



**DISCRETIONARY GRANT
FUNDING WINDOW GUIDELINES**

2021

BANKSETA FUNDING WINDOW GUIDELINES

1. Purpose

This document has been developed to guide the application process for BANKSETA Discretionary Grant Funding Windows. It takes into account the SETA Grant Regulations and the BANKSETA Discretionary Grant Policy. This document provides guidelines for the opening of funding windows, inviting applications, evaluation of applications, allocation of funds and payment of funds. This document aims to ensure a consistent, fair and transparent process.

Definition: A funding window is an invitation to stakeholders to apply for funding from the SETA for the programmes that the funding window is intended for. The programmes may include learnerships, internships, and bursaries, etc. or may be aimed at a particular stakeholder grouping for example Medium to Large Organisations, Small or Micro Enterprises, Co-operatives, Universities, etc. The window period has a specified opening date and a specified closing date.

2. Objective

The objective of a funding window is to allow stakeholders the flexibility to implement programmes in a way that is appropriate to their organisation. It also allows flexibility in content, duration, implementation dates and training provision platforms. Each funding window will have its own cost structure, Eligibility Criteria, Evaluation Criteria and Allocation Criteria in addition to item 3 and 4 below. These are attached as Annexure A.

Invitation Process

- BANKSETA will publish all funding window invitations on the BANKSETA website www.bankseta.org.za
- Each funding window will remain open for at least 6 weeks with the exception of the Reskilling Funding Window which will remain open throughout the year.
- Each funding window will have a set of guidelines aimed at assisting applicants with the application process.
- No late applications will be accepted.

3. Eligibility Criteria

Applicants must meet the eligibility criteria as indicated below to qualify for funding.

In the case of employers:

- The completion and submission of all required documents on time
- The applicant must be registered or in the process of registering with the BANKSETA for skills development levy purposes;
- The Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) reporting must be submitted by the due date of 30 April 2021; and
- The employer must be up to date with levy contributions unless exempt from paying levies
- Applications may be limited to small employers (less than 50 employees) where it is applicable to that particular funding window. Only microfinance organisations that are registered with the National Credit Regulator are eligible to apply.
- Applications may be limited to specific programmes i.e. PIVOTAL, IT or Re-skilling.
- In all instances the training provider must be accredited as a training provider by the relevant Quality Council and where applicable the registration number for the programme applied for.

In the case of Higher Education Training Institutions:

- The completion and submission of all required documents on time
- Only public TVET Colleges, Universities of Technology and Universities will be eligible to apply.
- Business Schools linked to Public Universities may also apply.

In the case of Community Organisations:

- Only Non-Governmental Organisations or Non-profit organisations registered with the Department of Social Development may apply.

In all instances, the proposed intervention must address business needs, scarce skills and PIVOTAL Occupations Scarcity as identified in the Banking Sector Skills Plan and/or support the outcomes of the National Skills Development Plan.

4. Evaluation Criteria

The evaluation panel will apply predetermined evaluation criteria to score applications. The criteria will include but may not be limited to a motivation for the project or the business case, an implementation plan or methodology, ability to meet equity of 85% Black, 54% Female and 4% people with disabilities unless the applicant motivates why this is not possible. The applicant's track record in BANKSETA funded programmes will be considered and applications from applicants where training from previous funding windows have not been completed will not be considered favourably. The proposed exit strategy for successful learners will also be evaluated and scored. Each applicable criterion will be allocated a weighting and any application scoring below a predetermined score will not be approved. In the Case of the Reskilling Funding Window the equity requirements will not be evaluated.

5. Submission Requirements

- Applications and other related documents are to be submitted on BANKSETA templates, and as per the prescribed submission process. Failure to do so will result in disqualification of the applications.
- Applications must be received in the specified timeframes; no late submissions will be accepted.
- Applicants agree to provide information as required by BANKSETA for the purposes of reporting to the Department of Higher Education and Training, as well as other statutory stakeholders.
- Please note that each funding category will have its own performance information requirements depending on the type of programme applied for.

6. Submission Process

- Early submissions are encouraged. No late applications will be accepted.
- Applicants are required to submit separate applications per category where applicable.
- Applications must be e-mailed to the address indicated in the guidelines for that particular funding window or online using the BANKSETA MIS whichever is indicated.
- Applicants are not limited on the number of applications per category. However, applicants are requested to carefully consider business needs and prioritize applications as funding may be limited or declined taking into account the funding available and the number of applications received.
- Each application will be evaluated individually.
- Applicants must keep a copy of their submission for their internal use and backup purposes.

7. Evaluation and Allocation Process

- In all cases an evaluation panel shall be established to evaluate applications.
- The evaluation panel will consist of at least the relevant Department Manager, the relevant Project Manager and one other person from the Quality Assurance Division.
- In cases where there is more than one project concerned the panel will be expanded accordingly.
- All panel members will be required to sign a declaration of interest.
- The evaluation panel and decision will be recorded for audit purposes.
- All grants are VAT inclusive and this funding is specifically for training costs, travel/ accommodation costs and /or learner allowances (for unemployed learners). Funding does not include set up costs including capitalization of projects.

- BANKSETA will evaluate all applications and approve funding in a way that will ensure the equitable allocation of funding by limiting the number of learners approved for each application and limiting the amount per learner.
- BANKSETA reserves the right to approve / decline applications, without any preference given to any applicant, and to apply discretion to equitably distribute funding per category, based on the availability of funds and to reallocate funds from undersubscribed categories.
- BANKSETA may approve additional applications or increase the funding for a particular application should additional funding become available at a later stage subject to Board approval.
- Feedback on the status of the application must be provided to unsuccessful applicants.

Specific Exclusions

- Capital and business set-up costs
- Salaries and directors' fees.
- Application development costs.
- Planning and marketing costs.

8. Approval, Appeal and Change Request Process

- The evaluation documentation should be submitted for Probity Review who must submit their report for review to the CEO. Once the CEO has reviewed and approved, the report and supporting evidence as required will be submitted to the Finance and Remuneration Committee for recommendation to the BANKSETA Board. Final approval will be done by the BANKSETA Board.
- Should an (unsuccessful) applicant want to appeal the decision of the Board, this must be done in writing and the request will be tabled at the Board to reconsider. After their reconsideration the Board's decision is final.
- Change requests must be submitted to the BANKSETA with a motivation for the change. The approval of the change request is at the discretion of the CEO provided that the approved amount is not exceeded and that the change is still in line with the guidelines.

9. Contracting, Commitment Schedule and Project system update

- BANKSETA will sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) with the applicant for each application that is approved.

- The approval notification to the applicant should include a deadline date for the return of signed MoAs to the BANKSETA so that funds are not left uncommitted for long periods of time.
- The project manager will monitor all the received MoAs and any MoA not signed and returned to BANKSETA by the agreed date will be cancelled.
- If the MoA has expired, and no project extension request is received by BANKSETA before the lapse of the MoA or if BANKSETA detects there is no project activity taking place and no reasonable cause has been provided, the MoA will be terminated and the funding forfeited.

10. Invoicing/ Funds Disbursement Process

- Upon approval of the application, the Applicant and BANKSETA will sign a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) to formalize the application and to agree to the disbursement schedule (in line with the specific application)
- The first invoice to the BANKSETA must be accompanied by official proof of banking details as well as a valid Tax clearance certificate failure to provide the tax certificate shall warrant BANKSETA to remind the applicant on need to be compliant but still process payment.
- The final invoice will be paid subject to all the project requirements being met. This may include a monitoring and evaluation audit conducted by BANKSETA.
- Progress Reports are to be submitted with invoices as required (BANKSETA to send template).
- Invoices will be paid provided all project requirements are met and supporting documentation are provided (such as proof of payment to other parties, proof of disbursement of stipends to unemployed learners, etc.)
- Successful applicants and payments are subject to a monitoring and evaluation process.
- The BANKSETA will only be paying for beneficiaries who successfully complete the programme as required, and only make final payments once all other tranche criteria requirements are met.
- Applicants are reminded that all supporting documentation including beneficiary registration and agreement documents may not be older than two (2) months.

11. Extensions and/or re-applications

- Applicants should endeavor by all means to meet deadlines and complete the project within the project plan submitted during application phase. If, however, this is not possible the applicant should apply in writing to have the timelines extended and where needed to sign an addendum to the MoA to extend the end date.
- In the event where, due to unforeseen circumstances an agreement lapses and the applicant is only able to continue with the project at a later stage the applicant may submit a motivation

to re-instate the previous approval if the overall project is still open and if there is still funds available in the project.

- This new application and agreement must follow the same process as the initial one and is subject to Board approval.

12. Disclaimer, Termination and Breach

- In all instances, BANKSETA reserves the right to approve / decline funding at its discretion.
- The BANKSETA reserves the right to verify, monitor and audit any of the above approved grants during the implementation period by a designated BANKSETA representative. Payments are also subject to these processes as per the quality requirements stipulated by BANKSETA.
- The BANKSETA may withhold grants or recover any grants paid to an applicant if it is found that the grants allocated are not being used for the purpose for which the grant was intended.
- Non-compliance will lead to summary termination of the agreement and the Contracting party will, due to non-compliance have neither right to any grants or disbursements nor any other right out of this agreement.