

THE SOUTH AFRICAN QUALIFICATIONS AUTHORITY
*An Environmental Scan of Career Advice Services
in South Africa 2012*



The South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

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Postnet Suite 248
Private Bag X06
Waterkloof
0145

Contact details:

Helpdesk: +27 (0) 86 010 3188

Facsimile: +27 (0) 12 431 5039

Websites: www.saqqa.org.za ; www.careerhelp.org.za

E-mail: saqainfo@saqqa.org.za



*An Environmental Scan of Career Advice Services
in South Africa*

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Abbreviations and acronyms

CAS	Career Advice Services
CEDEFOP	European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DHET	Department of Higher Education and Training
DoL	Department of Labour
DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
ELGPN	European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network
ESSA	Employment Services of South Africa
ETDP	Education, Training and Development Practices SETA
FET	Further Education and Training
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
H&WSETA	Health and Welfare Sector Education and Training Authority
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
HRD	Human Resources Development
HRDSA	Human Resource Development Strategy South Africa
HSRC	Human Sciences Research Council
IAEVG	International Association for Educational and Vocational Guidance
ICCDPP	International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
merSETA	Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
NGP	New Growth Path
NISHE	National Information Service for Higher Education
NLRD	National Learners' Records Database
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSDS	National Skills Development Strategy
NSF	National Skills Fund
NSFAS	National Student Financial Aid Scheme
NYDA	National Youth Development Agency
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
OFO	Organised Framework for Occupations
SAACDHE	Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education
SACDA	South African Career Development Association
SACPO	South African College Principals Organisation
SAGDA	South African Graduate Development Association
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
SAVGEA	South African Vocational Guidance and Education Association
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
SSCSA	Society for Student Counselling in Southern Africa
SSP	Sector Skills Plans

Executive summary

Until recently, South Africa had a history of fragmentation in terms of thinking about, organising, managing and providing career- and labour market-related information, career guidance and career counselling services. Up to now, there was no single agency either at a national or provincial level with the exclusive or predominant responsibility for the management and/or provision of career- and labour market-related information, career guidance and counselling services.

In 2012, the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), in partnership with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA), took the lead and developed a policy framework for the management and provision of career guidance information and services in South Africa. To facilitate the process of preparing a coherent career guidance policy framework and plan, the Minister of Higher Education and Training has an established delivery agreement with an array of government departments. The process of establishing key leadership and a coordinated vision and effort for all the sectors involved is under way. However, this process requires the completion of deliverables or outputs in a specific timeframe and the DHET is accountable for achieving the outputs. The last output must be met by March 2014.

The overall aim of the policy framework is to work towards a national model of career guidance services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point in their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.

In order to achieve the main aim, the specific objectives of the framework are the following:

- To obtain a common understanding of career guidance-related terminology in South Africa in order to build and enhance cooperation between stakeholders;
- To establish guidelines and a process for cooperation and collaboration at all levels of government as well as with non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the private sector;
- To propose the development and implementation of system-wide policies and practices;
- To assign stakeholders' roles and responsibilities for different areas and aspects of career guidance services in the country;
- To propose standards for career guidance systems, services and practitioners;
- To explore ways to ensure sufficient allocation of resources for a national service;
- To sensitise stakeholders about the role that evidence plays regarding the contribution of career guidance initiatives in reaching related national goals;
- To provide suggestions for the strengthening and continuity of leadership regarding career guidance services in South Africa; and
- To serve as the basis and starting point for the development and implementation of career guidance policy.

This document contains SAQA's inputs for the development of the policy framework for cooperation on the provision of career guidance information and services in South Africa. In order to understand the pivotal (and difficult) role of career guidance and counselling in South Africa, it is necessary to appreciate the socio-economic context as well as the education and training system of the country. Section three looks at this context.

The framework for career guidance in South Africa is based on the premise that career guidance is a national imperative. It is of national importance for several reasons. Career guidance is linked to human rights in terms of learning, working and social justice. The Bill of Rights, contained in the South African Constitution, 1996, stipulates that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic

education and further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must progressively make available and accessible. Career guidance is an intricate component of the educational system and plays an important role in making educational offerings accessible to individuals. In addition, career guidance can contribute to the achievement of public policy goals in education, employment and equity.

In South Africa, an array of legislation, policies and strategies sets the context for career guidance. Some of this legislation and these policies and strategies address broader issues such as education, the labour market and job creation, while others refer directly to the career guidance function. The overarching element and the heart of these types of policies and strategies is human resources development (HRD). Section six scrutinises the applicable policy landscape.

Similar to many other countries, South Africa has a history of career guidance services being distributed across various sectors under different ministries and jurisdictions. Career guidance services are offered at: (i) schools — General Education and Training (GET) and Further Education and Training (FET); (ii) FET colleges; (iii) higher education and training institutions (universities and universities of technology); (iv) public employment services; (v) Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs); (vi) statutory bodies; (vii) non-governmental services; and (viii) private services. Section seven describes the career guidance services in the different sectors.

International practices have shown that the establishment of a national career guidance forum is an efficient mechanism for cooperation and coordination. Section 10 refers to different levels of cooperation, coordination and partnerships between stakeholders. Examples are given of cooperation between the different career guidance delivery agents that is already taking place. The expected roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders and possible ways of establishing cooperation and coordination in future are mentioned.

Career- and labour market-related information plays a central role in career guidance and is seen as key to labour market efficiency. Without comprehensive educational, occupational and labour market information it is impossible to provide effective career guidance services. The quality of career information, its effective management, the dissemination or provision of the information and its accessibility are the most important issues to consider in a policy framework of this nature.

South Africa has now shown its intent to develop and establish a national career advice service. Currently, the reference to a national career advice service occurs in ministerial speeches, the Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training, and the agreement between the DHET and SAQA in terms of the Career Advice Services (CAS) and National Career Advice Portal (NCAP) projects. The CAS and NCAP projects represent significant progress in terms of establishing a comprehensive national career guidance and information system and service. The CAS currently consists of a website, a helpline, a social network, a walk-in centre and social marketing campaigns. The NCAP system is in the initial phase of development and will comprise four primary components: learning pathways, a learning directory, an e-portfolio function, and an occupational information centre. The CAS is and the NCAP will be free of charge and available to all citizens of South Africa.



Part One: The Process

1 Background

In a scoping exercise of the career guidance landscape in South Africa in 2008, Flederman² reported that there had been significant gains in the field of career guidance over the previous decade in South Africa. However, Flederman pointed out that the key problems in terms of career-related information and guidance provision are the lack of coordination and the non-existence of national policy leadership in the field.

Since then, SAQA has taken on the task of developing a system for career advice and/or guidance and the DHET has started with a process to develop a policy framework for the management and cooperation of career guidance information and services in South Africa. SAQA submitted a project funding proposal to the National Skills Fund (NSF) in March 2009. The proposal was subsequently updated on 20 May 2010 and approved by the NSF on 16 September 2010. The CAS is today seen as a flagship project of the Ministry of Higher Education and Training and the beginning of the process towards establishing a national system of career guidance through a partnership with SAQA. (SAQA is in a process of building up the core components of the national service.)

To give further direction and impetus to the overall initiative, in July 2011 SAQA requested a service provider to conduct research to provide a guideline for the implementation of a national career guidance service. The request was that the guideline must describe how South Africa could organise, manage and provide career guidance- and counselling services, and what the key challenges facing the country are to improve such services. However, simultaneously with the advertising of the terms of reference, the DHET started with a process under Output 5.1 (establish a credible mechanism for skills planning) to develop a policy framework for the management and cooperation of career information and guidance in South Africa. In the interest of synchronising the activities, the commencement of the SAQA research was delayed and the terms of reference were revisited. The research started in November 2011 in alignment with the DHET process of developing a policy framework.

2 Objectives

The revised objectives of the research are the following:

- To determine and describe how South Africa organises, manages and provides career guidance information and services as a country;
- To provide inputs to a framework for cooperation on the management and provision of career guidance information and services in South Africa; and
- To determine the perceived key challenges in improving the management and delivery of career guidance information and services (implementation of the framework).

2 Flederman P. 2008. *Navigational tools for learners, really? What is available, what are the challenges and what should be done? An Environmental Scan of the Career Guidance Field in South Africa*, Report for SAQA.

3 Methodology

The study comprised the following: conducting desktop research, conducting interviews with stakeholders, attending a conference and a symposium, and integrating the information in the form of a report.

The desktop analysis consisted of scanning international and national literature. Internationally, much research has been carried out in the area of career development and public policy by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), the World Bank and also the International Labour Organisation (ILO). The national literature provided information about applicable legislation, policies and strategies that relate to career guidance as well as services delivered by the different sectors. An interview schedule or framework for use during the interviews with stakeholders was developed, based on the knowledge gained from the desktop work.

Face-to-face interviews were conducted with 22 people drawn from a range of spheres, including government departments; statutory bodies; SETAs; higher education associations; a private company; the South African Career Development Association (SACDA), a voluntary association; and international experts in the career guidance fields. Table 1 below lists the interviews.

Table 1 Interviews

Institution / person	Unit	Designation
DHET	System Planning	Deputy Director General
	Information Systems Coordination	Director
	University Education	Deputy-Director
	SETA Support & Learnerships	Director
	Youth Development	Acting Director
	Social Inclusion and Equity	Director
DBE	School Curriculum Grade R-12: Social Services	Deputy-Director
DoL	Public Employment Services	Chief Director
	Public Employment Services	Deputy-Director
SAQA	Executive Office	Chief Executive Officer
	Executive Office	Deputy Executive Officer
	Career Advice Services	Director
	Career Advice Services	Deputy-Director
	International Liaison	Director
merSETA	Career Development	Programme Manager
HESA	Higher Education Enrolment Programme	Head
SACDA		Chair

SAACDHE		President
NYDA	Career Guidance	Programme Manager
PACE Career Centre		Director
Patricia Flederman		Consultant and expert in the field
Tony Watts		International expert on career development and public policy

The researcher's attendance at the International Career Development Conference in Cape Town (19-21 October 2011) and the Sixth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy in Budapest (5-7 December 2011) provided very applicable and useful information for the study.

The next part of the report (Part Two) provides the inputs for a framework for the management and cooperation of career guidance information and services in South Africa, while Part Three discusses some of the key challenges to the implementation of a framework of this nature.

*Part Two: An Environmental Scan Of Career
Advice Services In South Africa*

1 Introduction and background

South Africa has a history of fragmentation in terms of thinking about, organising, managing and providing career- and labour market-related information, career guidance and career counselling services. At the moment, there is no single agency either at a national or provincial level with the exclusive or predominant responsibility for the management and/or provision of career- and labour market-related information, career guidance and counselling services.

While a number of organisations and departments are active in the field, there is a need to develop and operationalise a career guidance policy framework that will cover a set of principles and long-term goals and will form the basis of and provide guidelines and direction to coherent planning, cooperation and accountability in meeting national goals that relate to the topic.

The importance of policy and legislation in steering career guidance information and services has been acknowledged internationally. The OECD has found that career guidance information and services can advance the efficiency and effectiveness of educational systems and labour markets and also contribute to social equity.² Career guidance services not only help individuals but also serve public-policy goals.

In South Africa, the notion and importance of career guidance as part of lifelong learning have been mentioned repeatedly by government. The former Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, Professor Hlengiwe Mkhize, made an important reference to the dire need for career guidance. She said that, “Our institutions should constantly monitor, and have built in facilities, where students can constantly be guided on their career path.”³

In his Budget Speech in 2010, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, announced the establishment of a national and comprehensive independent career service to support the implementation of the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), the National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS III) and the Human Resource Development Strategy South Africa (HRDSA).⁴ The CAS is today a flagship project of the Ministry of Higher Education and Training and was initiated through a partnership with SAQA, which is in the process of building up the core components of the national service. In the recent Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training it is stated that SAQA will continue to play a major role in the development and implementation of its newly developed national career guidance service, which is key to the economic and social mobility of learners.⁵

A key challenge for South Africa is the paradox of skills shortages in the workplace and high levels of unemployment. It is well known that a mismatch exists between the types of skills that are available and those demanded by the economy. These skills shortages underpin many of the challenges that government faces with regard to service delivery and the expansion of decent work for a rising proportion of the population.

2 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2004. *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris:OECD.

3 Hlengiwe-Mkhize, Deputy Minister of the Department of Higher Education and Training, Speech to the media on her first day in office, 4 November 2010.

4 Budget Vote speech by Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Blade Nzimande, 25 March 2010.

5 Department of Higher Education and Training. 2012. *Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training*.

Historically, this problem was aggravated by the non-alignment of the work done by the pre-2009 departments of education and labour; whereas the Department of Education focused on learners (the supply side of the labour market), the Department of Labour focused mainly on the needs of the labour market (the demand side). The disjuncture between the two was evidenced by too many graduates from the education system being unable to access employment, whilst certain skills remained critically scarce in the labour market. Since 2009, the functions related to the collection and dissemination of labour market information, skills planning and post-school education have been united in the DHET.

At the Cabinet Lekgotla held from 20 to 22 January 2010⁶ government agreed on 12 outcomes that *inter alia* refer to issues of education, skills, health, safety and security, human settlements and the environment. Each of the 12 outcomes has delivery agreements, which in many cases involve all spheres of government and partners outside of government. Outcome 5 refers directly to skills: “A skilled and capable workforce to support an inclusive growth path.” In order to ensure a skilled and capable workforce, Outcome 5 was structured into five outputs. The five outputs are the following:⁷

- Output 5.1: Establish a credible mechanism for skills planning;
- Output 5.2: Increase access to programmes leading to intermediate- and high-level learning;
- Output 5.3: Increase access to occupationally directed programmes in needed areas and thereby expand the availability of intermediate level skills (with a special focus on artisan skills);
- Output 5.4: Increase access to high-level occupationally-directed programmes in needed areas; and
- Output 5.5: Research, development and innovation in human capital for a growing knowledge economy.

Output 5.1 – “Establish a credible mechanism for skills planning.”⁸ This delivery agreement is between the Minister of Higher Education and Training and the following ministries: Public Service and Administration, Labour, Home Affairs, Economic Development, Rural Development and Land Reform, Finance, Trade and Industry, Science and Technology, Basic Education, Performance Monitoring and Evaluation, and the National Planning Commission. The Members of the Executive Council (MECs) for Education are also part of this agreement.

Output 5.1 has been structured into three sub-outputs, each with a set of indicators. The three sub-outputs are the following:

1. Sub-output 5.1.1: Development of standardised frameworks for the assessment of skills supply and demand in the country (build frameworks for cooperation and standardisation – March 2012);
2. Sub-output 5.1.2: Development of mechanisms to interface operational systems (build mechanisms to interface systems for data sharing and exchange – March 2013); and
3. Sub-output 5.1.3: Development of strategic management information systems (build strategic integrated management information systems – March 2014).

The four indicators for sub-output 5.1.1 are the following:

A standardised framework for providing information on current skills provisioning and attainment;

1. A standardised framework for information on current skills demand and projected skills demand;

⁶ The outcomes approach (<http://www.thepresidency.gov.za/>) (Accessed 4 January 2012).

⁷ Presentation by Department of Higher Education and Training, Workshop on 9 December 2011.

⁸ Department of Higher Education and Training, 2011. *Delivery Agreement 1 for Output 5.1 – Establish a Credible Mechanism for Skills Planning*.

2. A standardised framework for information on skills usage and inflow and outflow of skills in the country; and
3. A standardised framework for cooperation on the provision of career guidance and information services in the country.

This framework for the management and provision of career guidance information and services in South Africa refers to indicator 4 of sub-output 5.1.1.

A workshop was convened by the DHET and SAQA on 9 December 2011 as part of the process to prepare a career guidance policy framework. The purpose of the workshop was the following: to sensitise invited stakeholders regarding the ministerial priority to establish a framework and national action plan to coordinate career advice services for the country; to identify the current services offered by different stakeholders; to determine how to demarcate the supply chain for career services, thus ensuring cooperation between the key partners towards the best use of resources and closing gaps in services; and to discuss the way forward. The following stakeholders were invited to the workshop:

- SAQA (as partner and co-host of the event)
- South African College Principals Organisation
- Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)
- National Artisan Moderation Body
- Department of Basic Education (DBE)
- All provincial education departments
- National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)
- Department of Labour (DoL)
- Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)
- Department of Correctional Services
- Department of Performance Management and Evaluation (in the Presidency)
- Delegates from the Department of Higher Education and Training
- South African Career Development Association (SACDA)
- South African Graduate Development Association (SAGDA)
- Higher Education South Africa (HESA)

The next two sections of this document identify the specific objectives of a framework of this nature and sketch the critical features of the South African context that need to be considered in the framework. Sections 4 and 5 explain career guidance terminology and definitions and look at the rationale for career guidance. Section 6 scrutinises the related South African policy and legislative context and Section 7 describes the status of current career guidance services in South Africa.

Sections 8 to 10 look at the establishment of a national career guidance forum and the leadership, cooperation, collaboration and partnerships needed in order to ensure the achievement of goals. Section 11 refers to the importance of career- and labour market-related information and looks at technical issues such as standardisation, hosting, analysis, quality assurance and the provision of information.

Section 12 of the document investigates the importance of a national career service while section 13 looks at the importance of quality assurance of services and the professionalisation of career guidance practitioners. Section 14 discusses the need for research and evaluation in South Africa in order to strengthen the rationale for career guidance policy and legislation. The last two sections cover the importance of advocacy and communication regarding career guidance issues and the advantage of being part of international networks.

2 Objectives of the framework

The DHET is taking the lead (through the process required by Output 5.1) to prepare a framework for the management and provision of career guidance information and services in South Africa. The overall aim of the framework is to work towards a national model of career guidance services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point in their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers.

In order to achieve the main aim, the specific objectives of the framework are the following:

- To obtain a common understanding of career guidance-related terminology in South Africa in order to build and enhance cooperation between stakeholders;
- To establish guidelines and a process for cooperation and collaboration at all levels of government as well as with NGOs and the private sector;
- To propose the development and implementation of system-wide policies and practices;
- To assign stakeholders' roles and responsibilities for different areas and aspects of career guidance services in the country;
- To propose standards for career guidance systems, services and practitioners;
- To explore ways to ensure sufficient allocation of resources for a national service;
- To sensitise stakeholders about the role that evidence⁹ plays regarding the contribution of career guidance initiatives in reaching related national goals;
- To provide suggestions for the strengthening and continuity of leadership regarding career guidance services in South Africa; and
- To serve as the basis and starting point for the development and implementation of career guidance policy.

3 Critical features of the South African context

In order to understand the pivotal (and difficult) role of career guidance and counselling in South Africa, it is necessary to appreciate the socio-economic context as well as the education and training system of the country.

3.1 Socio-economic context

Some of the major socio-economic challenges that South Africa faces relate to inequality, high levels of unemployment, oversupply of low- or unskilled workers, a shortage of high-skilled workers and large numbers of its population living in rural areas.

South Africa is classified as an upper-middle-income developing country in terms of GDP per capita. However, it is ranked as one of the most unequal economies in the world in terms of income distribution (South Africa's gini coefficient is 0.57).¹⁰ Our biggest economic challenge is unemployment. The official unemployment rate is about 25% and even more alarming is the fact that about three-quarters (76%) of the unemployed report that they have been unemployed for one year and longer.¹¹ If the expanded

9 Use of research as a base for determining value and impact of career guidance and providing evidence for the rationale of career guidance interventions.

10 United Nations Development Programme. 2011. *Human Development Report*.

11 Quarterly Labour Force Survey, First Quarter 2011.

definition of unemployment is applied, which includes workers who have given up hope and who are not looking for jobs anymore, the unemployment rate is about 36%.¹²

An important characteristic of South Africa's unemployment crisis is its concentration in the 15-to-34 age cohort. In aggregate, this age cohort represents a staggering 68%¹³ of South Africa's unemployed. Another aspect of the unemployment problem is that it is embedded in structural deficiencies in the economy. Labour absorption tends to be relatively low and the economy is not growing fast enough to absorb new entrants into the labour market. The result is that each year young people exiting the education and training system are added to the pool of unemployed youth. That means that the actual number of unemployed youth in the country grows from year to year and that the unemployment problem becomes more and more challenging.

It is also well known that South Africa has a large informal sector. The informal sector, agriculture and domestic work contribute just over a fifth of all employment.¹⁴ Although it is generally believed that the informal sector gives people the opportunity to develop entrepreneurial activities and skills, it is often found that employment in the informal sector consists merely of survivalist activities and doesn't constitute employment in the true sense of the word.

In terms of skills, South Africa experiences a paradox: on the one hand, the country has an oversupply of low- or unskilled workers and/or skills that are not in demand in the labour market and on the other hand, a shortage of high-skilled workers. Statistics show that more than half (55%) of the unemployed have not completed secondary schooling.¹⁵

However, Leibrandt¹⁶ reports that given that expenditure on education has increased during the democratic era, the unemployed youth have higher educational qualifications than older citizens who are employed. Therefore, "the fact that better-educated young people remain poor suggests that the labour market has not been playing a successful role in alleviating poverty and that the education system is not delivering the skills needed in the labour market." The incidence of unemployed graduates is high, showing that there is an oversupply of people with relatively high levels of education, but who still don't have the skills sets (and possibly also other attributes) required by the labour market. To emphasise the point, Adcorp (a private employment agency) estimated that in April 2011 there were 829 800 unfilled positions for high-skilled workers across a wide range of occupations, including senior management, the professions (medicine, engineering, accounting and the law), technical occupations (specialised technicians and artisans) and agriculture.¹⁷

According to an article in *Engineering News*¹⁸ there are an estimated 300 000 unemployed people with qualifications from higher education institutions (HEIs) and FET colleges in South Africa who cannot

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid.

15 Ibid.

16 Leibrandt M et al. 2010. Trends in South African income distribution and poverty since the fall of apartheid, *OECD Social, Employment and Migration Working Papers*, No. 101, OECD Publishing, p.10.

17 Sharp L. 2011. *South Africa's Extraordinary Skills Shortage – Adcorp*, (<http://www.politicsweb.co.za/>) (Accessed 5 January 2012).

18 Prinsloo. L. May 2011. Lack of work experience left graduates unemployed. *Engineering News*, (<http://www.engineeringnews.co.za/article/lack-of-work-experience-leave-graduates-unemployed-2011-05-20>) (Accessed 4 January 2012).

find jobs, the main reason being the gap between the supply of skills and the demand for skills in the labour market. The article further states that many of these unemployed people hold qualifications in the fields of engineering and natural sciences, mainly from South Africa's FETs. The view is that these "unemployed people are given the knowledge and some practical training by institutions, but then left without any work experience and, ultimately, unemployed."¹⁹

In terms of spatial development, South Africa has large rural areas, some of which are densely populated. However, the same level of development relating to education, training and work as seen in urban areas does not exist in the rural areas. This means that people living in rural areas do not have the same opportunities in terms of obtaining knowledge, skills and access to work that urban residents have. At the same time, people living in rural areas and who are trying to access opportunities in urban areas face obstacles such as travel costs and the cost of migration. Rural development is a key focus in many of government's strategies and plans regarding job creation and skills development – such as the New Growth Path (NGP), the Jobs Fund, the Rural Development Strategy and the NSDS III.

According to the NGP, it is estimated that rural development programmes can achieve a measurable improvement in livelihoods for 500 000 households. The NSDS III requires that skills development activities in the different sectors contribute to the achievement of the country's new economic growth and social development goals by taking rural development strategies into account (special emphasis will be given to initiating and supporting projects with rural development as their goal). Similarly, a framework for career guidance should take the needs of citizens living in rural areas into consideration. For individuals, the labour market and the pathway into it (through education and training) are key determinants of mobility out of poverty and exclusion from the formal economy. Career guidance and counselling play a critically important role in linking individuals to learning paths and access routes into the labour market.

At the macro level, there is empirical evidence that in developing countries, inequalities in the distribution of physical capital (e.g. land) and human capital (e.g. education and health) represent obstacles to economic growth.²⁰ There is substantial agreement that the redress of unemployment, poverty and inequality will not only contribute to the wellbeing of the citizens of South Africa but will also stimulate the growth of the economy. These changes can only happen if labour absorption into local labour markets is increased. Career guidance and counselling, based on sound information, play a pivotal role in ensuring a match between labour demand and supply and, ultimately, in increasing labour absorption.

3.2 Education and training system

Education, and the knowledge it generates, is a key factor in development – it is crucial for economic and social progress everywhere. No country has managed to attain a high level of economic and social development without appropriate investments in good-quality schooling and post-school education. Education and training impact on economic development in many ways, through, for example, their impact on labour productivity, poverty eradication, technology and health.

19 Ibid.

20 Pillay P. 2006. Human capital development and growth: Improving access and equity in education and health services, Development Southern Africa, 23 (1), 2006.

The current state of education and training in South Africa is not favourable to knowledge generation and to the development of the appropriate skills necessary for growth in key sectors. The education and training challenge has both quantitative and qualitative dimensions.²¹

South Africa spends a large proportion of its national budget on education and training. In the fiscal year 2011/2012, expenditure on education and training accounted for 22% of the national budget and about 5.5% of GDP.²² In spite of this financial investment, the biggest systemic challenges in education and training remain the lack of efficiency and quality. The lack of efficiency refers to the fact that outputs are not in line with the substantial financial investments made in education and training (which can be seen in the high dropout rates). The lack of quality relates to the poor performance of a large number of students in key subject areas such as reading, maths and science.

One of the major challenges in the education system relates to maths and science education. A study carried out by the Centre for Development and Enterprise²³ argued that the South African schooling system continues to produce far fewer passes in maths and science – particularly in the (former) higher grade – than the country's economy requires. Many university degrees and professional and technical careers require grounding in maths and/or science, and the critical shortfall in learners leaving the schooling system with these qualifications was identified as a significant constraint to economic growth. This lack of quality maths and science education was seen also as an impediment to the development of state capacity, and further undermined both public and private programmes for black economic empowerment.

It is also well known that one of the main obstacles in maths and science education is the inadequate number of properly qualified teachers in these subjects. It is estimated that the teacher training system is producing only about a third of the country's requirement of about 25 000 new teachers a year.²⁴ There is little doubt that improving the quality of education provision at all levels – including effective career guidance and counselling – represents one of the greatest challenges to policy makers and policy implementers in South Africa.

Post-school education is critical for economic growth, technological absorption and advancement towards a knowledge economy.²⁵ The post-school education sector faces many challenges. A major challenge relates to access. Although South Africa has a relatively high 'gross enrolment ratio' in universities (at around 17% to 18%) in the African context,²⁶ this figure masks the fact that very few students are enrolled in the post-school vocational and education sub-sector, namely in FET colleges. However, the recent Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training specifically looks at increasing the vocational and technical education enrolment.²⁷

21 Pillay P. 2006. Human capital development and growth: Improving access and equity in education and health services, *Development Southern Africa*, 23 (1), 2006.

22 National Treasury. 2011.

23 Centre for Development and Enterprise. 2007. Doubling for Growth: Addressing the maths and science challenge in South Africa's schools. CDE Research Paper No.15 Johannesburg. (<http://www.cde.org.za/article>)(Accessed 4 January 2012).

24 Ibid.

25 Pillay P. 2010. *Linking Higher Education and Economic Development*. Wynberg: Chet.

26 Cloete N et al. 2011. *Universities and Economic Development in Africa*. Wynberg: Chet.

27 Department of Higher Education. 2012. *Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training*.

Another challenge relates to quality. As with the schooling sector, the challenge of quality is pervasive in the post-school sector, with large numbers of students obtaining certification that does not appear to equip them with the requisite skills for gainful employment. In addition, the South African higher education sector is not successful in supplying enough graduates in the science and engineering disciplines. This is directly related to the poor standard of maths and science education in the schooling system.

In terms of training, the NSDS, first introduced in 2001, provided the guidance for skills development in South Africa (see Section 6 for a discussion of the NSDS). The NSDS was intended to “radically transform education and training in South Africa by improving both the quality and quantity of training to support increased competitiveness of industry and improved quality of life for all South Africans.”²⁸ The NSDS provided the basis for skills development, which was aimed at addressing the structural problems of the labour market inherited from the past and at transforming the South African labour market “from one with a low skills base to one characterised by rising skills and a commitment to lifelong learning.”²⁹ We are now in Phase Three of the NSDS.

The focus of NSDS I was on equity, quality training and skills development in the workplace. The importance of employability was identified. NSDS II also identified the need for assisting designated groups to gain knowledge and experience in a workplace environment in order for them to gain critical skills. The emphasis in NSDS III is on institutional learning linked to occupationally directed programmes. It promotes the growth of FET colleges so that they can address national skills needs. It is against this background of education and training that career guidance has to contribute in terms of serving as an instrument to advance the transition from education to the labour market as well as facilitating advice on skills development in the labour market.

4 Career guidance definition and terminology

The following definition of career guidance can be found in international reviews conducted by the OECD,³⁰ the European Commission³¹ and the World Bank:³²

Career guidance refers to services and activities intended to assist individuals, of any age and at any point in their lives, to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. Such services may be found in schools, universities and colleges, in training institutions, in public employment services, in the workplace, in the voluntary or community sector and in the private sector. The activities may take place on an individual or group basis, and may be face-to-face or at a distance (including help lines and web-based services). They include career information provision (in print, ICT-based and other forms), assessment and self-assessment tools, counselling interviews, career education programmes (to help individuals develop their self-awareness,

28 Department of Labour. 2005. *The National Skills Development Strategy, 2005-2010*. Pretoria: Department of Labour.

29 Department of Labour, Republic of South Africa. 2001. *The National Skills Development Strategy April 2001 – March 2005 Skills for Productive Citizenship for All*. Pretoria: Department of Labour.

30 OECD. 2004. *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: OECD.

31 Sultana RG. 2004. *Guidance Policies in the Knowledge Economy. Trends, Challenges and Responses across Europe*. A Cedefop Synthesis Report, Cedefop Panorama series No. 85, Office for Official Publications of the European Commission, Luxembourg.

32 Watts AG, Fretwell DH. 2004. *Public Policies for Career Development. Case Studies and Emerging Issues for Designing Career Information and Guidance Systems in Developing and Transition Economies*. Washington: The World Bank.

opportunity awareness and career management skills), taster programmes (to sample options before choosing them), work search programmes and transition services.

Recent policy and strategy initiatives specifically in the European Union zone have shown that there is a paradigm adjustment indicating a shift from career guidance interventions at key points in a person's life to a lifelong guidance perspective. Further developments in this regard are a move from a psychological to a pedagogical approach (from testing to tasting the world of work) and from external support to career self-management skills.³³

In many instances, concepts and terminology are developed to serve the interest of education and training institutions and other stakeholders, which disregards the fact that career guidance is specifically aimed at helping individuals to make informed decisions about their learning and career paths.

At the recent Sixth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy (Budapest, 5-7 December 2011) the issue of language for clear communication was raised.³⁴ It was acknowledged that the language used to describe career development in relation to public policy varies and is often confusing within and across countries. It is often found that in relation to career development, countries use terms such as "education", "training", "employment", "skills development", "human resources development", "career counselling", "career information and advice", "careers education", "career coaching" and "livelihood planning".

To overcome this problem of too many terms, a recommendation was made to use career development as the core concept. The definition of "career development" is given as lifelong guidance for learning and work and is linked to policy agendas relating to lifelong learning, workforce development and social inclusion.³⁵ In the European context, the term "lifelong guidance" is used because of its link to lifelong learning. However, Watts emphasises that there are two warnings concerning the term "lifelong guidance":³⁶

- "Guidance" could be viewed as being somewhat directive in nature, whereas career development is designed to promote people's capacity to manage their own careers, with access to help where needed.
- "Lifelong guidance" could be viewed as suggesting that the State should pay for securing access to guidance on a lifelong basis. But while assuring access to such help throughout life is a public as well as a private good, this does not mean that the State should necessarily be expected to pay for it all: some will be funded by the State, directly or indirectly; some in other ways. The roles of the State can be to stimulate the market, to quality-assure the market and to compensate for market failure.

In the South African context, different terms are used by the various sectors that offer career-development-related services. In schools, activities related to career development are described as careers and career choices, residing under a broader term called "life orientation".³⁷ In the higher education and training sector, the term "student counselling services" is used to encompass activities such as career-

33 European Training Foundation. 2009. *In Demand: Career Guidance in EU Neighbouring Countries*.

34 Watts AG. 2011. *Communiqué for the Sixth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy*. Budapest, 5-7 December 2011.

35 *Ibid.*, p.5.

36 *Ibid.*, p.5.

37 Department of Basic Education. *Draft Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Life Orientation Grades 10-12 for 2012*.

curriculum and personal counselling. In the labour market sector, the term “employment services” is used by the Department of Labour (DoL) and includes career guidance as a function. The CAS project of the DHET and SAQA is called the “Career Advice Services”. At the enterprise level, a term such as “career management” is used quite often and refers to self-management of career planning. Annexure 1 provides some examples of terms used in the career guidance field.

However, currently in South Africa some of the sectors are starting to show a preference for the term “career development”. Given its association with lifelong learning and work, it seems that the term “career development” represents the entire sequence of activities and events related to an individual’s career and is an appropriate term to consider.

In the context of South Africa’s history of fragmentation regarding career guidance thinking and activities, it may be a good idea to adopt a common or shared term. This may strengthen the current process of establishing a relationship of cooperation between the different stakeholders that could lead to a coherent national framework and system.

The terminology of Output 5.1.1 is “career guidance information and services”, hence the use of these terms throughout this document. However, it is foreseen that the process of discussing the policy framework will provide enough opportunity to debate the most preferable terminology in this regard for the South African context.

5 *The rationale for career guidance*

The framework for career guidance in South Africa is based on the premise that career guidance is a national imperative. It is of national importance for several reasons, some of which are explained below. First, career guidance is linked to human rights in terms of learning,³⁸ working and social justice. The Bill of Rights, contained in the South African Constitution, 1996, stipulates that everyone has the right to a basic education, including adult basic education and further education, which the State, through reasonable measures, must progressively make available and accessible. Career guidance is an intricate component of the educational system and plays an important role in making educational offerings accessible to individuals.

Second, career guidance can contribute to the achievements of public policy goals in education, employment and equity.

The OECD³⁹ has found in a study of 14 countries that career guidance can contribute to the following categories of public policy goals and issues:

1. Learning goals

Within learning goals, career guidance can contribute to the development of human resources, improving the efficiency of educational systems and serving as an instrument to advance the transition from education to the labour market.

2. Labour market goals

38 The Bill of Rights, contained in the Constitution, 1996.

39 OECD. 2004. *Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policymakers*.

Under labour market goals, career guidance can contribute to several labour market objectives, such as: improving the match between demand and supply, improving labour market mobility, improving labour supply, addressing skills shortages and preventing unemployment.

3. Social equity goals

In terms of social equity goals, career guidance can contribute by supporting disadvantaged and marginalised groups and addressing gender and race equity.

These arguments in favour of career guidance in developed countries have to some extent also been confirmed for low- and middle-income countries by the World Bank⁴⁰ and the ILO.⁴¹

Third, career guidance forms part of a human resource-development strategy designed to harness technological and economic change and to enable the country to compete effectively in global markets. Career guidance can play an important role in encouraging all individuals to engage in career planning throughout life, taking into account that lifelong learning can enable them to respond more flexibly to the opportunities offered by a dynamic labour market. In other words, career guidance is seen as an important part of a national strategy for lifelong learning and sustained employability that is driven significantly by individuals themselves.

It is further important to see career guidance as a public good in its own right – as a crucial service to citizens, associated with affirming human value, self-respect and hope. If this argument is accepted and embraced by all, it will ensure that career guidance retains its importance on the political agenda and that it doesn't lose its significance as political priorities change. Essentially, career guidance is a core service that should be available to all citizens on an ongoing basis – not haphazardly to certain target groups.

6 The South African policy and legislative context

The responsibility for career guidance-related services in South Africa is fragmented across a range of government departments, which makes policy development extremely difficult. International experience has shown that career guidance policy cannot be developed and implemented in isolation; it needs to be part of a coherent coordination of other relevant policies relating to education and training, skills development, the labour market, social equity and broader development.⁴² The absence of such coordination leads to fragmentation of career guidance services, under-resourcing of services, and the under-utilisation of scarce resources. The lack of coordination may also undermine the quality of services and may lead to career guidance becoming subsumed by the other (sometimes overwhelming) challenges faced by the various role players involved in the delivery of career guidance services.

In South Africa, an array of legislation, policies, and strategies sets the context for career guidance. Some of this legislation and these policies and strategies address broader issues such as education, the labour market and job creation, while others refer directly to the career guidance function. The overarching element and the heart of these types of policies and strategies is HRD.

40 Watts AG, Fretwell DH. 2004. Public Policies for Career Development. Case Studies and Emerging Issues for Designing Career Information and Guidance Systems in Developing and Transition Economies. Washington: The World Bank.

41 ILO. 2006. *Career Guidance: A Resource Handbook for Low- and Middle-income Countries*. Geneva: ILO.

42 OECD. 2004. *Career Guidance: A Handbook for Policymakers*.

The HRDSA 2010-2030 draft strategy provides the framework for HRD in South Africa and the strategy was prepared in such a way that it can refer to and articulate with various other policies and strategies. The Office of the Deputy President of South Africa is the custodian for the HRDSA while the DHET is responsible for its administration. The HRDSA draft strategy is prepared through the structures of an HRD technical working group, technical task teams and the HRD provincial forum.

The HRDSA was developed on the premise that it: recognises both the demand and supply side of HRD issues, acknowledges that HRD spans several stages of human development from early childhood development through to labour market entry and participation, recognises systemic challenges as impediments to successful HRD policy implementation, and locates HRD in the broader development context and takes into account the challenges posed by issues such as poverty, inequality and high unemployment.

The HRDSA intends to contribute to the following national goals:⁴³

- To reduce poverty and unemployment in South Africa;
- To promote justice and social cohesion through improved equity in the provision and outcomes of education and skills development programmes; and
- To improve national economic growth and development through the improved competitiveness of the South African economy.

In its action plan for the next five years, the HRDSA sets out the following commitments:⁴⁴

1. To address the shortages in the supply of people with priority or scarce skills;
2. To increase the number of appropriately skilled people to meet the demands of South Africa's current and emerging economic and social development priorities;
3. To ensure improved access to quality basic education and schooling (up to Grade 12);
4. To implement skills development programmes that enable beneficiaries to overcome poverty and unemployment;
5. To ensure that the youth have access to education and training that enhances opportunities and increases their success in further vocational training and sustainable employment;
6. To improve technological and innovation capability and outcomes within the public and private sectors;
7. To ensure that the public sector has the capability to meet the strategic priorities of the South African developmental state; and
8. To establish effective and efficient planning capacity in the relevant government departments for the successful implementation of the HRDSA.

The reference to lifelong learning, education and training, skills development, employment and the labour market, social equity, and economic and general development in the HRDSA is of particular relevance to career guidance.

The notion of **lifelong learning** is starting to be recognised globally in policy and strategy frameworks, especially in the European Union environment. Countries in the European Union zone have started to establish lifelong guidance systems that can provide information, advice and guidance in a context where there is a need for continuously improving knowledge and skills.⁴⁵ In South Africa, the NQF

43 Human Resources Development South Africa (HRDSA). Draft strategy for discussion, 2010-2030.

44 Ibid.

45 European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. 2011. *Lifelong Guidance across Europe: Reviewing Policy Progress and Future Prospects*. Luxembourg: Publications office of the EU.

is seen as “a bridge to lifelong learning”, where the bridge metaphor is used to emphasise access, mobility, progression and a pathway.⁴⁶

The South African Qualifications Authority Act, No. 58 of 1995, (SAQA Act) provided for the establishment of SAQA, which was responsible for overseeing the development and implementation of the NQF. In 2008, the SAQA Act was replaced by the National Qualifications Framework Act, No. 67 of 2008. This statute changed the NQF levels of previously registered qualifications and introduced three sub-frameworks.

The objectives of the NQF contribute to the personal development of learners and the social and economic development of the country in general by: (i) creating an integrated national framework for learning achievements; (ii) facilitating access to and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths; (iii) enhancing the quality of education and training; and (iv) accelerating the redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities.

The NQF is a single integrated system that comprises three coordinated qualifications sub-frameworks:⁴⁷

- General and further education and training (schools and FET colleges, provided for in the GENFETQA Act);
- Higher education (universities, universities of technology and comprehensive universities, provided for in the Higher Education Act); and
- Trades and occupations (workplace learning, provided for in the Skills Development Act).

The NQF promotes lifelong learning to individuals through the sub-frameworks by providing:

- Access to education and training opportunities and study programmes;
- Vertical progression from one qualification level up to the next;
- Horizontal progression between different programmes and qualifications on the same NQF level;
- Pathways out of education, particularly higher education, and into the labour market; and
- Pathways into education and training for working people who need to advance their knowledge and skills.

In terms of **skills development**, the Skills Development Act and the Skills Development Levies Act were passed in 1998 and 1999 respectively. The legislation charged the Minister of Labour with preparing a national skills development strategy.

The title of the NSDS I was “Skills for productive citizenship for all”.⁴⁸ The following five objectives were identified to drive the strategy:

- To develop a culture of high-quality lifelong learning;
- To foster skills development in the formal economy for productivity and employability;
- To stimulate and support skills development in small businesses;
- To promote skills development for employability and sustainable livelihoods through social development initiatives; and
- To assist new entrants into employment.

46 National Qualifications Framework: *What the NQF does*. (<http://www.careerhelp.org.za/page/nqf-levels/nqf/735412-National-Qualifications-Framework> (Accessed 4 January 2012).

47 NQF Act. 2008.

48 Department of Labour, Republic of South Africa. 2001. *The National Skills Development Strategy 1 April 2001 – 31 March 2005: Skills for Productive Citizenship for All*. Pretoria: Department of Labour.

The NSDS II for the period 2006 to 2010 was launched by the Minister of Labour at the National Skills Conference in March 2005. The title of the NSDS II was “Skills for sustainable growth, development and equity”.⁴⁹ The following five objectives were identified to drive the NSDS II:

- Prioritising and communicating critical skills for sustainable growth, development and equity;
- Promoting and accelerating quality training for all in the workplace;
- Promoting employability and sustainable livelihoods through skills development;
- Assisting designated groups, including new entrants, to participate in accredited work, integrated learning and work-based programmes to acquire critical skills to enter the labour market and self-employment; and
- Improving the quality and relevance of training.

The focus of the NSDS II was equity, quality training and skills development in the workplace. The importance of employability was identified. The NSDS II also identified the need for assisting designated groups to gain knowledge and experience in a workplace environment in order to gain critical skills.

The integration of higher and further education and the transfer of the skills development mandate from the DoL to the DHET in 2009 was a measure by government to enhance synergy between the HRDSA and the NSDS. The NSDS III followed the integration process and is seen as a significant component of the HRDSA.⁵⁰

There is a strong focus in the NSDS III on the Sector Skills Plans (SSPs), which are prepared by the SETAs and are aimed at identifying the following:

- The skills needs of industry/economic sectors; and
- Possibilities and constraints in the effective utilisation and development of skills in relation to government’s priorities and the objectives of the HRDS, the NSDS, provincial growth and development strategies and relevant industry/economic strategies.

The emphasis in the NSDS III is also on institutional learning linked to occupationally directed programmes. It promotes the growth of FET colleges so they can address national skills needs. The NSDS III is driven by eight objectives:

- Establishing a credible institutional mechanism for skills planning;
- Increasing access to occupationally directed programmes;
- Promoting the growth of a public FET college system that is responsive to sector, local, regional and national skills needs and priorities;
- Addressing the low level of youth and adult language and numeracy skills to enable additional training;
- Encouraging better use of workplace-based skills development;
- Encouraging and supporting cooperatives; small enterprises; worker-initiated-, NGO- and community training initiatives;
- Increasing public sector capacity for improved service delivery and supporting the building of a developmental state; and
- Building career and vocational guidance.

49 Department of Labour, Republic of South Africa. 2005. *The National Skills Development Strategy 1 April 2005 – 31 March 2010: Skills for Sustainable Growth, Development and Equity*. Pretoria: Department of Labour.

50 Department of Higher Education and Training. 2010. *Framework for the National Skills Development Strategy 2011/12-2015/2016*.

The NSDS III framework expresses the need for a wider spectrum of, above all, programmes that will lay a broader foundation for decent work in a variety of contexts. The referenced programmes in the framework are *inter alia* programmes to facilitate access, success and progression; professional, vocational, technical and academic (PIVOTAL) programmes; skills programmes and other non-accredited short courses; and programmes that build the academic profession and engender innovation. Information and career guidance fall under programmes to facilitate access, success and progression.

The focus on career-related information and guidance is based on the awareness and understanding that in order for individuals to succeed they need to be guided before they enrol in any learning or training programme. SETAs are seen as points where career- and labour market-related information is gathered and support services generated. The NSDS III emphasises the need for such information to be synchronised centrally and made available nationally. To this effect, SETAs are commissioned, under the NSDS III, to submit information in a standard format and to help expose learners to the work before they make their final career decisions. The standard formats for information will be developed by the skills planning unit of the DHET.

The related success indicators in terms of career guidance-related objectives are the following:⁵¹

- SETAs to submit a comprehensive occupational profile of their sector and a guide to employment opportunities in their sector in the format prepared by the DHET by March 2013. These profiles and guides must be updated by March 2016; and
- SETAs to provide information on the steps taken to expose prospective learners to work in their sector.

In order to regulate, enable and transform school education in South Africa, the following pieces of legislation are in place:

- South African Schools Act, No. 84 of 1996;
- National Education Policy Act, No. 27. of 1996;
- Adult Basic Education and Training Act, No. 52 of 2000; and
- South African Council for Educators Act, No. 31 of 2000.

In terms of career information, guidance and counselling, the National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 12 (January 2012) and the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Life Orientation Grades 10 to 12 (January 2012) are relevant. The National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 12 makes provision for a subject called “Life Skills” in the foundation, intermediate and senior phases of school. This subject consists of the following themes: beginning knowledge (only in the foundation phase); and creative arts, physical education, and social and personal wellbeing (in all the phases).⁵² The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Life Orientation Grades 10 to 12 provides the framework for career development during the last three years of school. Career development is one of six topics (called “careers and career choices”) in the subject called “Life Orientation”.⁵³

Life Orientation is defined as a learning area that guides and prepares learners for life and its possibilities. It specifically equips learners for meaningful and successful living in a rapidly changing and transforming society. It develops skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that empower learners to make informed decisions and take appropriate actions regarding health promotion, social development, personal development, physical development and movement, and orientation to the world of work.

⁵¹ Ibid.

⁵² Department of Basic Education. 2011. *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)*.

⁵³ Department of Basic Education. 2011. *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Life Orientation Grades 10-12 for 2012*.

The practicalities surrounding the delivery of career guidance at schools through the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Life Orientation are discussed in Section 7.1.

In order to regulate, enable and transform **post-school education** in South Africa, the following pieces of legislation and policy framework apply:

- Higher Education Act, No. 101 of 1997 (as amended by Higher Education Amendment Act, No. 55 of 1999; Higher Education Amendment Act, No. 54 of 2000; and Higher Education Amendment Act, No. 23 of 2001);
- The Further Education and Training Act, No. 98 of 1998;
- National Student Financial Aid Scheme Act, No. 56 of 1999;
- General and Further Education and Training Quality Assurance Act, No. 58 of 2001; and
- Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training, 2012.

The Education White Paper 3, 1997 included support services with specific reference to the need for career guidance. The Higher Education Act, 1997 allowed for the establishment of the Council on Higher Education (CHE) and stated that the CHE may advise the Minister on any aspect of higher education on its own initiative. The advice contemplated includes advice on student support services. However, history has shown that HEIs were functioning quite independently and that many of the institutions already had well organised student counselling services in place. (Career guidance services through student counselling services is discussed in Section 7.3.)

The Further Education and Training Act, 1998 refers to the function of the relevant council to advise on the policy for student support services within public FET institutions. The FET colleges have established student support units (see Section 7.2). However, experience has shown that these units provide limited career guidance services.

Reference to the National Student Financial Aid Scheme (NSFAS), the financial aid scheme for students at HEIs, is appropriate in so far as it redresses past discrimination in ensuring equal access to study loans and bursaries.

The most recent development in terms of career guidance in the post-school sector is the Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training. The Green Paper emphatically states that “career guidance must become available to all young people as they choose their career paths.”⁵⁴ The reference to career guidance is threefold:

- The role that the planned Institute for Vocational and Continuing Education and Training can play in the development of career guidance material;
- The continued role of SAQA in providing guidance and leadership on the development of the NQF as well as the development and implementation of its national career guidance service; and
- The role of a national institutional mechanism for skills planning – a data system that will inter alia contain standardised and integrated career and labour market-related information for use in career guidance services (discussed in Section 1 under Output 5.1; also see Section 11).

Clearly, the Green Paper supports the thinking underlying the current framework document.

54 Department of Higher Education and Training, 2012. *Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training*, p.94.

In terms of **employment** (and unemployment) and **the labour market**, the DoL currently delivers employment services under the Skills Development Act, 1998 while the Employment Services Bill⁵⁵ is still negotiated at the National Economic Development and Labour Council (Nedlac). The functions of the employment services directorate referred to in the Act are the following: to provide employment services for workers, employers and training providers, including improvement of such services to rural communities; to register work seekers; to register vacancies and work opportunities; and to assist prescribed categories of people to enter special education and training programmes, find employment, start income-generating projects, and to participate in special employment programmes.

The relevant sections in the Employment Services Bill refer to the provision of specialised services to assist specific categories of work seekers – including the youth, new entrants into the labour market, disabled people, and members of rural communities. It is also mentioned that the DoL may provide the following services to facilitate the matching of work seekers to employment opportunities: vocational and career counselling and labour market information; assessment of work seekers to determine suitability; and other related life skills to secure employment.

Private employment agencies that render recruitment and placement services (some of them also provide career guidance-related services) fall under the Skills Development Act, 1998 and are required to register with the DoL.

In terms of youth development in general and entrepreneurial skills development and career guidance specifically, the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA) is the entity that holds the mandate. The NYDA derives its mandate from the National Youth Development Agency Act, No. 54 of 2008 and the National Youth Policy (2009-2014). According to the Act, the NYDA has the following functions: (i) national youth service and social cohesion; (ii) economic participation; (iii) policy, research and development; (iv) governance, training and development; (v) youth advisory and information services; and (vi) the National Youth Fund. Career guidance services falls under function v.

While the strengthening of the nation's education, skills and human resource base is one of the government's highest priorities, policies and strategies for **growth and job creation** are equally important. Policies and strategies for growth and job creation are necessary in order to ensure that newly educated and trained entrants into the labour market can get access to decent work opportunities and that current workers in the labour market can experience continuation of employment. In fact, HRD and growth and job creation policies and strategies should be reciprocal; improvements in education and skill levels are a fundamental prerequisite for achieving many of the goals set for growth and job creation.⁵⁶

The strategies and initiatives in this regard are the NGP, the Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP2) and the Jobs Fund. The NGP is an economic framework with the objective of creating a better labour-absorbing growth path,⁵⁷ the IPAP2 is an industrial policy to expand production in sectors with high employment and high possibility for growth,⁵⁸ and the Jobs Fund (announced by the President during the State of the Nation Address on 10 February 2011) is a fund established to co-finance public- and private sector projects that will significantly contribute to job creation.⁵⁹

55 Employment Services Bill. 2010.

56 Guidelines on strategy and priorities for the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), 2011/12.

57 Department of Economic Development. 2010. *The New Growth Path: The Framework*.

58 dti. 2010. *Industrial Policy Action Plan (IPAP2)*.

59 The Treasury and Development Bank Southern Africa, 2011, *The Jobs Fund*.

It is in this legislative and policy context that career guidance agents have to deliver services. The development and implementation of a national careers plan strongly linked to the achievement of youth education, training and employment targets, and the provision of lifelong learning opportunities for adults is imperative.

Section 7 takes stock of the current provision of career guidance services by the different stakeholders in South Africa. From Section 8 onwards, the fundamentals of a national career information and guidance policy framework are presented.

7 Status of the career guidance services

Similar to many other countries, South Africa has a history of career guidance services being distributed across various sectors under different ministries and jurisdictions. Career guidance services are offered at: (i) schools (GET and FET); (ii) FET colleges; (iii) higher education and training institutions (universities and universities of technology); (iv) public employment services; (v) SETAs; (vi) statutory bodies; (vii) non-governmental services; and (viii) private services.

7.1 Schools

In 2011, the school sector had 23 572 public schools offering the GET band and 6 286 offering the FET band; and 1 486 registered private or independent schools. In terms of the NQF, Grades One to Nine fall in the GET band and Grades 10 to 12 in the FET band.

Learners make initial decisions regarding career choice at the end of Grade Nine when they select the subject fields to be studied in Grades 10, 11 and 12. At the end of Grade 12, learners are required to make decisions regarding further study or work preferences. In the foundation, intermediate and senior phases, the National Curriculum Statement Grades R to 12 makes provision for the subject called “Life Skills”. This subject consists of the following themes: beginning knowledge (only in the foundation phase); and creative arts, physical education, and social and personal wellbeing (in all the phases).⁶⁰ Grade Nine is a critical stage in terms of career guidance. Experience has shown that although Grade Nine learners are assisted to select subjects, the reality is that in many of the poorer schools, the subjects offered are very limited. A major problem is the huge shortage of maths and science teachers. As a result, only a limited number of pupils are able to take these subjects, and only those that have achieved good grades in these areas are allowed to study these subjects.

The Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement for Life Orientation Grades 10 to 12 provides the framework for career development during the last three years of school. Career development is one of six topics (called “Careers and Career Choices”) in the subject “Life Orientation”. Two hours per week are allocated to Life Orientation in total. This means that over a period of a year, 66 hours are available for the teaching of Life Orientation in Grades 10 and 11 and 56 hours in Grade 12. The annual teaching hours for the topic Careers and Career Choices are 11 hours in Grade 10, eight hours in Grade 11, and eight hours in Grade 12.

In Grade 10, the teaching plan for Careers and Career Choices includes the following themes:⁶¹

- Subjects, career fields and study choices (decision-making skills);

60 Department of Basic Education. 2011. *Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS)*.

61 Ibid.

- Socio-economic factors;
- Diversity of jobs;
- Opportunities within career fields;
- Trends and demands in the job market; and
- The need for lifelong learning.

In Grade 11, the themes are the following:⁶²

- Requirements for admission to HEIs;
- Options for financial assistance for further studies;
- Competencies, abilities and ethics required for a career;
- Personal expectations in relation to job or career of interest; and
- Knowledge about self in relation to the demands of the world of work and socio-economic conditions.

In the final year of school (Grade 12), the themes are the following:⁶³

- Commitment to a decision taken (locate appropriate work or study opportunities in various sources);
- Reasons for and impact of unemployment and innovative solutions to counteract unemployment;
- Core elements of a job contract; and
- Refinement of portfolio of plans for life after school.

In addition, learners have access to a variety of career events outside of school. The provincial offices of the Department of Basic Education (DBE) take responsibility for organising career events for Grade 12 learners outside of school hours. These usually take the form of career exhibitions and career talks by people working in a particular field. Other stakeholders such as higher education and training institutions, SETAs, Higher Education South Africa (HESA), the NYDA, NGOs and private companies take responsibility for providing career talks and organising career events and exhibitions. Regrettably, these events are usually more accessible to schools in urban areas and learners from rural areas are neglected.

It is common knowledge that career guidance activities vary considerably from one school to another. It is often found that schools in the more affluent areas have established career guidance practices in place and in many instances use the services of registered psychologists in this regard. However, to the detriment of learners, many schools do not have Life Orientation teachers who have sufficient knowledge and experience regarding career guidance. In order to address this problem, the provincial offices of the DBE provide support to Life Orientation teachers and guidance teachers. Provincial office officials usually visit schools to provide assistance to the teachers to develop learning materials and to provide accredited training through private companies such as PACE (a one-day course).

Another major challenge is access to reliable career- and labour market-related information. In the absence of a national information system, schools depend on other stakeholders such as the HEIs, HESA, SETAs and private companies to provide the needed information. All district offices are also supposed to have teacher support centres, which sometimes include resource libraries that house some career guidance material.

⁶² Ibid.

⁶³ Ibid.

7.2 Further Education and Training (FET) Colleges

There are 50 registered and accredited public FET colleges in South Africa, which operate on 263 campuses spread across the rural and urban areas of the country. Currently, there are about 300 000 students in public and private FET colleges. In the recent Green Paper on Post-school Education and Training, the Minister of Higher Education and Training made it clear that the focus of higher education in South Africa will shift from universities to FET colleges, positioning the vocational college system as the main platform for skills development training. The FET colleges are seen as the primary site for skills development in areas that are demanded by the labour market and the government aims to have four million people enrolled at colleges or other HEIs by 2030.

It is emphasised in the Green Paper that the key areas of expansion will be the public FETs in order to provide PIVOTAL programmes to a growing number of young post-school learners as well as adults at turning points in their careers. These programmes are learning programmes that meet critical needs for economic growth and social development.

Most public FET colleges have Student Support Units that focus generally on academic and broader social/psychological needs of students. However, it is often found that colleges do not have the resources (in terms of people, knowledge, skills and money) to offer full career guidance services such as advice about study choices, assisting students with job applications and preparing them for employment interviews. In order to strengthen this function, some colleges are making use of private services and/or psychology interns from nearby universities, who visit campuses on fixed days and see students by appointment. SAQA is also involved in a capacity-building exercise at the moment in its effort to upgrade the skills of student support officers in terms of delivering career guidance services. However, with the new focus of the Minister of Higher Education and Training on increasing the enrolments at FET colleges, the load on student support officers will also increase, making their current problems even more challenging.

7.3 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)

There are 21 registered public HEIs in South Africa, including universities and universities of technology. Traditionally, these institutions have been very independent regarding their career guidance-related activities. All of these institutions have student counselling units in place. These units used to operate under the leadership of the Society for Student Counselling in Southern Africa (SSCSA) which offered a wide range of services. These included counselling- and career guidance- and development services aimed at empowering students in all of the major transition phases that relate to higher education. SSCSA's name changed to the Southern African Association for Counselling and Development in Higher Education (SAACDHE). This was done to address diversity and incorporate broader support services at the counselling units. SAACDHE also set standards for practice at the student counselling services units. A quality assurance framework for best practice is applied and all the institutions are monitored against it.

Most of the HE institutions do not only serve their current student base, but also conduct school visits, hold open days and exhibit at career exhibitions in order to recruit prospective students. The aim is usually to provide learners with information and counselling on prospective careers available through the institution. These services fall under the marketing department of the institutions. There are no fees charged for these services. Prospective students and members of the general public are also able to access individualised career assessment and counselling services, often at a fee.

As soon as students are registered at the institutions, they have access to a range of support services such as: academic support; personal counselling and therapy; career guidance and counselling; and life skills training, including job-search skills, interview skills and CV-writing skills. Many of the institutions provide graduate recruitment services for graduates. This takes the form of organising opportunities for prospective employers to address and meet graduates, as well as the screening and referral of applicants. Applicants that are screened are also provided with assistance in terms of interview skills and CV-writing skills.

Most student counselling services use mainly traditional models of careers guidance, are relatively well resourced, and most staff are well trained. (Many of the staff members are registered psychologists.) Although the graduate-placement programmes of some of the institutions are fairly successful, the high unemployment rate of graduates poses a particular challenge. Questions arise about the effectiveness of initial career guidance in directing learners and students into learning pathways that can lead to sustainable employment. However, it must be stated that the HEIs can't redress the gaps in basic education, such as poor guidance when choosing school subjects and the poor quality of basic education in general.

The National Information Service for Higher Education (Nishe) deserves mention in an account of services available in the higher education sector. Nishe falls under HESA and was established in 2003 with the main aim of providing career information at Grade Nine and FET levels. It consists primarily of a learner-friendly publication that covers topics such as subject choices, opportunities at HEIs and admission requirements of HEIs. It is distributed mainly to schools in partnership with the DBE.

7.4 Public Employment Services

In the light of limited or inaccessible opportunities in formal employment, the DoL provides guidance and labour market information that is aimed at equipping citizens with knowledge and skills to help them make appropriate choices that lead to creating or accessing income-earning opportunities.

In terms of its current operations, the DoL offers employment- and career guidance-related services at its 125 labour centres located in the nine provinces. The services include the provision of: career- and labour market-related information and information that is essential to unemployed youth such as on government and non-governmental programmes and services and job opportunities; guidance to help people clarify their goals, understand their own identity and make informed decisions; employment counselling to help people access job- and skills development opportunities, to enhance their employability, thus securing and maintaining employment; and psychometric assessment and selection to assist employers to choose workers/learners with the necessary potential to make a success of the learning programme or work opportunity, and work seekers to become satisfied that they will adjust well in the workplace and be productive. Other service-delivery infrastructure exists in addition to the labour centres that enable the DoL to reach people in deep rural areas; these include 19 mobile trucks and the Phelophepa train.⁶⁴

The DoL also plays a major role in collecting career- and labour market-related information. The Employment Services for South Africa (ESSA) system is operational in all the labour centres and holds the following information: a register of work seekers; a register of employers, a register of placement opportunities/vacancies, an indication of the matching of individuals to placement opportunities

64 Phelophepa is a 'health train' in South Africa, supported by the Canon Collins Trust and driven by Transnet of South Africa to help the rural people of South Africa access much needed healthcare.

(supply and demand), and a record of the placement of individuals in work opportunities. However, the department warns that the information is not comprehensive because: not every unemployed person registers with the DoL, not every organisation registers placement opportunities with the DoL, very few organisations report on the placement of individuals, and many other organisations keep databases of work seekers, opportunities and other labour market-related information.

In terms of staff capacity, the DoL employs 85 career counsellors, all of them registered with the Health Professions Council of South Africa as counsellors, psychometrists or psychologists. There are nine career guidance coordinators in the nine provincial offices that manage, oversee and coordinate all career guidance-related functions and activities and three people at head office that are responsible for programme development and monitoring and training of career counsellors.

7.5 Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)

During the time of the NSDS II (2005/2006 to 2010/2011) Indicator 1.2 required SETAs to develop sector guides to inform a range of stakeholders on the scarce and critical skills in their sector. However, no framework for the format or type of information was provided. Consequently, different formats of career guides were developed. Some of the guides included information on career decision making and planning in general, while others merely provided basic information about occupations. Some other activities of SETAs in the career guidance field are the development of Life Orientation teachers for Grades Nine to 12 and the training of student support officers at FET colleges and HEIs (the Education, Training and Development Practices (ETDP) SETA specifically).

The NSDS III framework continues the requirement for SETAs to provide information and career guidance. The framework states that in order for learners to succeed, they need to be guided prior to enrolment on both the best match of their interests and abilities to occupational requirements and their best prospects for employment and decent remuneration. SETAs are therefore instructed to submit information in a standard format and need to help expose learners to the work before they make their final decisions. The following success indicators apply:

- SETAs must submit a comprehensive occupational profile of their sector and guide to employment opportunities in their sector in the format prepared by the DHET by March 2013. Profiles and guides are to be updated by March 2016; and
- SETAs must provide information on the steps taken to expose prospective learners to work in their sector.

A component of the current process of preparing a career guidance framework is related to information. SETAs are stakeholders in this process and are required to take part so that they can understand what their roles and responsibilities are going to be in terms of providing career- and labour market-related information.

7.6 Statutory bodies

7.6.1 National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)

The NYDA provides career guidance services under the function known as “youth advisory and information services”. The career guidance service is offered at the 13 full-service branches across the country and is seen as one of the first ports of call for youth. People usually walk in and a career guidance practitioner conducts a one-on-one interview with the person. Based on the outcomes of the career guidance programme/advice, people are then referred to other units working with job-preparedness programmes, entrepreneurship development, loans, life skills training and job placement.

Group career guidance is also offered to learners at schools and adults in church and community groups. In order to conduct group career guidance with learners, the NYDA has developed its own career guidance booklet aligned to the Life Orientation Curriculum (the booklet aligns with the career choices learning material of the curriculum). The NYDA has a close relationship with PACE Career Centre and uses PACE's information and self-assessment resources in its work with learners and adults. It also has an agreement with SAQA to get access to any learning- and career-related information prepared by SAQA.

Each of the 13 full-services branches has at least one career guidance practitioner. These practitioners are trained by PACE (the training entails a one-week accredited course). Refresher courses are also offered to practitioners. The aim of the refresher courses is to provide career guidance practitioners with enhanced knowledge and experience relating to critical career guidance issues (issues such as assisting learners with the choice of school subjects and assisting unemployed youth to better their skills in order to enter the labour market).

7.6.2 South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)

SAQA is mandated by the NQF Act of 2008 to:

- oversee the further development and implementation of the NQF;
- advance the objectives of the NQF; and,
- co-ordinate the sub-frameworks.

In order to realise the objectives of the NQF, SAQA has established certain policies, processes and services. Of relevance to career development are *inter alia* Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL), credit accumulation and transfer (CAT), the evaluation of foreign qualifications, CAS and the NCAP.

SAQA has developed a policy⁶⁵ for RPL. Through this policy, SAQA provides principles, criteria and guidelines for sectoral planning, design and implementation of RPL. The NQF objectives that specifically speak to RPL are: facilitate access to and mobility and progression within education, training and career paths; and accelerate redress of past unfair discrimination in education, training and employment opportunities. The process of RPL supported by SAQA in the first 10 years of its implementation entails the following:⁶⁶

- Identifying what the candidate knows and can do;
- Matching the candidate's skills, knowledge and experience to specific standards and the associated assessment criteria of a qualification;
- Assessing the candidate against those standards; and
- Crediting the candidate for skills, knowledge and experience built up through formal, informal and non-formal learning that occurred in the past.

SAQA is mandated to develop policy and criteria for CAT. CAT involves being awarded actual credits for formal study, to exempt the holders of this credit from repeating similar study unnecessarily. SAQA also has the task of evaluating educational qualifications that have been obtained in education and training systems of countries other than South Africa. People with foreign qualifications who wish to attend South African education institutions or who wish to enter the South African labour market apply to SAQA to have their qualifications evaluated, and assigned an NQF level. The Directorate for Foreign Qualifications Evaluation and Advisory Services is responsible for this function.

65 SAQA. 2002. The Recognition of Prior Learning in the context of the South African National Qualifications Framework.

66 SAQA. 2002. The Recognition of Prior Learning in the context of the South African National Qualifications Framework.

The NQF is embedded in the notion of lifelong learning, implying lifelong career guidance. In 2008, SAQA realised that one of the critical cross-field outcomes for all qualifications is “exploring education and career opportunities” across the lifespan and that learners have to find their way through the education and training systems as they make work and life choices and build learning and career paths.⁶⁷ The question was asked: “What navigational tools are there to help learners in all age groups to explore education- and career opportunities?”⁶⁸ SAQA then commenced with an exploration process and discussions to determine the state of career guidance in the country.

During this process, SAQA conducted an environmental scan⁶⁹ of career guidance services in the country and arranged consultative career guidance meetings with a small, select group of stakeholders such as the departments of education and labour, PACE, and individual career guidance experts. In addition, 300 career guidance practitioners from schools, workplaces, higher education, communities, the departments of labour and education and the private sector were involved in discussions. The outcome was a strong recommendation for SAQA to explore the establishment of a national initiative that could contribute to what is being done by the government, the private sector and civil society. SAQA then further investigated setting up a national helpline, along the lines of Learndirect in the United Kingdom or the Careers Service helpline in New Zealand. It was envisioned at the time that such a helpline would work closely with all the career guidance initiatives across the country.⁷⁰

In his Budget Speech of 2010, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande, announced the establishment of a national, comprehensive, independent career service to support the implementation of the NQF, the NSDS and the HRDSA. The Minister emphasised that a national, comprehensive, independent career helpline was urgently needed for youth, students, under-employed and unemployed citizens to help them navigate their career development paths through the complex array of opportunities and possibilities. The Minister also referred to ignorance and misinformation resulting in expensive, impractical training, a high drop-out rate and failure. Mismatches of people, study and work opportunities are a costly burden on government, the labour force and education services. The shortage of scarce skills needs optimal rationalisation of worker- and scarce skills opportunities.

SAQA submitted a project funding proposal to the NSF in March 2009. The proposal was subsequently updated on 20 May 2010 and approved by the NSF on 16 September 2010. The CAS is today seen as a flagship project of the Ministry of Higher Education and Training and the beginning of the process of building the national system of career guidance through a partnership with SAQA, which is in a process of building up the core components of the national service.⁷¹

Currently, the primary components of the CAS project are the following:⁷²

- A website

The website is the central portal for information related to career development and a link to some existing information in South Africa. The website is used by both career advisors and individuals

67 SAQA. 2009. *Career Guidance Challenges and Opportunities*.

68 Ibid.

69 Flederman P. 2008. Navigational Tools for Learners, Really? What is Available, What Are the Challenges and What Should Be Done?

70 SAQA. 2009. *Career Guidance Challenges and Opportunities*.

71 Official opening address of the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training Republic of South Africa on the occasion of the International Career Guidance Conference at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-21 October 2011.

72 SAQA, 2011, CAS strategic plan.

- A Helpline
The helpline is an integral part of the CAS and access is built on existing technologies. It is housed at SAQA
- Social network
Social networking is done by using available web2.0 technologies that are in common use such as Facebook and MXit
- Walk-in centres
At this stage, there is only one walk-in centre at SAQA House
- Social marketing campaigns
Social marketing about the importance of career advice is aimed at the broadest possible communities in the country. Under the brand name “*Khetha: make the right choice, decide your future*”, examples of social marketing activities include producing publications, brochures, and newspaper inserts and adverts; participating in career exhibitions and workshops, particularly in rural and disadvantaged communities; conducting radio interviews and adverts; running a radio campaign that is broadcast in 10 official languages (except English) in the SABC African Languages radio stations weekly for 48 weeks, primarily aimed at listeners in rural and remote areas who have little or no access to information on qualifications and careers.

The staff consists of a group of career advisors working at the helpline and attending to walk-ins at SAQA House.

Another significant development currently is the development of the National Career Advice Portal through a DHET-SAQA partnership. The system will comprise four primary components: learning pathways, a learning directory, an e-portfolio function, and an occupational information centre. These components will be linked to the CAS website as a self-help service available to the general public.

7.7 Non-governmental services

During the 1990s, NGOs in the career guidance sector were very active. A national association of career guidance NGOs was established in 1991, known as the “South African Vocational Guidance and Education Association” (SAVGEA). This organisation was very proactive and by 1994, SAVGEA had more than 20 members, organisations that provided a range of career guidance services throughout the country.

After democratisation in 1994, there was a shift in donor funding priorities which forced SAVGEA to close. Three of the NGOs working in the field were very well known in career guidance circles. They are the Careers Research and Information Centre in Cape Town, the Careers Resource Centre in Pietermaritzburg, and the Centre for Entrepreneurship and Education Development (formerly Durban South Career Centre) in Durban. Although the NGO sector is not that active anymore, many of the policies and programmes developed by the sector have been incorporated into government policies, and several people who worked for the NGO sector now occupy positions in government.

7.8 Private services

The private sector’s career guidance services are offered mostly by psychologists in private practice, private companies such as PACE, and private employment agencies.

Psychologists work as clinical, counselling, educational or industrial psychologists. Most of these psychologists, except for clinical psychologists, usually offer career guidance and counselling as part

of their array of services. It is common knowledge that psychologists use psychometric assessments, individual counselling and self-assessment extensively in order to assist clients to choose appropriate careers. In addition, private psychologists are often employed by private schools to conduct group guidance and counselling sessions for pupils at school. The school normally covers these costs.

There are four main reasons why PACE, as a private company, is mentioned in this framework: it has established itself as a leader in the development of career information and the provision of services; it has committed itself to partnerships with government in order to train career guidance teachers and career counsellors and to make information resources available; it is the founding member of SACDA, a body that could set standards for career guidance services and practitioners; and it is the representative for the International Association for Vocational and Educational Guidance (IAEVG) within the SADC region.

In terms of the Skills Development Act, all private employment agencies are required to register with the DoL. The department is responsible for the quality assurance of these agencies. However, it should be noted that only a small number of private employment agencies provide career guidance services. All others provide only recruitment services for employers. Some of these agencies provide wide-ranging human resource services to private employers. These services include *inter alia* selection, career development for employees, the development of retention strategies for employers and career-transition services for companies undergoing restructuring. Selection services will typically include assessment of potential job applicants and limited career counselling. Career development for employees in companies would include counselling for individuals to assist them to enhance their careers within the company.

7.9 Challenges

From the discussion in Section 7 it is evident that many of the challenges that stakeholders experience in providing career guidance-related services relate to the lack of a framework for leadership, coordination and guidelines. Most of the stakeholders are trying to fulfil their mandates on their own. There is evidence of only limited coordinated cooperation between the stakeholders.

The experience shows that schools are not able to provide sufficient and comprehensive assistance to learners when they choose school subjects or study fields. The main reasons are that Life Orientation teachers are not adequately trained to conduct career guidance and that most schools have limited resources in terms of career- and labour market-related information.

The same is true of the post-school sector. It seems that student support units at FET colleges suffer in terms of the lack of capacity, knowledge, skills and information and it is reported that many of these units do not even carry out career guidance at all. And the HEIs, although they have a history of providing career guidance services, lack, for example, information about the demands in the labour market and placement opportunities. Neither has SAQA's CAS project reached the stage where it can be presented as a national service.

In summary, it seems that some of the key challenges are the following:

- The provision of comprehensive and coordinated career guidance at critical stages such as: Grade Nine when learners choose subjects, Grade 12 when learners either access post-school education and training institutions or job opportunities, and after graduation in terms of placement;
- The provision of comprehensive targeted career guidance services (for example, for disabled people);

- The systematic collection of career- and labour market-related information;
- The provision of comprehensive, standardised and quality assured career- and labour market-related information;
- Sufficient institutional capacity (human resources) for delivering comprehensive career guidance services; and
- The competence of practitioners delivering the services.

A concerted effort by all stakeholders in the career guidance field is needed for the development of a coordinated framework and an operational national career guidance plan to overcome the challenges.

8 Leadership

The lack of strategic leadership in the field of career information, guidance and counselling has been mentioned in previous sections of this document. As previously discussed, up to now, no body or entity has coordinated these services or provided leadership for the career guidance sector in general. The current drive of developing a framework for the coordinated management and provision of career information and guidance services, led by the DHET, may change this situation. The DHET — along with the institutions that it is responsible for (i.e. FET colleges, higher education institutions and SETAs) — is positioned at the nexus between the formal education system and the labour market. The DHET is therefore well positioned to involve all key stakeholders and take up the leadership for the coordination of the provision of career guidance information and services in South Africa.

In the process of preparing a coherent career guidance policy framework and plan, the Minister of Higher Education and Training has established delivery agreements with an array of government departments. The process of establishing key leadership and a coordinated vision and effort for all the sectors involved has just commenced. However, this process requires the completion of deliverables or outputs in a specific timeframe and the DHET is accountable for achieving the outputs. (The last output must be met by March 2014.)

The question arises as to how South Africa ensures the continuation of leadership and the cooperation and coordination between all the key stakeholders after the deliverables or outputs have been achieved. The suggestion is that the DHET takes up the leadership for the management and coordination of career guidance and information in South Africa. In this way and with the assistance of SAQA, the DHET will be able to establish a national career guidance or career development forum. The main aim of such a forum will be to bring all the key stakeholders together in an institutional structure in order to ensure that coordination and collaboration are sustained.

9 National career guidance forum

9.1 Motivation for cooperation and coordination mechanisms

International practices have shown that the establishment of a national career guidance forum is an efficient mechanism for cooperation and coordination. The European Lifelong Guidance Policy

Network (ELGPN) indicates that a national forum of this nature should satisfy the requirements set out below:⁷³

- The forum should involve, or at least be recognised, by government;
- The membership of the forum should not be limited to government departments (the public sector);
- The forum should span the fields of education and employment; and
- The forum should address the career development of youth and adults.

Based on international experience, the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) has outlined the following key points or considerations for countries wishing to establish career development forums:⁷⁴

- To link lifelong learning, employment and social inclusion strategies;
- To clearly articulate the role of lifelong guidance and career development as a public good in relation to all these strategies;
- To identify the strategic leader(s) and other strong stakeholders;
- To agree on definitions and terminology;
- To carefully and purposefully select the participants;
- To identify goals, roles and responsibilities or tasks;
- To clearly define the relationship with the government (at all spheres);
- To establish a secretariat that is independent or at least “ring-fenced”;
- To be aware of the risks of role conflict; and
- To work from the viewpoint of the individual citizen, knowing the public benefits of doing so.

The stage of development of a country (in terms of the establishment of a forum) will determine the relevance of the key considerations.

ELGPN emphasises that such a forum or similar mechanism can operate at one or more of the following four levels:⁷⁵

- Level 1: Communication
Communication might include exchanging information and exploring possibilities for cooperation and coordination.
- Level 2: Consultation
This might include more detailed discussion of possibilities for cooperation and coordination.
- Level 3: Cooperation
Cooperation in this regard is between partners within the existing structures. This level of collaboration might be largely informal in nature and based on a cooperation agreement, with decision-making powers being retained by each partner.
- Level 4: Coordination
In order to coordinate efficiently, it is likely that a coordinating structure will be required in which roles and mandates (operational powers) are spelled out clearly, binding the forum through agreements such as memoranda of understanding (MoUs).

73 The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN). 2009/2010. *Lifelong Guidance Policies*; Work in Progress. Jyväskylä: ELGPN.

74 Ibid.

75 Ibid.

Some of the key elements mentioned by the CEDEFOP for the motivation of establishing a forum of this nature are the following:⁷⁶

- To share resources;
- To coordinate the work in order to efficiently use the resources;
- To identify gaps in service provision;
- To develop common standards of service;
- To standardise training of career guidance practitioners; and
- To present a coherent image of career guidance services to the public.

The first coordination mechanisms in career guidance or national forums for guidance were established in the 1980s and early 1990s (the Danish National Council for Vocational Guidance, the UK Guidance Council and the more informal Finnish ministerial working groups on guidance).⁷⁷ By 2008, national forums existed, although at various stages of development, in 24 European countries (i.e. Austria, Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Norway, Poland, Romania, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden and the UK).

If South Africa should decide to establish such a forum, it would provide the mechanism for national communication, consultation, cooperation and coordination that we direly need. The current initiative for cooperation under the leadership of the DHET is actually already a prelude to the establishment of a national career guidance forum.

9.2 Tasks of a national career guidance forum

The typical tasks that a national career guidance forum can and should undertake are *inter alia* the following:⁷⁸

- Improving communication
 - Providing a forum for discussion on policy issues
 - Establishing a common definition of career guidance
 - Developing shared terminology for career guidance
- Encouraging collaboration
 - Encouraging inter-stakeholder cooperation and coordination on specific activities
 - Taking on initiatives that include several services or sectors
- Identifying citizens' needs
 - Mapping services and identifying gaps and challenges
 - Managing research regarding the impact of services for clients
- Improving the quality of services
 - Developing quality standards and quality assurance systems
 - Developing competence frameworks and accreditation systems for career guidance practitioners
- Influencing policy
- Collaborating with peer international organisations.

⁷⁶ European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. 2008. *Establishing and Developing National Lifelong Guidance Policy Forums*. Thessaloniki: CEDEFOP.

⁷⁷ Ibid.

⁷⁸ Ibid.

9.3 Approach to establish a national career development forum

One of the major issues is whether a national career forum should be established through a top-down or bottom-up process. A top-down approach will entail the establishment of such a forum by government. (It could be through legislation.) A bottom-up approach will see organisations outside of government establishing such a forum and ensuring that linkages can be formed with government. The advantages of the top-down approach are:⁷⁹

- It provides a funding base;
- It provides a direct link with government policy; and
- It makes it easier to secure selective (purposeful) participation.

The advantages of the bottom-up approach are described as:⁸⁰

- It may be more sustainable, especially when there are changes in government and government priorities;
- It has more independence in terms of action; and
- It may produce a greater sense of ownership and lead to better motivated and committed participation.

The two approaches are not necessarily unconnected; they can be seen as different processes, which may be combined or alternated in varying ways to serve the needs and realities of a country. However, the current initiatives of the DHET and SAQA (the development of a policy framework and the progress of the CAS into a national career advice service) suggest that South Africa would benefit by following a top-down process.

9.4 Formal Status of a national career guidance forum

A country has to decide on the form the forum should take. Different types of forums are found in the European examples – ranging from statutory councils to more informal, experimental and temporary arrangements. CEDEFOP emphasises that it is important for a country to select an option that will serve the needs and circumstances of the participants. Examples of types of forums that exist are set out below:⁸¹

- **Statutory council**
A statutory council is a legal entity and is established by an Act of parliament which determines its mandate. The establishment of such a council is usually a lengthy process. However, the advantages of such a body lie in its permanence, legitimacy and independence. Examples of countries that have established such bodies are Denmark (the National Council for Vocational Guidance) and Greece (the National Centre for Vocational Guidance).
- **Government-initiated body**
A government-initiated body is usually found when a working group is set up by one or more of the ministries/departments. The activities of such a working group can be temporary or indefinite in duration. It is usually found that such structures have some legitimacy because of their relationship with or proximity to the relevant ministry or ministries. A further advantage is that a government-initiated body often has access to resources from those particular ministries to carry out its work. Examples of countries that have established such bodies are Lithuania (the

79 The European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network. 2009/2010. *Lifelong Guidance Policies; Work in Progress*. Jyväskylä: ELGPN.

80 Ibid.

81 European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training. 2008. *Establishing and Developing National Lifelong Guidance Policy Forums*. Thessaloniki: CEDEFOP

National Career Guidance Council) and Romania (the Romanian National Lifelong Guidance Forum).

- Voluntary association

Voluntary associations are usually more practical and easy to form than government structures and the major advantage is their independence from government. However, such structures may encounter challenges in terms of legitimacy. An example of such a forum can be found in Germany (the National Forum for Guidance in Education, Career and Employment).

- Experimental/project-based body

In some instances, countries find it difficult to establish official or semi-official forums and set up a platform for cooperation in the form of a project. Such an approach is usually only temporary. However, it can provide the space for stakeholders to investigate the different formats of forums before they make the choice to establish a more formal and long-term structure. An example of a country that has established such a forum is Estonia (Estonian National Guidance Policy Forum).

- Regional forums

Regional forums are usually in addition to national forums and policy-coordinating mechanisms. Examples of countries that have established such forums are Finland, Scotland and Spain.

9.5 The South African context

The current initiative for cooperation under the leadership of the DHET and the partnership between the DHET and SAQA to develop the CAS into a national career advice service is already a prelude to the establishment of a national career guidance forum. In the current context, the establishment of a career guidance forum can be a process of evolution.

The following strategy is suggested:

1. Use the policy framework process to establish a government-initiated body;
2. Carefully and purposefully invite the key stakeholders under Outcome 5.1.1 to be part of such a forum (such as the DoL and the DBE);
3. Carefully and purposefully invite other stakeholders that have a direct interest (such as SETAs, HESA, NYDA, SSCSA, private entities and NGOs);
4. Establish a shared definition and terminology;
5. Identify the roles and responsibilities of each of the stakeholders;
6. Investigate the different formats or types of forums in order to choose the format that will suit South Africa the best over the longer term; and
7. Allow the forum to develop.

10 Cooperation, coordination and partnerships

This section refers to different levels of cooperation, coordination and partnerships between stakeholders. Examples are given of cooperation between the different career guidance delivery agents that is already taking place. The expected roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders under Outcome 5.1.1 are listed (only the stakeholders that participated in the DHET and SAQA workshop on 9 December 2011) and possible ways of establishing cooperation and coordination in future are mentioned.

10.1 Examples of current cooperation

Some of the examples of current cooperation between stakeholders involved in career guidance-related activities are listed below:

- Schools
 - HEIs, SETAs, HESA, the NYDA, NGOs and private companies take responsibility for visiting schools to provide career talks and organising career events and exhibitions.
 - HEIs, HESA, SETAs and private companies distribute career-related information to schools.
 - PACE and the ETDP SETA train Life Orientation teachers (courses accredited by the ETDP SETA) to improve their knowledge and skills regarding career guidance.
- FET colleges
 - SAQA has signed MoUs with FET colleges to build capacity and enhance the resources of walk-in centres at their campuses. This project is still in progress.
 - The South African College Principals Organisation (SACPO) is currently engaged with industry in an initiative towards Continuing Professional Development (CPD) for college lecturers and students.
 - HESA and SETAs distribute career-related information to FET colleges.
- NYDA
 - The NYDA has already entered into partnerships with SAQA and the Manufacturing, Engineering and Related Services SETA (merSETA) in terms of assistance with information and the delivery of career guidance services at their full-service offices.
- SAQA
 - SAQA is already interacting with SETAs at the NQF Communication Practitioners' Forum to forge much closer collaboration between SAQA and SETAs. One of the aims of this forum is for these entities to collaborate in hosting and participating in career guidance initiatives.
 - SAQA is preparing a proposal to forge partnerships towards career counselling in schools, to place more focus on career guidance in the curriculum, and to possibly have dedicated counsellors available in schools.
 - SAQA has supported the establishment of SACDA.
- DoL
 - The DoL is investigating interaction and cooperation with the DHET in order to obtain information on skills programmes so that users of career guidance services at the labour centres can access the information (since the skills development function was transferred to the DHET, the DoL no longer has information on skills programmes).
 - The DoL is investigating interaction and cooperation with municipalities in order to use their community halls and libraries as career guidance centres.
 - The DoL is investigating interaction and cooperation with the Department of Trade and Industry (dti) in order to assist clients with information on the establishment of small businesses and co-operatives.
- SETAs
 - The Services SETA supported SAQA in the early development of the CAS.
 - The ETDP SETA has established a partnership with the North West Province Department of Education to develop the knowledge and skills of Grades 9 to 12 Life Orientation teachers.
 - The merSETA has established a MoU with SAQA relating to the building of capacity of the staff of career advice services.
 - SETAs provide information regarding occupations and opportunities in their different sectors to schools and FET colleges.

It is evident that there are already good examples of cooperation and partnerships between stakeholders that are involved in career guidance-related activities. However, there is a need to develop more specific coherence in terms of resources, communication and collaboration.

10.2 Roles and responsibilities of stakeholders

Although all stakeholders have their roles and responsibilities in terms of fulfilling their own mandates, specific roles and responsibilities have to be assigned to stakeholders in terms of achieving Output 5.1.1. The following section lists the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders that participated in the DHET and SAQA workshop. One of the objectives of the workshop was to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the different stakeholders. The departments that did not participate are referred to as “other departments” at the end of the section (staff from these departments did not attend and therefore did not share their anticipated roles and responsibilities with the rest of the group).

10.2.1 DHET

The DHET has the following responsibilities:

- To lead the process of developing a framework for the management and provision of career guidance information and services in South Africa;
- To lead the process of implementing the framework;
- To lead, with SAQA, the process of establishing a national career guidance forum (see Section 9);
- To develop a framework for standards of career- and labour market-related information
 - To develop data templates to accommodate career- and labour market-related information received from stakeholders
 - To develop, adjust and/or expand databases
 - To mine data
 - To ensure that data aligns with standardised systems such as the Organised Framework for Occupations (OFO)
 - To house data
 - To provide data to career guidance delivery partners;
- To take the authority for standardised career- and labour market-related information in South Africa;
- To ensure that career guidance is offered at technical colleges by providing the necessary resources (i.e. financial, infrastructure, staff);
- To ensure that student support officers are adequately trained to conduct career guidance;
- To ensure that career guidance is offered at student counselling service units at HEIs;
- To ensure that career counsellors that provide student counselling services are adequately trained; and
- To ensure that funding is provided over the longer term to progress the CAS project into a national career advice service.

10.2.2 SAQA

SAQA has the following responsibilities:

- To ensure that the NQF stays relevant in terms of serving as the “bridge” for lifelong learning and career development;
- To maintain the NLRD;
- To lead, with the DHET, the process of establishing a national career guidance forum (see Section 9);

- To develop the CAS (with the assistance of the DHET) into a national comprehensive career advice service for all citizens in South Africa at any point in their lives and living in any part of the country;
- To ensure that a national careers advice service:
 - Is free of charge
 - Is accessible for all citizens through various channels
 - Applies a career development framework that can assist an individual at any stage (lifelong) of his/her life with career-related decisions
 - Provides quality-assured information
 - Employs career advisors or career guidance practitioners who are competent; and
- To continue assisting the SACDA in its quest to ensure quality assurance of career guidance practice and the competence of practitioners.

10.2.3 DBE

The DBE has the following responsibilities:

- To provide for a Life Orientation curriculum that includes career guidance;
- To ensure that the career guidance curriculum and teaching material are relevant;
- To ensure that every learner receives assistance when choosing subjects in Grade 9;
- To ensure that every school leaver receives career guidance in terms of further or higher education studies or accessing work opportunities; and
- To ensure that Life Orientation teachers are competent to provide career guidance and, if not, to ensure that every school has access to the services of a career guidance practitioner.

10.2.4 DoL

The DoL has the following responsibilities:

- To provide employment services in general (such as the registration of the unemployed);
- To provide career guidance services;
- To provide psychometric assessment for direct placement;
- To provide special employment programmes;
- To maintain the Employment Services of South Africa (ESSA) system; and
- To make available any career- and labour market-related information created by the DoL.

10.2.5 SETAs

The SETAs have the following responsibilities:

- To submit information about occupations in their sector in a standard format as requested by the DHET;
- To provide information on the steps taken to expose prospective learners to work in their sector; and
- To accredit providers (specifically the ETDP SETA) to offer courses and qualifications that relate to the training of Life Orientation teachers, career information officers, career advisors and career guidance counsellors.

10.2.6 HESA

HESA has the following responsibilities:

- To provide information on study opportunities at and admission requirements to HEIs;
- To provide information on study opportunities at and admission requirements to FET colleges; and
- To maintain an active website.

10.2.7 SACPO

SACPO has the following responsibilities:

- To build the capacity (staff, knowledge and skills) to deliver career guidance at student support units at FET colleges; and
- To provide information on FET colleges to schools and the public.

10.2.8 SACDA

SACDA has the following responsibilities:

- To promote career guidance in South Africa;
- To establish and maintain minimum standards for career guidance delivery;
- To promote the role of Life Orientation teachers, career information officers, career advisors and career guidance practitioners/career counsellors;
- To improve the continued professional development of Life Orientation teachers, career information officers, career advisors and career guidance practitioners/career counsellors;
- To assist the development and education of members as professionals; and
- To respond to government policy initiatives.

10.2.9 National Artisan Moderation Body

The National Artisan Moderation Body has the following responsibilities:

- To coordinate artisan development in South Africa;
- To rationalise and list trades in the Government Gazette;
- To keep a national register of artisans; and
- To develop and monitor implementation of trade-testing regulations.

10.2.10 Other departments' part of the agreement on Output 5.1.1

Other departments have the following responsibility:

- To use the DHET's framework for standards in terms of career- and labour market-related information.

10.2 The way forward

The ideal scenario for a country is to have a comprehensive national career advice service accessible to all at any stage of their lives to assist with career-related decisions (see Section 12). If a comprehensive national career advice service is operational it will contribute to the following:

- To make comprehensive career- and labour market-related information available to individuals at schools, at FET colleges, at HEIs and to the unemployed and those working in the labour market; and
- To provide information, advice and guidance to citizens through distance- as well as face-to-face mediums and channels.

However, South Africa is not at such a state yet. (Section 12 discusses the issues regarding a national career advice service.) Until the CAS has progressed into a fully fledged national career advice service, stakeholders will have to commit themselves to establishing mechanisms of coherent cooperation and collaboration in order to strengthen the delivery of career guidance- and information services.

Some suggestions are made here in terms of cooperation and collaboration. These suggestions are in alignment with the requirements of Output 5.1.1, take the current initiatives for cooperation into consideration and keep in mind the different roles and responsibilities of the various stakeholders.

Policy

1. All the key stakeholders work together in order to assist the DHET to implement a policy framework for the coherent management and cooperation of career guidance information and services in South Africa.
2. All the key stakeholders such as the DHET, the DBE, the DoL and SAQA work together in order to keep policies relevant to integrate lifelong learning, education, training and work.

National Career Guidance Forum

3. All the key stakeholders cooperate with the DHET and SAQA to establish and join a National Career Guidance Forum. Such a forum will provide the structure and channel for the coherent management and cooperation of career guidance information and services in South Africa in future.

Funding

4. The DHET and SAQA work together in securing continuous funding in order to progress the CAS project into a comprehensive national career advice service.

Infrastructure for walk-in centres

5. Stakeholders make their infrastructure available as walk-in centres for the delivery of a national career advice service (labour centres of the DoL, the full-service branches of the NYDA, the student support offices at FET colleges, the offices of student counselling support services at HEIs, the mobile trucks of the DoL and libraries at municipalities).

Information

6. Public entities cooperate with the DHET under the agreement for Output 5.1.1 to use standard formats provided by the DHET for information collection, capturing and provision.
7. Public entities cooperate with the DHET in providing career- and labour market-related information in order to build the repository of information (this will fall under the Labour Market Intelligence Project – see Section 11).
8. The DHET and SAQA form partnerships with private entities that have established themselves in developing quality career- and labour market-related information.
9. Stakeholders preparing and publishing career- and labour market-related information should provide it to schools and FET colleges.

Building capacity

10. The DHET, the DBE, SAQA, SACDA, and the ETDP SETA should work together to create a tier of competent Life Orientation teachers, career information officers, career advisors and career guidance practitioners (see Section 13).
11. This will entail the following:
 - a. Training of Life Orientation teachers;
 - b. Training of student support officers at FET colleges;
 - c. Training of student counselling services officers;
 - d. Training of career information and career advisors on the CAS project; and
 - e. Training of the NYDA career guidance officers.

Job creation

12. The DHET, the DBE, SAQA and SETAs should work together to prepare a proposal to access the Jobs Fund in order to create a tier of career information officers, career advisors and career

guidance practitioners/career counsellors working at schools, FET colleges, HEIs, labour centres, NYDA full-service offices, the CAS helpline and walk-in centres.

Ensuring quality

13. Stakeholders should become members of SACDA (SACDA is going to develop standards for practice and practitioners).
14. SACDA should prepare standards for practice and practitioners.

Training of practitioners

15. DBE, SACDA and SAQA should work together to train sufficient Life Orientation teachers so that at every school, learners will have access to career guidance services.
16. The DHET, SACDA and SAQA should work together to train sufficient student support officers so that every student at an FET college will have access to career guidance services.
17. SACDA, DHET and SAQA should work together to train career information officers, career advisors and career practitioners to work in the walk-in centres of a national career advice service (use current capacity at labour centres, NYDA offices and student support services, but also build extra capacity by creating new jobs and ensuring that South Africa has a corps of career guidance practitioners that are competent).

Strengthening the career guidance curriculum for schools

18. Stakeholders specialising in career development and career guidance knowledge should assist the DBE in developing a relevant curriculum with regard to career guidance at school level.

11 Career- and labour market-related information

11.1 Introduction

Career- and labour market-related information plays a central role in career guidance and is seen as key to labour market efficiency. Without comprehensive educational, occupational and labour market information, it is impossible to provide effective career guidance services. The quality of career information, its effective management, the dissemination or provision of the information and its accessibility are the most important issues to consider in a policy framework of this nature.

In a World Bank study⁸² conducted in 14 countries it was found that the lack of career information was one of the major challenges for the delivery of efficient career guidance services. Moreover, if information is available, there are often limitations in accessing it. In spite of the progress of access to resources through ICT, such access is still restricted in many developing countries, especially in schools. It was found that in the absence of the provision of information by government, the private sector has taken the initiative for publishing career information. (Chile, Poland, Romania, South Africa and Russia are mentioned in this regard.) However, this information usually includes a description of occupations and education guides (mainly on universities). Information on the labour market is generally absent. In policy terms, the quality assurance of information of this nature is an issue.

The study further detected that even in countries where some information exists, institutions creating this information do not always share or distribute it widely enough. A common practice is for the information

82 Watts AG, Fretwell DH. 2004. *Public Policies for Career Development. Case Studies and Emerging Issues for Designing Career Information and Guidance Systems in Developing and Transition Economies*. Washington: The World Bank.

to be available mainly for use by the provider itself and not accessible to a wider community of career guidance providers. The consequence is threefold: ineffective use of national resources, duplication of effort in the process of development, and failure to take full advantage of publicly funded resources.

In most OECD⁸³ countries, the picture looks different; governments take authority for funding the collection, organisation, linking, systematising and distribution of career information. Different practices are found in this regard. One of the most common practices is the formation of partnerships between government and the private sector. There are also a few examples where governments have established separate agencies to take responsibility for career- and labour market-related information (France, Denmark, the US and the Netherlands). Experience in these countries has shown that such agencies can coordinate the collection of information across different portfolios and levels of government. Such agencies also make it easier to link different types of information or to compile it into a single source.

11.2 The South African context

In terms of career- and labour market-related information, there is currently a drive, specifically by the DHET, to attend urgently to matters of standard setting for information, coordination of information, utilising information for efficient planning and the provision of information for wider use. This is evident in the following:

- The deliverables required in Output 5.1, of which the development of a framework for information standards and the framework for the coordination of career guidance information and services is part;
- The Labour Market Intelligence Project, including the development of a repository of career- and labour market-related information; and
- The reference to these endeavours again in the Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training.

The objective of Output 5.1 is to establish a credible national institutional mechanism for skills planning and to integrate the DHET data systems with data from all institutions in the higher education and training system, including data from universities, colleges and adult education facilities, levy-grant institutions, the Quality Councils, SAQA, the NSFAS and several government departments. The DHET has commissioned a consortium of research institutions, led by the Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC), to look at the enhancement of data collection and analysis in order to better the understanding of the education and training system and the needs of the labour market. The information thus generated will be used to: guide policy and strategy formulation, implementation, monitoring and evaluation; support the planning of capacity building in institutions and national or provincial systems; enhance policy and strategy coordination across previously divided sub-systems; and assist in career guidance and career development by helping people to make more informed career and study choices.

The success of the information-related initiatives of the DHET will result in the following advantages for career guidance information and services in South Africa:

- Information will be standardised (the DHET provides a framework for standards);
- Information could be centralised;
- Information will be easily accessible; and
- Information will be user friendly.

83 Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2004. *Career Guidance and Public Policy: Bridging the Gap*. Paris: OECD.

Furthermore, if the conditions mentioned above are achieved in terms of career- and labour market-related information, the provision of comprehensive information through a national career advice service is in reach.

12 A national career advice service

12.1 Introduction

There are multiple examples of countries that have established national career advice and/or guidance services. Two good examples are the Next Step⁸⁴ and Connexions Service⁸⁵ careers services in England (a new service that will build on Next Step and Connexions called “National Careers Advice Service”⁸⁶ was launched in April 2012) and Careers New Zealand.⁸⁷

International experience shows that the prerequisites for a national career advice service are:

- The establishment of a quality standard that will assure users that the services delivered are of a high quality; and
- The provision of competent career guidance workers through common professional standards and codes of ethics that are maintained by appropriate initial training and CPD (Continuous Professional Development).

The potential of ICT as a delivery mode of national career advice services is widely acknowledged.⁸⁸ In terms of career guidance, ICT has generally been used to help meet the demand of users in:

- Delivering information;
- Providing an automated interaction; and
- Providing a channel for communication.

One of the major advantages highlighted by Watts is the potential of ICT to serve as a mechanism in the development of a more integrated lifelong guidance system:

It could thus be the means through which service providers could transform their separate, sector-based and provider-centred offerings into a user-centred lifelong guidance system, with the website (including the user’s e-portfolio) conceptually at the centre, supported by coordinated sectoral provision.⁸⁹

The advantages of using ICT in a national career advice service could *inter alia* be the following:⁹⁰

84 Next Step provides free and confidential information and advice to support adults in England to make appropriate decisions on a full range of learning and work opportunities.

85 Connexions Service offers advice to young people aged 13 to 19 living in England. It provides advice on learning, work, housing and money. It also provides support for young people up to the age of 25 who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

86 The all-age careers service will be delivered through a range of channels – online, telephone and in the community – with prioritised intensive face-to-face guidance.

87 Careers New Zealand is the government agency responsible for leading the career development of all citizens of New Zealand. The service is delivered to people of all ages and is web- and phone-based.

88 UK Commission for Employment and Skills (UKCES). 2010. *Careering through the web*.

89 Watts AG. 2010. Policy Issues Relating to Connexion Service the Use of ICT in Lifelong Career Guidance. *Career Research and Development (the NICEC Journal)*, No.25, 2010,p.6.

90 Ibid.

- Providing the opportunity for learners to start using the web portal as part of their school curriculum and for setting up their e-portfolios and using these throughout their lives to manage their own career development;
- Providing training to all career guidance teachers, career advisors and career practitioners working at different institutions to use the web portal as part of their service provision;
- Enabling the websites to include 'hot links' to interactive e-counselling support through telephone, web chat or email; and
- Referring to supportive face-to-face career counselling resources wherever they exist, thus making the lifelong guidance system transparent to the user.

However, concern is also raised by experts working in the field of career development and guidance that so-called "e-guidance" is ahead of career development theory.⁹¹ The concern is that not much attention has been given to the pedagogy of virtual careers learning and advice. A need is expressed to investigate how effectively virtual careers learning and advice can be combined with other forms of careers learning. In addition, the context of a country like South Africa also poses an access problem; many citizens and communities do not have access to ICT infrastructure such as computers. However, in this case, a channel like a mobile phone makes information more accessible.

12.2 The South African context

12.2.1 Current situation

South Africa has shown its intent to develop and establish a national career advice service. In the event of establishing such a service, the following matters emerge: policy, funding, capacity, standards, the general approach and components of such a service.

It is very important that there be alignment between policy commitments, funding, building capacity and ensuring standards. Currently, the reference to a national career advice service occurs in ministerial speeches, the Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training and the agreement between the DHET and SAQA in terms of the CAS project. In his budget speech in 2010, the Minister of Higher Education and Training referred to a national career advice service:

The absence of adequate career guidance and information contributes to high dropout rates in post-schooling career choices. I am pleased to announce that by the end of June, SAQA will launch a comprehensive national career advice centre through the medium of a career development helpline. This model will be accessible to learners across the system and will require coordinated actions across a range of departments.⁹²

In the official opening address on the occasion of the International Career Guidance Conference at the Cape Town International Convention Centre in October 2011, which the Deputy-Director General of the DHET delivered on behalf of the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training, it was stated that:

The Career Advice Service is today a flagship project of the Ministry of Higher Education and Training. It is time we built a national system that will provide information and advice to people at any

91 International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP). 2011. Reports of the International Work Groups: *Transformation; and Proof it.*

92 Budget Vote speech by Minister of Higher Education and Training Dr Blade Nzimande: *In Memory of the Fallen Heroes and Heroines of the Seven Day War.* 25 May 2010.

stage of life! We have begun the process of building the national system of career guidance through a partnership with SAQA, which is establishing the core components of the national service.⁹³

In the recent Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training, a national system of career guidance is again mentioned:

The South African Qualifications Authority will continue to provide guidance and leadership on the development of the NQF. It will also continue to play a major role in the development and implementation of its newly developed national career guidance service, which is key to learner mobility.⁹⁴

As can be seen from these citations, SAQA has been tasked with establishing a national career advice service for the country. The CAS was launched in June 2010 and at the moment, has the status of a project in terms of a mandate and funding. (The funding agreement with the NSF is valid until 31 August 2013.) In order for the CAS to progress into a comprehensive national career advice service, the following measures are necessary:

- Linking the mandate to strong policy commitments;
- Securing continued funding;
- Ensuring that high priority is given to capacity building that will warrant the sustainability of a national service of this nature; and
- Establishing standards in order to assure users that they receive quality information and services through various channels and that career advisors and/or career guidance practitioners are competent in delivering these services.

In the South African context, a national career advice service should be embedded in concepts such as lifelong career development and a qualitative approach towards delivering services. In terms of lifelong career development, it has already been mentioned that this concept is embedded in policy agendas that relate to lifelong learning, workforce development and social inclusion (see Section 4) and that the NQF is seen as “a bridge to lifelong learning”. The bridge metaphor is used to emphasise access, mobility, progression and path (see Section 5). In terms of a qualitative approach, career guidance involves the use of a greater degree of subjectivity, personal opinions and perception, takes diversity and contextual issues into account and attempts to enable broader access to career advice services.⁹⁵

The comprehensive components of a national career advice service should include distance and face-to-face support. International experience shows that the distance component is highly dependent on ICT, providing information and advice through multi-channels such as the following: a web portal (using integrated Web2.0 to enable interactive activities through email and chat rooms); a helpline; and social network applications such as Facebook and MXit. Walk-in centres usually accommodate the face-to-face support where career advisors and/or career guidance practitioners are available on the premises. In Section 7.6.2, the current development of the National Career Advice Portal (NCAP) through a DHET-SAQA partnership is mentioned. This is significant progress in terms of establishing a national career

93 Official opening address on behalf of the Deputy Minister of Higher Education and Training Republic of South Africa on the occasion of the International Career Guidance Conference at the Cape Town International Convention Centre, Cape Town, South Africa, 19-21 October 2011, by Firoz Patel, Deputy-Director General in the Department of Higher Education and Training, p.8.

94 Department of Higher Education and Training. 2012. *Green Paper for Post-school Education and Training*, p.70.

95 Keevy J, Steenkamp S, West P. 2012. Career Development within the Context of the South African National Qualifications Framework. Article in progress for *South African Journal of Higher Education (SAJHE)* Vol. 25(6): Career Counselling in South African Institutions of Higher Learning in the 21st Century: Rediscovering the Potential of Qualitative Approaches.

guidance service. The system will comprise four primary components: learning pathways, a learning directory, an e-portfolio function and an occupational information centre.

12.2.2 The way forward

The initial setting up of the CAS was planned over three years (ending 31 August 2013) after which it is planned that the CAS will transfer to or progress into a self-supporting model over a further three years through sponsorships and being accommodated in the DHET budgeting structures. The current components of the CAS project are described in Section 7. The next phase of development for the CAS project is an initiative to develop a web-based mechanism that will assist citizens with their career development in terms of choosing suitable learning options and occupations. The online mechanism will consist of the following four components: a learning pathway portal, a learning directory, an occupation information centre and an e-portfolio system.

In order to deliver and sustain an integrated and comprehensive national career advice service for the country, stakeholders will have to collaborate in earnest. The following actions are necessary:

1. The establishment of a national career guidance forum under the leadership of the DHET and SAQA;
2. The establishment of a long-term relationship of cooperation, coordination and collaboration between all key stakeholders through the proposed forum;
3. The commitment of the DHET to ensure sustainable funding in order to progress the CAS project into a fully fledged national career advice service;
4. The continued commitment of SAQA (CAS) to use current career- and labour market-related information (provided either by public or private institutions) and additionally develop quality information (such as the databases on learning pathways, the learning directory and occupations) to be incorporated into the website;
5. The assurance that all information will be updated annually to ensure currency;
6. The intention to build the capacity of helpline staff working at SAQA (CAS);
7. The use of current infrastructure such as labour centres, the full-service branches of the NYDA, the student support offices at FET colleges, the offices of student counselling support services at HEIs, the mobile trucks of the DoL and libraries at municipalities as walk-in centres of a national career advice service;
8. The building of capacity by creating a tier of career information officers, career guidance advisors and career guidance practitioners/career counsellors that can deliver a face-to-face service at the walk-in centres (this could also serve as a job creation endeavour as mentioned in Section 10.3);
9. The use of existing accredited training initiatives (such as the one-day- and one-week courses accredited by the ETDP SETA) and future planned qualifications to build capacity; and
10. The setting of standards for quality of services and practitioners by the newly established SACDA.

13 Standard setting and quality assurance

Internationally, there has been growing recognition of the crucial role that career guidance plays in meeting educational-, labour market- and social justice goals. Consequently, there is an international trend towards developing minimum standards for career guidance services and minimum competency standards for career guidance practitioners. Setting of standards is a statement about whether something is good enough for a particular purpose. There is no perfect standard-setting method and decisions are made on the most important criteria for the circumstances. Standard setting is not enforceable but only

serves the purpose of recommending standards. The application of certain standards may contribute to the quality of a service that is being delivered.

In career guidance practice, the aims of any mechanism to enhance quality are threefold: to improve efficiency in service provision, to increase institutional financial accountability and to create transparency from the perspective of the citizen.⁹⁶

International experience in career guidance shows that the prerequisites for any service are the setting of standards for the service and the career advisors and/or career guidance practitioners delivering the service. It is therefore important:

- To establish a standard that will assure users that the services delivered are of a high quality; and
- To provide for competent career guidance practitioners through common professional standards and codes of ethics that are maintained by appropriate initial training and CPD.

Some of the most well known frameworks and mechanisms in this regard are the British Matrix Standard,⁹⁷ the Canadian Blueprint for Life/Work Designs,⁹⁸ and IAEVG's International Competencies for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners.⁹⁹

The Matrix Standard is a quality framework for the effective delivery of information, advice and/or guidance on learning and work. It promotes the delivery of high quality information, advice and/or guidance by ensuring organisations' review, evaluation and development of their services. Furthermore, the Matrix Standard encourages the take up of professionally recognised qualifications and the CPD of practitioners. The Matrix Standard framework consists of four elements: leadership and management, resources, service delivery and continuous quality development.

The Blueprint is Canada's national learning outcome framework of the competencies (skills, knowledge and attitudes) citizens of all ages need for effective lifelong career development. The Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Practitioners define the competencies career development practitioners need in order to practise effectively and ethically.¹⁰⁰ The guidelines are used to shape professional training and development programmes and the certification and scope of practice in Canada.

The IAEVG has developed an international framework of competence for practitioners – the International Competencies for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners. This framework applies a competency-based approach by focusing on the knowledge, skills and attitudes that practitioners need in order to provide quality career guidance services. The framework for competencies includes two major sections: core competencies that all practitioners need regardless of their job setting and specialised competencies (additional skills, knowledge and attitudes) that may be required, depending on the type of work setting and the client groups that are being served.

96 Plant P. 2009. *Quality Assurance/Evidence-base for Policy and Systems Development: Briefing Note Field Visit*, Berlin, 3-14 May 2009. (European Lifelong Guidance Policy Network (ELGPN) Work Package 4). (http://ktl.jyu.fi/img/portal/14791/WP4_Berlin_Briefing_30_04_2009.doc?cs=1241465634) (Accessed 6 February 2012).

97 *Matrix: Quality Standards for Information Advice and Guidance Services*. (<http://www.matrixstandard.com/the-standard/the-standard/>) (Accessed 3 January 2012).

98 *What is the Blueprint?* (<http://206.191.51.163/blueprint/whatis.cfm>). (Accessed 3 January 2012).

99 *The International Competencies for Educational and Vocational Guidance Practitioners* (<http://crccanada.org/crc/files/iaevg/Competencies-English.pdf>) (Accessed 3 January 2012).

100 *Canadian Standards and Guidelines for Career Practitioners (S&Gs)* (http://career-dev-guidelines.org/career_dev/) (Accessed 6 January 2012).

In South Africa, no specific standards have yet been set for either career guidance services or practitioners. The only standards set are for people who want to practise as psychologists, psychometrists and counsellors in general. It is clear that the need exists to standardise career guidance services and training of practitioners to be in line with international trends. By improving the training of career guidance practitioners, the quality of service delivery will immediately improve.

The newly founded SACDA has positioned itself to take the lead in terms of setting standards. SACDA was established with the following objectives in mind:

- To promote career guidance and its practice;
- To establish and maintain minimum standards for career guidance delivery;
- To promote the role, professional development and education of career guidance practitioners;
- To assist the professional development and education of members; and
- To lobby for and respond to government policy initiatives.

Preliminary work has already been done by SACDA in terms of listing the different categories of practice in the career guidance field.¹⁰¹ The model that is being investigated provides for different levels and categories of practitioner status linked to the environment a person works in and the training that practitioners need to be competent to fulfil their duties. The levels and/or designations are the following:

- Career advisor
This designation refers to the level of Life Orientation teachers at school. Currently a one-day course is available for training at this level. PACE is accredited as a provider at the ETDP SETA to deliver the course.
- Career guidance practitioner
Practice at this level is currently linked to a five-day course. PACE is accredited as a provider at the ETDP SETA to deliver the course.
- Career counsellor
PACE has applied for provider accreditation at the Health and Welfare SETA (H&WSETA) in order to deliver a one-year qualification. The name of the qualification is "Further Education and Training Certificate: Counselling" (NQF Level 4).

The ultimate goal of developing a competency framework is to increase the quality of services available to users. However, it is important that comprehensive research and consultation take place in order to establish a model and framework that will work in the South African context. Issues such as the designation of practitioners and the level of regulation should be debated. There are strong sentiments in the career guidance community in South Africa that the practice should not be regulated too strictly. The reason for this is that there are anecdotal examples of unemployed youth working as volunteers in communities and assisting individuals with career development issues. Given the drive of government for job creation, such endeavours can be turned into sustainable employment opportunities. Volunteers can be trained to become career advisors and practitioners.

14 Research and evaluation

Experience has shown that research models evaluating career guidance are complex.¹⁰² However, it is necessary for South Africa to develop a research and evaluation framework in order to obtain

¹⁰¹ Interview with Avron Herr, who is the chair of SACDA (23 January 2012).

¹⁰² Maguire M, Killeen J. 2003. *Outcomes from Career Information and Guidance Services*, paper prepared for the OECD Career Guidance Policy Review, Paris. (<http://www/oecd.org/edu/careerguidance>). (Accessed 6 February 2012).

an evidence base for the rationale for providing career guidance information and services. At the Sixth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy held in Budapest (5-7 December 2011) South Africa agreed to develop a national career development research agenda in order to strengthen evidence-based policy, practice, monitoring and evaluation and implementation. (See Section 16.)

At the symposium, experiences of countries in terms of research were shared. The major drive for countries is to continually prove whether there is a positive impact of career development or career guidance, skills enhancement and lifelong learning on social, education and economic goals. Countries mentioned that the following challenges are encountered in efforts to conduct research on this possible impact:¹⁰³

- The evidence (data) collected is splintered between universities, ministries, public employment services, schools, and information centres;
- Monitoring data is usually only available internally for self-evaluation of sectorally implemented programmes;
- There is a lack of agreement on ways to collect, measure and analyse data across the careers sector;
- There is a lack of coherence or linking across data (different datasets and different types of data);
- Existing research is fragmented and is largely dependent on individual researchers;
- The collected data does not measure what it is expected to measure; and
- A lack of evidence exists on the long-term impact of guidance services.

In order to prepare a research agenda for South Africa, the weaknesses mentioned above should be kept in mind. The DHET is now leading three processes where career- and labour market-related information is relevant. These processes are: the development of the information framework, the development of the cooperation framework for career guidance information and services and the Labour Market Intelligence programme that the HSRC is going to oversee. All of these processes require data identification, gathering and utilisation (using and providing data for decision making at various levels). In addition, SAQA (through the CAS project) is developing databases and a system that is used for career guidance information and services purposes.

In this context, a research agenda should start at the basic level:

- Monitoring the implementation of the policy framework;
- Monitoring the implementation of information and guidance systems;
- Evaluating the processes of implementation; and
- Identifying the gaps in the policy framework and/or in the information and guidance systems that may exist.

When the stage is reached where evaluation studies on the effect or impact of career guidance information and services can be conducted, the DHET should investigate the different models of research in order to determine which one will be applicable for use in South Africa. There are international models and frameworks in this regard that can be scrutinised.

Some international examples of monitoring and evaluation models used for policy and practice devolvement are the following:¹⁰⁴

103 Vuorinen R. *Evidence-based Practice; Evidence-based Policies*. Presentation at the Sixth International Symposium on Career Development and Public Policy held in Budapest (5-7 December 2011).

104 Ibid.

- Countries such as Australia, Croatia, Denmark, Germany, Latvia, New Zealand use governmental bodies to collect evidence from different settings in order to monitor policy development. The infrastructure that is developed for service provision is also used as a feedback mechanism;
- Latvia has integrated the development of a feedback mechanism of clients in the implementation of their new career education programmes; and
- Canada has a research team that is a good example of a national network committed to contributing to the national and also international development of research methodology in this regard. This team has developed an evaluation framework that is used to determine the impact of career guidance in Canada.

15 Advocacy and communication

Advocacy and communication should be an essential and integral component of the process of preparing and implementing a framework for the management and coordination of career guidance information and services in South Africa.

The role of advocacy and communication in this regard will be:

- Sensitising policy makers and users to the importance of career guidance information and services;
- Promoting the provision of lifelong guidance in government policies and programmes;
- Informing all stakeholders about the process of developing and implementing a framework of this nature;
- Inviting all the relevant stakeholders to participate in the process of developing and implementing a framework for the management and cooperation of career guidance information and services in South Africa;
- Informing citizens of the roles and responsibilities of leadership as well as the roles and responsibilities of all the key stakeholders;
- Promoting the establishment of a national career guidance forum;
- Promoting the use of a national career advice service; and
- Promoting a career in career guidance practice.

A framework for advocacy and communication should be developed by the key stakeholders and such a framework should provide for a concerted effort to promote career guidance in South Africa.

16 International collaboration

History has shown us that up to now, no national body or forum in South Africa has taken responsibility for the management and coordination of career guidance information and services. The fragmented manner in which stakeholders have operated has resulted in South Africa seldom participating in international activities regarding career guidance.

One of the most significant activities that have taken place over the last decade has been the international career guidance reviews in many developed and developing countries. (South Africa took part in the World Bank review in 2003.) The reviews were facilitated by a series of international symposia on career development and public policy, the first of which was held in Canada in 1999 and the sixth of which was held in Budapest in 2011. These symposia are attended by participants not as individuals but as members of country teams. The country teams usually include both policy makers and professional leaders. An International Centre for Career Development and Public Policy (ICCDPP)

has been established to maintain continuity between these biennial symposia. The ELGPN has also been established by the European Commission along the same lines.

In 2007, a researcher from the HSRC attended the symposium in Aviemore, Scotland, as an independent observer. In 2009, delegates from SAQA and the merSETA attended the symposium in New Zealand and again in 2011 in Budapest, Hungary. This can be seen as the beginning of building international links through which South Africa can learn from other countries and share experiences with similar mechanisms in other countries. At the end of the symposium in Budapest, South Africa agreed to carry the following five recommendations forward:

- To agree on and implement a sustainable career development strategy with partners and stakeholders towards the establishment of a national policy, which is happening as part of the current endeavour of developing a framework for the coordination of career guidance information and services;
- To develop a national body for career development practitioners (SACDA has been established – one of its objectives being to promote the role, professional development and education of career guidance practitioners);
- To develop competency requirements for career development practitioners;
- To advocate a consistent set of career development terminology and values, such as access, quality, respecting people and allowing them to develop to their full potential (which will happen during the process of consultation regarding the framework); and
- To agree on the national career development research agenda in order to strengthen evidence-based policy, practice, monitoring and evaluation, and implementation.

The seventh symposium will take place in Finland in 2013. By then, South Africa will have completed the process of developing and implementing a framework for the management and coordination of career guidance information and services. It is hoped that the country will also have established a national career guidance forum and progressed the CAS project into a national career advice service, and that SACDA will have developed a framework for standards in terms of assuring quality services and practitioners. The South African team will have much to share with the international career guidance community at this symposium.

The affiliation of PACE as an institute with the IAEVG is also worth a mention. The IAEVG is a global professional community for career and educational guidance practitioners and practitioner associations. PACE Career Centre, as an institutional entity, has up to now been the official South African representative at the IAEVG. This affiliation enabled South Africa to host the annual International Career Development Conference of the IAEVG in Cape Town in October 2011. This was the first international conference of the IAEVG held on the African continent and attracted the most delegates ever to attend a conference of this nature. It is presumed that SACDA will become a supportive member and take over the role of representing South Africa.¹⁰⁵ If South Africa should decide to establish a national career guidance forum, such a body would also benefit in applying for supportive membership of the IAEVG. The most important reason for membership of the IAEVG is to get the opportunity to learn from and develop relationships with colleagues of other national associations in the international career and educational guidance community.

¹⁰⁵ Supportive members are described as ministries, institutions and organisations active in the field of educational and vocational guidance.

*Part Three: Challenges In The Implementation
Of The Framework*

In Part Two of this report, inputs were given regarding the elements of a framework for the management of and cooperation within career guidance information and services in South Africa. This part of the report looks at some of the key challenges in the implementation of a framework of this nature.

1 Establishing leadership

It was mentioned in Section 8 of Part Two that the DHET (along with the institutions that it is responsible for) is positioned at the nexus between the formal education system and the labour market. This position provides the opportunity for the department to take leadership of the management and coordination of career guidance information and services in South Africa. The process of developing and implementing a framework of this nature will form part of this leadership role. The challenge for the DHET will be to communicate its leadership in this regard to the broader career guidance community in South Africa and to the international career guidance community. The national CAS initiative will promote the DHET-SAQA “brand” in the national and international career guidance communities and is an important step towards establishing the DHET leadership role. However, this initiative should be augmented by leadership initiatives such as establishing coordination between stakeholders.

2 Co-opting stakeholders

One of the key challenges for the DHET will be to get all the relevant stakeholders to participate and to maintain their participation in career guidance. The first step of this process was the workshop that the DHET and SAQA held on 9 December 2011 on career advice services. Delegates at this workshop were from: key government departments (DBE, DoL and DHET), statutory bodies (SAQA and the NYDA), SETAs, higher education (HESA), further education and training (SACPO), the National Artisan Moderation Body and the voluntary association SACDA. Although representation at the workshop covered most of the sectors, there are still other stakeholders that need to become part of the process. They are organisations such SAACDHE, private companies that offer career guidance services and NGOs. The DHET will have to make an effort to draw these into the process.

3 Negotiating roles and responsibilities

In the event of committing stakeholders to the process of implementing the framework, it will be necessary to define and demarcate the different roles and responsibilities of all participating stakeholders. (The suggested roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders are presented in Section 10.2 of Part Two.) It will also be necessary to form different types of agreements in order to deliver on tasks. A key challenge is to develop an action plan and to monitor performance against such a plan.

4 Establishing a national career guidance forum

The establishment of a national career guidance forum is suggested in Section 9 of Part Two. The main aim of such a forum will be to bring all the key stakeholders together in an institutional structure in order to ensure the continuation of coordination and collaboration. The process of advocacy and the establishment of such a forum may be cumbersome. However, a DHET-SAQA partnership will provide the impetus and competency for such an endeavour. SAQA was instrumental in the establishment of SACDA and has much experience in this regard. International experience has shown that the existence

of such a body can contribute significantly to the effective management and cooperation of career guidance information and services in a country.

5 *Establishing a national career advice service*

Commitment, coordination and collaboration will be crucial to developing a national career advice service:

- Commitment from the DHET in terms of funding;
- Commitment from SAQA (CAS) to provide comprehensive career- and labour market-related information;
- Coordination and collaboration between all the public and private stakeholders that have information resources that need to feed into the CAS;
- Collaboration between the stakeholders that have the infrastructure to house the walk-in centres of the CAS; and
- Collaboration between stakeholders to ensure that all career information officers, career advisors and career counsellors working at the helpline and the walk-in centres are well trained and competent.

6 *Assuring quality information*

In terms of information, the DHET is developing a framework for standards of career- and labour market-related information. The challenge will be to ensure that all stakeholders adhere to these rules and principles in order to establish a standardised system of information that can be used by providers of career guidance information and services. Another challenge is to ensure that information is updated regularly and that information systems remain current. A third challenge will be to provide the information in a user-friendly way.

7 *Assuring quality services*

It will take some time to develop standards and quality assurance models for career guidance services. However, there are already models in use in the national and international career guidance community that can be applied (for example, the model used by the South African Student Counselling Services at HEIs). The establishment of a research plan to monitor and evaluate the development and implementation of the framework – and, in effect, the efficiency of the services delivered by a national career advice service – will require some effort.

8 *Training of practitioners*

Practitioners have to be competent if they are to deliver quality career guidance services. The current challenge is one of sufficiency and competence: there are not enough career guidance practitioners and there is a lack of competence in the field (practitioners lack knowledge and skills). Discussions in Part Two of the report have shown that there are current efforts to train people working in the field. However, to ensure the success of the implementation of this framework, the training initiative must be very well coordinated and funded. The challenges will be the following:

- To develop national standards for competence (as discussed in Part Two, SACDA is the right organisation to take responsibility for this task);
- To train sufficient Life Orientation teachers so that at every school, learners will have access to career guidance services (efforts should be coordinated);
- To train sufficient student support officers so that every student at an FET college will have access to career guidance services (efforts should be coordinated);
- To train career information officers, career advisors and career practitioners to work in the walk-in centres of a national career advice service (use current capacity at labour centres, NYDA offices and student support services, but also build extra capacity by creating new jobs and ensuring that South Africa has a corps of career guidance practitioners that are competent); and
- To secure the funding for the training endeavours (the possibility of accessing the Jobs Fund and contributing to job creation in the process should be investigated).

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Annexure 1: Examples of terms used

Terms that contain the word "career" and are used in the career guidance field interchangeably:	
Career	A career is the sequence and variety of occupations which one undertakes throughout a lifetime or the progression up an orderly hierarchy within an organisation or profession
Career advice	The provision of support, usually on a one-to-one- or small-group basis, whereby individuals are able to understand and interpret career information in their personal situation
Career choice	Career choice is the specific occupation that a person chooses
Career counselling	Career counselling is the process of assisting individuals to gain greater self-awareness in areas such as interests, values, abilities and personality style; connecting individuals to resources; engaging individuals in the decision-making process in order that they can choose a career path; and assisting individuals to be active managers of their career paths
Career development	Career development is the complex process of managing life, learning, and work over the lifespan and also lifelong guidance for learning and work
Careers education	Careers education is a comprehensive educational programme that focuses on individual career development
Career exploration	Career exploration is the process of finding a rewarding career path, as well as specific jobs within a particular career path
Career information	The provision of educational-, training-, occupational- and labour market information that is accurate, up-to-date, accessible, objective, relevant and available in a variety of formats
Career management	A proactive process to career development, career exploration, career decision making and personal learning, which may be facilitated by a range of processes and activities
Career planning	The continuous process of decision-making and evaluating current lifestyle, likes/dislikes, passions, skills, personality, and career path and making corrections and improvements to better prepare for the future or to make a career change
Career support	The provision of information, advice, guidance and resources to support individuals' career management and their development of career-management skills
Careers coaching	A process for offering career advice that focuses on achieving specific career goals and, while doing so, ensures that individuals retain responsibility for their own career
Terms to describe people working in the career guidance field:	
Career information officer	A career information officer mainly provides career-related information (not advice or counselling)
Career advisor	A career advisor is a person trained in giving career advice (not counselling)
Career guidance practitioner	A career guidance practitioner is a person who is engaged in the provision of career guidance as their main professional activity and may also do counselling
Career counsellor	A career counsellor is a certified professional who assists people with careers and life issues and decisions
Career coach	A career coach is a career consultant, career advisor, work-life coach, personal career trainer and life-management facilitator



The South African Qualifications Authority

Career Advice Helpline: 0860 111 673 | SMS: 072 204 5056

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/careerhelp>

Twitter: <http://www.twitter.com/nqfcareerhelp>

Website: <http://www.careerhelp.org.za>

Email: help@help@nqf.org.za



Telephone: 012 431 5000

Facsimile: 012 431 5147

Helpdesk: 086 010 3188

Website: www.saqa.org.za

Email: saqainfo@saqa.org.za