published in its social media pages, website and intranet, important information relating to the prevention of Coronavirus infection.

COMMUNIICATION FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF HIGHER EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

- All non-essential/ non critical meetings between employees, contractors and Interaction between the SETA and its employees and stakeholders will be through the ERP web-based systems, other SETA systems, e-mails, skype, zoom or other tools
- Interaction between the SETA and its employees and stakeholders will be through the ERP web-based systems, other SETA systems, e-mails, skype, zoom or other tools.
- High Risk Employees, employees in the ETQA Division and contractors who can work from home must do so without exception unless there is exceptional reason why the employee or contractor is unable to work from home. Those employees who are working from home are to report to their line manager daily who will determine the functions to be performed and completed by the employee.
- All site visits for purposes of monitoring and reporting learners' progress and approvals for workplace learning are suspended with immediate effect until further notice by the DHET.
- As payment to suppliers, service providers and projects may be significantly delayed, the SETAs must put contingency measures in place to communicate with the suppliers, service providers and the projects as to when and how payment will be made.
- The publication, awarding of tenders and the appointment of service providers will be suspended with immediate effect until such time the national state of disaster is uplifted.

The SETAs will support employers remotely and the date for the submission of Workplace Skills Plans (“WSPs”) will be extended to 31 May 2020, as also provided for by the Regulation. The request for extension which was communicated by BANKSETA **must** be made in writing to the BANKSETA relevant representative.

- The following must be noted with regard to training by SETA providers:
- It is noted that the training will be severely affected, affecting learners, affecting learner stipends, and possibly affecting SETA performance.
- Compliance of SDPs to the national state of disaster and lockdown measures must be adhered to.
- Communication must be maintained by the SDP, employer and the SETAs so that the effect of the national state of disaster can be quantified and known by the SETAs.
- Stipends to learners during this time should be continued at full value. This however will have an effect on the duration of the contract as it may have to be extended, and the financial resources of the SETA to carry stipends to learners during this period. Other options of resourcing can be explored to assist the SETAs.
- Workplace based learning programmes will also be suspended for the period of the national state of disaster, and hence any stipend and contracts will have to be extended resulting in a financial burden to the SETAs.
- Bursary funding will continue, and operations relating to TVET colleges and Universities will be dictated by guidelines determined by the DHET.
- Documentation relating to training/projects can still be sent and communicated to the SETAs through electronic means or the SETAs’ automated systems.
- Trade testing has been suspended until further notice. Issuing of trade and other SETA certificates will be delayed due to the National state of disaster period, however where possible endeavours should be made not to delay.
- WSPs can be submitted to SETAs as required, but a blanket approval to 31 May 2020 will be implemented to allow employers more time to submit WSP as SETAs will support employers remotely.
- Research can be done remotely where possible, but again there will be some delays/postponements on some research.

QUARTERLY REPORTING

Quarterly reporting remains in force, as per the DHET deadlines, owing to further guidance by AGSA and the DHET, should situation, otherwise be warranted.

“I would hasten to my place of refuge from the stormy wind and tempest ... this too shall pass”

Yours Faithfully,

Mr. Lefaso Motsoeneng
Acting Chief Executive Officer