

Final Report

W&RSETA Customer Survey Report

Final Report and Executive Summary

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Abstract

This report sets out the findings of research into levels of customer satisfaction with the W&R SETA. Quantitative and qualitative research methods were employed including a survey of 241 enterprises from three provinces (Western Cape, KwaZulu Natal, Gauteng) and nine key stakeholder interviews. A key limitation of the research, however, was the lack of representation of enterprises from the informal sector and cooperatives. A further limitation was only 80 of the 241 enterprises had interactions with the W&R SETA are we able to respond to the survey.

The majority of enterprises surveyed, and key stakeholders interviewed, provided positive ratings of the W&R SETA: 76% of enterprises rated the W&R SETA positively in terms of the quality of programmes it facilitated; and 70% rated the W&R SETA's frontline services positively. 91% felt W&R SETA services were accessible in their areas; 90% of enterprises felt the W&R SETA's information was accessible and 85% felt information was relevant and useful. 83% of enterprises were aware of mechanisms to report their dissatisfaction with the W&R SETA; and 81% of enterprises felt W&R SETA staff were able to handle their complaints quickly and efficiently.

The report makes a series of recommendations to improve customer service including: the need to upscale information and communication technology systems across the W&R SETA functions; to extend strategic partnerships to include a broader range of institutions; to improve training of frontline services and inter-department communication between different divisions of the W&R SETA; and to improve accessibility to information, programmes and services of the W&R SETA both online and offline by employing innovative methods of communication.

Areas identified for further research include: strengthening evaluation and monitoring systems; improving the process of identifying enterprises' skills development needs and investigating barriers to registration with the W&R SETA; and the need for more information about the informal and cooperative sector.

Executive Summary

Introduction

The key objective of the research was to determine levels of customer satisfaction with the Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&R SETA). The wholesale and retail sector comprises a significant component of the South African economy employing 21% of the active labour force (2018 data).

¹ The effective functioning of the W&R SETA can have a meaningful impact on economy and broader developmental objectives of the country.

Methodology

The methodology employed in this research included quantitative and qualitative research methods namely: a limited literature review of key W&R SETA documentation; a customer satisfaction survey of 241 wholesale and retail companies (113 small (1- 49 staff members); 65 medium (50 -149 staff members); 62 large (more than 149 staff members); and 1 unknown) based in three provinces (KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and the Western Cape) and nine (9) key stakeholder interviews (2- TVET; 3- W&R SETA regional managers; 1- SAPRA, 1-RMI, 1- enterprise).

Findings

The results of the survey and key stakeholder interviews were consistent in their rating of the W&R SETA. There is no apparent consistency in responses based on either by province or size of enterprise.

Relationship to the W&RSETA

67% of wholesale and retail enterprises surveyed were not members of the W&R SETA. As a result only 80 (of the 241) enterprises surveyed were therefore able to respond to questions of their direct experience with

¹ W&R SETA Skills Sector Plan 2019-2020, Executive Summary pp. 1, citing Statistics SA, 2018 Labour Force Survey, Q.1. Available at https://www.wrseta.org.za/downloads/Sector_Skills_Plan_2019_20.pdf

the W&R SETA. The 80 enterprises constituted 43-Large (larger than 149 staff); 18-Medium (between 50-149 staff); 19- Small (between 1-49 staff).

The research findings raises three key issues which require further research: why enterprises are not members of the W&R SETA; what strategies needs to be improved to secure increased involvement by enterprises; and the reasons for non-payment of levies by members.

Effective and Efficient Service Delivery

The majority of the 80 wholesale and retail enterprises surveyed provided positive ratings of the W&R SETA in terms of its efficiency. 76% of enterprises rated the W&R SETA positively in terms of the quality of programmes it facilitated.

Issues flagged in the findings requiring attention included the need to improve internal communication between different units in the W&R SETA, support to host employers offering learnerships. In terms of programmes issues included limitations with the types of learnerships provided and support from host employers to learners, as well as the need for sector-based skills programmes.

Client- centric work ethic

70% of enterprises surveyed rated the W&R SETA's frontline services positively. 86 % felt the frontline services were adequately trained to assist with queries; and 87% indicated they received feedback with regard to applications.

Concerns flagged in the findings included challenges with processing of applications; poor feedback on queries; and communication within the W&R SETA.

Accessibility of the W&RSETA services

91% of enterprises surveyed felt W&R SETA services were accessible in their areas.

Accessibility related to both access to information, access to the W&R SETA and accessibility of programmes facilitated by the W&R SETA. It is important to note that the survey was not representative of the informal sector and primarily based in urban centres. Further research is required to gauge the experience of micro enterprises, the informal sector and co-operatives and enterprises in rural and semi-urban areas.

Consultation

77% of enterprises had attended W&R SETA stakeholder engagements. A majority felt these events addressed the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided to enterprises. Key stakeholders interviewed were less certain on this issue with only four (4) replying in the affirmative. This is a concern warranting further interrogation.

In terms of levels of participation in stakeholder engagements, areas requiring attention included reasons for non-participation in stakeholder events as well as how stakeholder events are planned and their effectiveness.

Service Standards

This category provided some of the highest positive ratings in the survey, indicating high levels of knowledge of service standards and obligations of the W&R SETA.

Research findings did however indicate a lack of clarity as to the existence of a service charter for the W&R SETA.

Access to Information

90% of enterprises surveyed felt W&R SETA information was accessible and 85% felt information was relevant and useful. 87% of enterprises felt information provided was accurate and up to date.

Issues requiring further attention include levels of access to the internet and actual usage of online services which may differ in case of co-operatives, micro - enterprises and the informal sector and rural areas. Another issue included the need for more creative and innovative ways to disseminate information and calls to ensure targeted constituencies are reached, and beneficiaries understand benefits of W&R SETA products.

Redress and Complaints Management

83% of enterprises surveyed were aware of mechanisms to report their dissatisfaction with the W&R SETA and 81% of enterprises felt W&R SETA staff were able to handle their complaints quickly and efficiently.

Respondents referred primarily to the corruption/fraud hotline and a manner in which complaints were currently addressed i.e. by social media, meeting regional managers. This indicated a conflation between these processes and a dedicated complaints management system.

Value for Money

86% of enterprises surveyed felt that W&R SETA offerings were value for money and 87% of enterprises felt the offerings were economically efficient.

However this does not necessarily apply across the board to all enterprises given the limitations of the sample. The views of cooperatives and informal sector will need to be investigated to provide a more accurate assessment of all enterprises.

Batho Pele Principles

21 enterprises surveyed did not know what Batho Pele principles were.

The apparent lack of understanding and /or knowledge of Batho Pele Principles by a sizeable component of survey respondents indicates the need for greater education and awareness raising of Batho Pele principles and their relevance to the work of the W&R SETA.

Limitations

A key limitation of the research was the inability to access a database of enterprises registered with the W&R SETA. The survey sample was initially intended to be proportionally representative of selected provinces (KwaZulu-Natal, Gauteng and Western Cape), corresponding to number of enterprises registered with the W&R SETA (as reflected in its 2018-2019 Annual Report). However, the lack of the available databases meant that the research team had to rely on a convenience sample. This selection process impacted on the number of enterprises which had dealings with the W&R SETA and were able to respond to questions directed at their experience with the W&R SETA.

A further limitation of the research process was the reliability of information received from survey respondents on the issue of co-operatives, small and informal businesses, which had to be discarded due to the lack of representation of these categories in the sample. Future research should focus on this constituency in order to better understand the challenges faced by this category of enterprises and how the W&R SETA can better tailor services to address it needs.

Recommendations

- Greater attention needs to be focussed on the integration of ICT systems across the W&R SETA functions to improve efficiencies.
- There is a need for a differential and targeted approach to different categories of stakeholders i.e. beneficiaries/enterprises; partners (tertiary and research institutions etc.); industry associations etc. Engagements with strategic partnerships should also be extended to include a broader range of institutions, which can support, advise and add value to the work W&R SETA.
- Targeted capacity building and training of frontline services is required. In addition, there is a need to identify and address factors contributing to delays in responding to queries.

- There is a need to improve knowledge of Batho Pele principles across the board, with clients, stakeholders and W&R SETA employees. This issue also relates to service standards and the need for clarity of W&R SETA service charter.
- In addition to the use of the website and mechanisms to improve accessibility to information, programmes and services of the W&R SETA could be enhanced. This includes adopting innovative methods both online and offline to reach different types of enterprises (small, medium, large, micro and informal) and geographical spread.
- Areas for further research include the evaluation of systems of engagement and communication with clients and stakeholders; improving the process of identifying needs to ensure offerings and qualifications accurately address different community needs and different categories of enterprises; strengthening monitoring and evaluation systems in relation to applications, queries, learnerships, support; to investigate the quality of engagement and responsiveness of the W&R SETA to the informal business sector and co-operatives, which was not addressed in the scope of this research.

Conclusion

The findings of this research are promising, indicating above average positive customer satisfaction with the W&R SETA. However, more research is required to interrogate whether the interventions of the W&R SETA are bearing fruit for all categories of enterprises – large, medium and small, and the formal and informal sector; and reasons impacting on poor performance in areas identified for improvement.

The report identifies where the W&R SETA can improve including improving efficiencies of its systems through technology; monitoring and evaluation systems to monitor performance; employing a differential approach to different categories of stakeholders to address specific concerns of each constituency; strengthening frontline services and addressing factors contributing to delays in processing applications, queries etc.

Improving customer relations by addressing performance gaps and challenges will also enhance both the effectiveness and impact of the W&R SETA, enabling it to grow its representation of enterprises and its offerings, which will in turn improve the functioning of the sector contributing to employment and ultimately broader developmental objectives of the country.

Table of Contents

Abstract	2
Executive Summary	3
<i>Relationship to the W&RSETA</i>	<i>3</i>
<i>Effective and Efficient Service Delivery</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Client- centric work ethic.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Accessibility of the W&RSETA services.....</i>	<i>4</i>
<i>Consultation.....</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Service Standards</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Access to Information</i>	<i>5</i>
<i>Redress and Complaints Management.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Value for Money.....</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Batho Pele Principles.....</i>	<i>6</i>
Abbreviations	12
1. Introduction	13
2. Methodology	17
3. Literature Review	21
4. Research Findings	27
5. Recommendations	45
6. Conclusion.....	48
References.....	50
APPENDIX 1: Data Collection Tools	51
APPENDIX 2: List of survey respondents.....	56

List of Tables

Table 1: Geographical Spread of Survey Sample.....	18
Table 2: Survey Sample.....	22
Table 3: Summary of Key Findings.....	27
Table 4: Quantitative Findings of Effective and Efficient Service Delivery.....	32
Table 5: Quantitative Findings of Client-centric Work Ethic.....	33

Abbreviations

Consumer Goods Council of South Africa	GCSA
Gauteng	GP
KwaZulu-Natal	KZN
National Skills Development Strategy	NSDS
Small Medium and Micro Enterprise	SMME
South African Petroleum Retailers Association	SAPRA
Sector Education and Training Authority	SETA
Skills Sector Plan	SSP
Retail Motor Industry Organisation	RMI
Technical Vocational Education and Training Colleges	TVETS
Western Cape	WC
Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority	W&R SETA

1. Introduction

1.1 Rationale

The wholesale and retail sector is an important component of the South African economy. Research data indicates that the wholesale and retail sector employs 3 207 000 people (21% of the active labour force).² There are 87 790 active wholesale and retail enterprises,³ of which 88% are small companies, three (3%) medium, one (1%) large, and eight (8%) unclassified.

The Wholesale and Retail Sector Education and Training Authority (W&R SETA), established in 2000, is responsible for the skills development needs of the wholesale and retail sector. The W&R SETA performs this function through the implementation of learning programmes, disbursement of grants and monitoring of education and training as set out in National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS). Central to the effectiveness of the W&R SETA, is its ability to render excellent services to its customers.

The purpose of this report is to set out the findings of research conducted on customer satisfaction, and to make recommendations on how the W&R SETA can improve its customer service.

1.2 Background and Context

In January 2020, Mthente Research and Consulting Services (Pty) Ltd successfully bid to conduct a customer satisfaction survey on the Wholesale and Retail Sector Training and Education Authority (W&R SETA) commissioned by the Wholesale and Retail Leadership Chair at the Durban University of Technology.

² W&R SETA Skills Sector Plan 2019-2020, Executive Summary pp. 1, citing Statistics SA, 2018 Labour Force Survey, Q.1. Available at https://www.wrseta.org.za/downloads/Sector_Skills_Plan_2019_20.pdf

³ W&R SETA Skills Sector Plan 2019-2020.

1.3 Objectives of the Research

The key objective of the research was to determine levels of customer satisfaction with W&R SETA. The questions formulated in the survey and key stakeholder interviews were therefore formulated in manner to solicit information which addressed these issues. The research focussed on determining the following:

i. Levels of knowledge and membership of the W&R SETA

The research sought to establish how well known the W&R SETA was known in the sector, and the extent of engagement with the W&R SETA by enterprises. It further sought to establish levels of affiliation to the W&R SETA by enterprises sampled.

ii. Levels of customer satisfaction with W&R SETA, and reasons therefore

In determining levels of customer satisfaction the research sought to establish levels/ and quality of participation by enterprises in engagements of the W&R SETA; the quality of enterprises' experience when engaging with staff of the W&R SETA; and the quality of services provided/and or facilitated by the W&R SETA.

iii. Performance gaps impacting on customer service

Participants were prompted to identify areas of service which required attention and were provided an opportunity to elaborate on challenges identified.

iv. Recommendations on how the W&R SETA can address these deficits.

The research questions provided an opportunity for participants to make recommendations on how they felt challenges could be addressed, and how customer service could be improved.

v. Areas for further research

An analysis of the results and inputs of participants together with the review of key documentation assisted in the identification of areas/ and issues which required further investigation and research.

1.4 Summary of Methodology

The methodology comprised of quantitative and qualitative methods. This included a limited literature review of key W&R SETA documentation; a customer satisfaction survey of 241 wholesale and retail companies from Kwa Zulu Natal, Western Cape and Gauteng, and nine (9) key stakeholder interviews drawn from partner institutions, W&R SETA staff and one enterprise.

The data was then analysed, and trends were identified to inform key recommendations on how the W&R SETA could improve services to its customers.

1.5 Structure of the Report

The report sets out the scope and limitations of the research process. It then sets out in greater detail the methodology employed and provides a synopsis of key issues relevant to customer service as identified through the literature review. The findings of the report are consolidated in the next section, and the report concludes with a set of recommendations on how the W&R SETA can better improve its customer service.

1.6 Scope and Limitations

A key limitation of the research was the inability to access a database of enterprises registered with the W&R SETA. The survey sample was initially intended to be proportionally representative of selected provinces (Kwa Zulu Natal, Gauteng and Western Cape), corresponding to number of enterprises registered with the W&R SETA (as reflected in its 2018-2019 Annual Report). However, the lack of the available databases meant that the research team had to rely on a convenience sample. A database was then developed using the contacts of the W&R SETA Leadership Chair at the Durban University of Technology (DUT) combined with the results of desktop research. This involved an online search of national wholesaler and retailers, and provincial search of wholesaler and retailers through the directories of shopping malls and shopping complexes in Gauteng (GP), KwaZulu-Natal (KZN) and the Western Cape (WC). This selection process impacted on the number of enterprises which had dealings with the W&R SETA and were able to respond to questions directed at their experience with the W&R SETA.

A further limitation of the research process was the reliability of information received from survey respondents on the issue of co-operatives, small and informal businesses, which had to be discarded.

Finally, due to challenges with the database, views of the informal sector and cooperatives are not represented in this study.

2. Methodology

The research process involved:

- A documentation review which identified relevant W&R SETA strategic goals and Batho Pele principles. These were used to inform the development of research questions applied in the data gathering tools;
- The administration of the survey to 241 small, medium and large wholesale and retail enterprises.
- The conducting nine key stakeholder interviews;
- An analysis of the results of the survey and qualitative interviews. The findings from the customer survey and key stakeholder interviews were then collated and triangulated to determine common themes and trends.
- The development of strategic recommendations related to performance gaps and challenges which impact on service delivery.

2.1 The Size of the Sample

The customer satisfaction survey (survey) was administered to a sample of 241 wholesale and retail enterprises. The sample consisted of:

- 113 small (1- 49 staff members);
- 65 medium (50 -149 staff members);
- 62 large (more than 149 staff members); and
- 1 unknown.

The enterprises surveyed were operational in the following areas:

Table 1: Geographical Spread of Survey Sample

<i>Provincial area of operation</i>	<i>Total</i>
North West	1
Northern Cape	1
Eastern Cape	3
Limpopo	4
Free State	5
KwaZulu-Natal	39
Gauteng	77
Western Cape	75
Two or more provinces	29
Outside country and one or more province	6
Outside Country only	1
Total	291

The majority of the participants interviewed were from the Human Resources Department (170); followed by the owner of the company (62); and in nine instances, from other departments in the company. This did not impact on the nature of responses. The survey responses were administered through Google Forms, allowing researchers immediate access to data. Each fieldworker used a voice over IP system to make calls.

2.2 Key Stakeholder Interviews

Nine (9) key stakeholder interviews were conducted with representatives from the following institutions:

- W&R SETA regional managers (GP North, GP South, and WC) - 3
- Consumer Goods Council of South Africa (CGCSA) - 1
- TVETS (KZN and WC) - 2
- South African Petroleum Retailers Association (SAPRA) - 1
- Retail Motor Industry Organisation (RMI) - 1
- Wholesale and retail enterprise - 1

2.3 Research Questions

The following thematic areas were identified to guide the survey and key stakeholder questions:

The effectiveness of the W&R SETA:

The effectiveness of the W&R SETA is key indicator of the SETA's ability to respond to the needs of its stakeholders. The survey sought to measure this by investigating the following:

- The actual experience of companies which engaged with the W&R SETA.
- The quality of programmes provided by the W&R SETA.
- The effectiveness of stakeholder events and programmes.
- Levels of participation in stakeholder events and programmes.

Client centric standards of the W&R SETA:

This theme focused on the responsiveness of the W&R SETA in addressing its stakeholders requirements.

This was measured by assessing the following:

- The professionalism of W&R SETA staff: the extent to which W&R SETA is orientated towards service fulfilment. The extent to which customers are treated with courtesy and consideration.
- The existence of tools, measurements and systems to effect customer care.
- The accessibility of services accessible to all types of users and areas.
- The extent to which frontline services are adequately trained to find out what end-users need and expect. Whether frontline services are they adequately trained to inform customers of services, and where and how to access these.
- their ability to feedback to enterprises.

The quality of consultation by the W&R SETA:

This theme investigated the nature of consultation and engagements by the W&R SETA, and the extent to which consultation with stakeholders was meaningful. Issues canvassed were:

- Whether the W&R SETA listens to its customers and addresses their needs.

- The extent to which stakeholders and customers are consulted on the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided in order to determine their needs and the expectations of end users.
- The effectiveness of the consultation process in addressing the needs of enterprises, and whether the W&R SETA takes on board the inputs of enterprises.

Service standards of the W&R SETA:

This sought theme sought to establish whether service standards were institutionalised and levels of awareness thereof. This provides an indication of the extent to which the W&R SETA has sought to educate and reinforce both staff and customers of its commitment to service.

- Awareness by customers of the level and quality of services they are entitled to.
- Existence of service charters, service level agreements etc.

Access to information:

This theme expanded on the issue of accessibility by interrogating the accessibility both in format and reach to different stakeholders and the quality of information. The following categories were investigated:

- The availability of information.
- The accessibility of information.
- The relevance and usefulness of information, and whether information provided to customers is accurate.
- Whether there are mechanisms for reporting dissatisfaction, (e.g. toll-free number, suggestion boxes etc.).
- The existence of/ and effectiveness of complaints handling systems.
- The extent to which W&R SETA staff are trained to handle complaints quickly and effectively.
- The awareness of customers of mechanisms to report their dissatisfaction with the W&R SETA.

Value for money:

This theme sought to establish the perspectives of participants on the cost benefit of services provided by the W&R SETA to its stakeholders. This addressed:

- Whether the W&R SETA provides value for money and the extent to which its services and offerings are economically efficient.

Co-operatives and small informal businesses:

This theme was included in the survey to address the particular needs of these sectors.

- The extent to which the W&R SETA addresses the needs of co-operatives, small and informal businesses. The extent to which the W&R SETA caters for and meets the skills development needs of co-operatives as well as small and informal businesses.
- The quality of programmes provided to this sector, in particular.

Batho Pele Principles:

Batho Pele Principles are accepted and entrenched as benchmarks for customer service. Its inclusion as a theme sought to measure how stakeholders rated the W&R SETA in terms of its compliance with Batho Pele principles.

In addition participants were invited to make recommendations on how they felt the W&R SETA could improve its services to enterprises.

3. Literature Review

3.1 The profile of enterprises registered with the W&R SETA

17 705 companies paid levies to W&R SETA in the 2018-19 financial year.⁴ The majority of these (89%) constituted small companies (with staff between 1-49). The location of levy paying companies across South Africa is not surprising and follows economic trends, with the largest proportion in Gauteng (39%), followed by the Western Cape (22%) and Kwa Zulu Natal (14%).

⁴ W&R SETA 2018/19 Annual Report pp. 32-33. Available at

https://www.wrseta.org.za/downloads/1431_WRSETA_Annual_Report_WEB.PDF

Table 2: Survey Sample

<i>Province</i>	<i>Percentage (%) number of levy-paying enterprises</i>
Northern Cape	1,52
North West	3,38
Limpopo	3,47
Free State	3,61
Mpumalanga	5,73
Eastern Cape	6,25
KwaZulu Natal	14,66
Western Cape	22,0
Gauteng	39,07
Total	99,69

3.2 W&R SETA Skills Sector Planning

The 2019-2020 W&R SETA Skills Sector Plan (Skills Plan) identifies stakeholder engagement as a key priority areas. It notes that stakeholder partnerships are the best way to meet industry needs for skilled workers and worker's needs for better jobs. It notes further that these engagements offer a platform to focus on job growth sectors and workforce training needs.

The Plan identifies the need for the W&R SETA to establish partnerships with small business enterprises to reach retail SMMEs, cooperatives and informal traders.⁵ This focus on the SMME and informal sector resonates with findings that South Africa has a two tier wholesale and retail sector – a sophisticated formal wholesale and retail sector and small and micro enterprises in the informal sector.⁶ The Plan notes that SMMEs, whilst making up most of the levy-paying enterprises, are under-represented in terms of skills

⁵ W&R SETA 2019-2020 Skills Development Plan pp.7. Available at https://www.wrseta.org.za/downloads/Sector_Skills_Plan_2019_20.pdf

⁶ Ibid. pp 28.

development initiatives, and that informal retailers have a great need for skills development.⁷The Plan acknowledges that existing partnerships are working well but there is a need for monitoring, evaluation and impact assessments of these partnerships; and further that new partnerships need to be forged to respond to key drivers identified in the sector. Technology, SME development and youth focused skills development initiatives are identified as skills development interventions that should be prioritised.⁸

These issues highlight the importance of stakeholder engagement not merely as a customer service issue but the contribution stakeholders can make in identifying the needs of the sector and building capacity making through strategic partnerships, making the W&R SETA more responsive to the skills development needs of all wholesale and retail enterprises.

The survey and key stakeholder interviews address the issue of stakeholder engagement by interrogating levels of participation in stakeholders engagements, and participants views of the quality of stakeholder engagements both in terms of their relevance and responsiveness to stakeholder needs.

3.3 Challenges facing the W&R SETA

The W&R SETA has been burdened with historical challenges including a large backlog in certifying learnerships and skills programmes and payments, received a qualified audit opinion for the 2018-19 year and met only 32% of its performance targets.⁹

The W&R SETA has acknowledged the challenges in governance and administration which 'over time cost the Organisation valuable relationships with stakeholders who are crucial to the execution of the W&R SETA mandate'. It further acknowledges that this 'dissatisfaction had caused a decline in stakeholder participation in previous years.' To address these challenges the W&R SETA embarked on a process of

⁷ Ibid. pp 58.

⁸ Ibid. pp 57.

⁹ W&RSETA 2018/19 Annual Report pp.12-13.

setting goals and targets to restore the trust and confidence of the key role-players. In addition, other developments included the appointment of a new Board and Chief Executive Officer in 2018-19 financial year; the development of a turnaround strategy; and review of the delivery model of the organisation to enable enabling the empowerment of Regional Offices to expedite delivery of services. In addition to these interventions the W&R SETA implemented 'a transformative Information and Communications Technology (ICT) plan, which seeks to improve its strategic and operational value in the Sector.' By focusing on the needs of stakeholders and these relationships the W&R SETA it seeks to enable stakeholders' experience, reduce manual and fragmented stakeholder business interactions with the SETA, and achieve customer-focused service.

Whether these interventions have been effective at the time of this research, maybe too early to establish. On a superficial level, the research findings of both the survey and key stakeholder interviews indicate at a level satisfaction with the W&R SETA. However, notwithstanding the limitations of the research, it does study does draw attention to areas requiring attention and further interrogation.

3.4 Key Principles Driving Customer Satisfaction

The document review consisted of a review of key W&R SETA documentation and Batho Pele principles to extract important determinants of customer satisfaction. The review sought to extract relevant strategic goals, performance targets and Batho Pele principles to inform the development of key research questions to be addressed in the data collection process. The following key themes were identified:¹⁰

3.4.1 Efficiency and effectiveness

The need for an effective and efficient organisation which supports the implementation of the W&R SETA Strategic Plan. This goal is set out in the W&R SETA Strategic Objective 2: 'The purpose of this goal is to ensure effective management of the W&R SETA through proper governance, efficient use of resources,

¹⁰ W&RSETA 2018/19 Annual Report; Presentation - Sector Skills Plan Update 2019-20 June – July; National Skills Development Plan 2030. Available at <https://www.wrseta.org.za/>

integrated systems and improved monitoring and evaluation in order to implement the Strategic Plan. Progress in achieving this goal includes the integration of key ICT systems to ensure accessibility of information in real time, and revision of the Monitoring and Evaluation Policy to enable implementation of a decentralised model for monitoring and evaluation that will further improve key components of performance information management, namely records management and verification of performance.’¹¹

3.4.2 Effective stakeholder engagement strategic partnerships

The need for effective stakeholder engagement and strategic partnerships which are beneficial to both parties. W&R SETA Strategic Objective 3: ‘The purpose of this goal is to strengthen strategic partnerships with the public and private sectors to better align programmes and resources; and facilitate placement of learners.’

3.4.3 A skilled small and medium enterprises and co-operative sector

The need for a skilled, vibrant small, medium and micro enterprises (SMME) and co-operative sector, set out in W&R SETA Strategic Objective 4: ‘The purpose of this goal is to strengthen and develop new training models to meet the skills development needs of co-operatives as well as small and informal businesses. The W&R SETA ensures the participation of small businesses in skills development initiatives, from skills planning to skills development programmes aimed at supporting small businesses in addressing their skills needs’.

3.4.4 Adherence to organisational values

The W&R SETA sets out the following organisational values to which the institution aspires:

- Client-centric work ethic;
- Professionalism;
- Being orientated towards service fulfilment; and
- Living the Batho Pele principles.

¹¹ W&R SETA 2018/19 Annual Report pp. 18.

3.4.5 *Batho Pele Principles*

Batho Pele principles are aligned to Constitutional values and are entrenched in the policy and legislative framework governing service delivery in the public service. The following principles were identified as particularly relevant to customer service: ¹²

- Consultation;
- Service Standards;
- Ensuring Courtesy;
- Information;
- Openness and Transparency;
- Redress; and
- Value for Money.

In summary, the W&R SETA strategic goals and Batho Pele principles guided the development of key research questions addressed in the survey and key stakeholder interviews to determine levels of customer satisfaction with the W&R SETA.

¹²Batho Pele Vision, DPSA <http://www.dpsa.gov.za/documents/Abridged%20BP%20programme%20July2014.pdf>;
DPSA Handbook. Available at <http://www.kzneducation.gov.za/Portals/0/documents/BathoPeleHandbook.pdf>

4. Research Findings

Table 3: Summary of Key Findings

<i>Thematic Area</i>	<i>Subtheme</i>	<i>*Positive Survey Result</i>	<i>*Positive Stakeholder Response</i>
Effective and efficient service delivery	Performance of W&RS ETA	70%	66%
	Quality of programmes	76%	57%
	Participation in stakeholder engagements	51%	88%
	Quality of stakeholder engagement	82%	75%
Client-centric work ethic	Courtesy/ orientation to customers	72%	88%
	Effectiveness of frontline services	70%	77%
	Feedback provided on applications	87%	77%
	Frontline services adequately trained	86%	77%
Accessibility	Accessibility of W&R SETA in their areas	91 %	87%
Consultation	Quality of stakeholder events	95%	44%
	W&R SETA takes on board inputs from enterprises	80%	77%
	W&R SETA addresses needs of enterprises	80%	88%
Service Standards	Awareness of level and quality of services	87%	44%
	Awareness of service charters	90%	44%
Access to information	Accessibility of information	70%	77%
	Relevance and usefulness of W&R SETA information	85%	88%
	Accuracy and reliability of information provided by the W&R SETA	87%	77%
Redress and complaints management	Awareness of complaints mechanisms	83%	66%
	Ability of W&R SETA staff to handle complaints	81%	88%
Value for money	Whether the W&R SETA offerings provided value for money	88%	88%
	Whether the W&R SETA offerings were economically efficient	87%	88%
Batho Pele principles	Adherence of W&R SETA to Batho Pele principles (significant number did not know)	51%	55%

* Positive indicates a rating of Excellent or Good

4.1 Relationship to the W&RSETA

A significant number of the wholesale and retail enterprises - 160 (66%) surveyed, were not members of the W&R SETA.

- Of the 241 wholesale and retail enterprises surveyed only 80 (33%) were members of the W&R SETA. Only 10 (6%) of the 161 non-members had had some form of contact with the W&R SETA.
- Out of the 80 who were members of the W&R SETA only 70 (87,5%) paid levies. The 10 non-paying levy members consisted of six small, two medium and two large enterprises.
- 13 (5%) of the 241 enterprises surveyed were also members of other SETAs.
- Only two (0,8%) enterprises were members of both the W&R SETA and another SETA.

Only 80 (33%) wholesale and retail enterprises surveyed were therefore able to respond to the remaining questions which were directed at the enterprises direct experience of the W&R SETA.

The above raises three key issues which require further interrogation. Firstly, why enterprises are not members of the W&R SETA . Secondly what needs to be done to secure greater participation. Thirdly, what are the reasons for non-payment of levies by members.

4.2 Effective and Efficient Service Delivery

The majority of the 80 wholesale and retail enterprises surveyed provided positive ratings of the W&R SETA in terms of its efficiency based on their dealings with it. There is no apparent consistency in types of responses either by province or size of enterprises.

4.2.1 Performance of W&R SETA

56 (70%) of enterprises rated the performance of W&R SETA positively. 10 (12,5%) provided a rating of 'Excellent'; 46 (57,5%) provided a rating of 'Good'; 19 (15%) provided a rating of 'Average'; 2 (2,5%) provided a rating of 'Bad'; one (1%) provided a rating of 'Poor' and one (1%) 'did not know'.

The two enterprises that provided a negative rating of 'Bad' were large enterprises (with a staff in excess of 149 people). One (1) was based in Kwa Zulu Natal (KZN) and the other had a presence in five provinces (Eastern Cape (EC), Free State, Gauteng (GP), KZN and the Western Cape (WC)). The other enterprise which provided a 'Poor' rating was a large enterprise with a presence in the Free state and KZN.

A similar trend is evident from key stakeholder interviews with six (66,6%) out of the nine (9) participants rating the W&R SETA's effectiveness in dealing with stakeholders as - good; one (11%) – excellent; one (11%) – average; and (11%) – poor. When asked to elaborate one participant indicated that internal communication was problematic. *'I am speaking as an internal stakeholder. The service that we get from support units are very poor. There communication is poor for national projects'*. An external stakeholder provided the following feedback: *'It's one of the most effective SETA's to work with. There some areas that need improvement, they can provide training providers more assistance, in terms of host employers. There are challenges with host employers relating to anchoring projects for implementation'*.

4.2.2 Quality of programmes

Similarly, the majority – 57 (71%) of enterprises rated the W&RSETA positively in terms of the quality of programmes facilitated. 12 (15%) provided a rating of 'Excellent'; 45 (56%) – 'Good'; 16 (20%) - 'Average'; two (2,5%) – 'Poor', two (2,5%) – 'Bad', and two (32,5%) – 'did not know'. The enterprises which provided negative ratings of 'Bad' were both large organisations one based in KZN and the other based in Eastern Cape, Free State, KZN&WC. The enterprises which provided 'Poor' ratings were small enterprises (between 1-49 staff) in KZN, and a medium enterprise (50-149 staff) in WC.

This is consistent with key stakeholder interviews in which seven (77,7%) responded with four (44%) indicating the programmes were – average; one (11%) – good; two (22%) – excellent. Areas for improvement identified by two participants related to stakeholder engagement which it was suggested could be extended to include other stakeholders; be more regular and better planned.

Internal stakeholders provided positive ratings of programmes, with one indicating that they were outsourced. However, two other provided input indicating:

'The programmes that we offer, especially learnership qualifications, there is a thorough process which goes into the approval. It is also accredited with SACCAWU and therefore I am giving it a (5).'

'I will rate it a 4 because we have very good programs that we are offering as W&R SETA and this is from level 1 to level 6 and also, we offer other programs.'

Two external stakeholders provided detailed responses.

One raised challenges with learnerships:

'...I still feel that some of the learnerships that are offered shouldn't really have qualification. For instance, the chain store operations level 2 has a lot of work being done by the learners on site in the retail industry. [Name redacted] supermarket expects learners to perform all duties around the store, from bakery, merchandising to the butchery, except being a cashier. Working hours are also not friendly as learners are expected to be on site from 6:30 am to 6:30 pm. Engaging host employers does not make any difference as they are not interested in changing these conditions for learners. The scope of work done in these retail stores needs to be relooked or focused on support staff such as supervisors or managers. Maybe these are areas that they would have to train people. Maybe make learnerships for such positions. But for merchandisers it doesn't really work. No one is going to study to be a merchandiser, you may be absorbed as a temp after leaving school and work your way up to whatever position you may choose within the retail store. This is not fair to the youth that we are training.'

The other indicated the need for sector-based skills programmes:

'For South Africa to move forward, in order for South Africa to accelerate forward; we need more programmes of sector-based skills programmes for individual training rather than generic programmes. Fundamental backgrounds (relevant subjects done at school) are important, but training required for the specific purpose only require each individual in their line of speciality to have about 6 months of practical training and then they go into application in the real work space; this model works globally. Convert training into purpose driven training developed around the need rather than train the trainer with the view to placing them into a position'.

4.2.3 Levels of participation in stakeholder engagements

52 enterprises (65%) had participated in W&R SETA stakeholder engagements. Out of these 52 enterprises, there was a decline in positive rating with only six (11,5%) enterprises providing a rating of 'Excellent' and 31 (59,6%) a rating of 'Good'. 10 (19%) provided a rating of - Average, two (3,8%) provided a rating of 'Bad', and three (5,7%) provided a rating of 'Poor'. This is an area that requires further attention.

Only one (16,6%) out of the six (66%) external key stakeholders interviewed had not attended a stakeholder engagement. Eight (88,8%) key stakeholders responded to this question on the quality of stakeholder engagement, with one (12,5%) rating of – excellent; five (62,5%) -good; one (12,5%) – average; and one (12,5%) – poor.

Table 4: Quantitative Findings of Effective and Efficient Service Delivery

Dimension	Excellent	Good	Average	Bad	Poor	Do not know
Performance of W&R SETA	10 (12.7%)	46 (58.2%)	19 (24.1%)	2 (2.5%)	1 (1.3%)	1 (1.3%)
Quality of programmes	12 (15.2%)	45 (57.0%)	16 (20.3%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (2.5%)
Participation in stakeholder engagements	6 (13.0%)	36 (78.3%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (4.3%)	2 (4.3%)	0 (0.0%)

Again it is evident from the survey results that negative or positive ratings were not limited to any province or type (size) of organization.

Overall the majority of enterprises surveyed provided positive feedback as to the effectiveness of the W&R SETA.

4.3 Client-centric work ethic

There was no trend in responses by either size of enterprise or province in which enterprises were based.

4.3.1 Courtesy

58 (72,5%) of enterprises rated the W&R SETA positively when asked if they had been treated with courtesy in their engagements with the institution. Eight (10%) provided a rating of ‘Excellent’; 50 ((62,5%) – ‘Good’, 18 (22,5%)– ‘Average’; two (2,5%) – poor and two (2,5%) – bad. Key stakeholder responses were in the majority positive when asked if staff were orientated towards customers with only one (1%) participant providing a negative response.

4.3.2 Effectiveness of W&R SETA frontline services

The majority 57 (71%) of enterprises surveyed rated the W&R SETA frontline services positively with six (7,5%) rating – Excellent; 51 (63,7%)– Good. 19 (23,7%) felt service was – Average; two (2,5%) – Did not know; two (2,5%) indicated it was – Bad. Most key stakeholders were positive as well with four (44%) rating frontline services as – excellent; three (33%) – good; two (22%) – Average.

Prompted further in the survey, as to whether enterprises felt the frontline services were adequately trained to assist with queries 69 (86%) said – Yes, five (6%) – No, and six (7,5%) – Did not know. The majority of key stakeholders were positive with seven (77,7%) saying – Yes; one (11%) – did not know; one (11%) – No.

When asked if the enterprises received feedback with regard to applications 70 (87%) of survey respondents said – Yes. Seven (77,7%) out of nine (9) key stakeholders agreed.

Concerns raise which should be investigated related to:

- The system not being able to accept uploads;
- The failure to acknowledge receipt;
- Feedback taking too long on application queries;
- Feedback provided either to brief or vague;
- The need to address delays by the quality assurance department which took very long to resolve issues and go through applications.

Table 5: Quantitative Findings of Client-centric Work Ethic

Dimension	Excellent	Good	Average	Bad	Poor	Do not know
Courtesy	8 (10.0%)	50 (62.5%)	18 (22.5%)	2 (2.5%)	2 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)
Effectiveness of W&RSETA frontline services	6 (7.5%)	51 (63.8%)	19 (23.8%)	2 (2.5%)	0 (0.0%)	2 (2.5%)

Whilst still positive, this result on courtesy, and the overall rating of frontline services indicates a slight decline compared to the previous performance rating of the W&R SETA. Areas of concern related to the quality of responses provided to queries and delays in processes. Notwithstanding this, the vast majority 69 (86%) still felt that frontline services were adequately trained.

4.4 Accessibility

There was no trend in responses by either size of enterprise or province in which enterprises were based.

4.4.1 Accessibility of the W&R SETA services

73 (91%) of enterprises surveyed felt W&R SETA services were accessible in their areas. Five (6%) enterprises did not feel the services were accessible, and two (2,5%) – did not know.

Only eight (88,8%) key stakeholders responded to this question with only one (11%) indicating that it was not. When asked to elaborate, areas of concern in respect of accessibility were raised by three participants indicating: at a regional level W&R SETA was accessible but not head office; that services were not accessible in rural areas and people in townships; and the need to improve the online service and make it more user-friendly.

It is important to note that the survey was not representative of the informal sector and primarily based in urban centres. further research is required to gauge the experience of micro enterprises, the informal sector and co-operatives and enterprises in rural and semi- urban areas.

Consultation

There was no trend in responses by either size of enterprise or province in which they were based.

4.5.1 Participation in stakeholder engagements of W&R SETA

62 out of 80 (77,5%) enterprises had attended stakeholder engagements.

4.5.2 Quality of stakeholder engagements of W&R SETA

Prompted further on whether the W&R SETA addressed the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided to enterprises, only two (3%) enterprises in the survey who attended stakeholders event felt it did not, and one (1,6%) – Did not know.

Key stakeholders interviewed were less certain on this issue with four (44%) indicating – yes; three (33%) – no; one (11%) – did not know; one (1%1) was uncertain. Detailed responses were provided by the W&R SETA staff as follows:

- *'In the region we try very hard to engage with stakeholders. The strategic partnership target does not reside in the region, it is covered by head office.'*
- *'We do have what we call Stakeholders Forum in the regional offices which is a platform to provide feedback'*
- *'We are a projects driven organisation and all these projects come from our stakeholders and we also do take unsolicited projects, that comes from our other stakeholders as well.'*

Three external stakeholders provided the following areas for improvement:

- *'There are some areas they can improve, again with host employers. They tend to be more lenient towards the host employers when issues against host employers are raised, maybe because they pay levies.'*
- *'Engagements with stakeholders is not so great, it often happens last minute and it's not often.'*
- *'The stakeholder engagement can be extended to some extent...There is a need to invest in all the W&R regional offices with virtual conferencing concept – there are a number of people that could play a role that cannot make themselves available because of logistics.'*

When asked if the W&R SETA takes on board the inputs from all enterprises, the majority 64 of survey respondents (80%) said 'Yes' only five (6%) – No, and eleven (13,7%) - Did not know. This trend is consistent with stakeholder responses with seven (77% which included the W&R SETA staff members, TVET respondents and two partner institutions) out of nine (9) indicating – yes. One respondent (enterprise) was 'Not sure', and one indicated 'No'. The latter, a partner institution explained:

'Virtual conference would open up a door to not being prejudice against those who cannot afford to be at the meeting from a timing point of view'.

External respondents who were positive provided the following examples:

- *'The accessibility of training materials to all accredited providers, that was one of the things mentioned by some private providers who were struggling with buying training materials and they have since been made accessible to all those who needs them'. (KZN TVET respondent)*
- *'There's flexibility in terms of grants advertisements, the contents of the annual performance plan – there is no reason why the W&R SETA will refuse an application if the is a scope and room within the grants policy as well as the annual performance plan'. (RMI respondent)*

64 (80%) of enterprises surveyed felt the W&R SETA addresses the needs of their enterprise, only nine (11%) said - No; and two (2,5%) - Did not know. There was no trend in responses by either size of enterprises or province in which they operated.

Eight (88%) of nine key stakeholders felt the W&R SETA addresses the needs of enterprises . This included respondents from the three W&R SETA staff members, two TVET colleges, from KZN and WC, and three external partner institutions. The respondent from an enterprises was not sure and did not provide input.

The following external stakeholders provided examples of areas they were satisfied with:

- *Regarding the Western Cape office. 'The college has a good relationship with the office and the Manger. They have regular engagements'.*
- *'The upskilling, training and development of employed staff by retail stores'.*
- *'The needs of our organization were fulfilled'.*
- *'Annual performance plan and grants policy'.*
- *'There is a fair representation of the various sectors of the W&R SETA'.*

Respondents were not specific in their responses to any particular province with exception of the WC response. It cannot therefore be deduced that any particular province fared better. The question was not targeted to solicit a response of actual experience or to rate their provincial office. Furthermore, the size of the sample is limited and would not provide an accurate representation.

Whilst the majority of participants were satisfied with stakeholder events issues flagged include:

- Levels of participation in stakeholder events;
- The accessibility of stakeholder events and the need to explore use of technology to improve accessibility.

Stakeholder events refers to engagements arranged by the W&R SETA to communicate and/or consult with various stakeholders.

4.6 Service Standards

There were no trends indicating differing positions either by size of enterprise or province in which they were based.

4.6.1 Awareness of level and quality of services

70 (87%) of enterprises surveyed were aware of the level and quality of services they were entitled to. Only 10 (12,5%) of survey respondents– said they were not aware of the level and quality of services they were entitled to.

Only four (44%)of key stakeholders interviewed were aware of the level and quality of services they were entitled to; three (3%3) were not aware; and two (22%) – uncertain.

4.6.2 *Awareness of W&R SETA service charters setting out the standards of services.*

72 of enterprises (90%) were aware of service charters, only eight (10%) indicated they were not. Only four (44%) of nine (9) stakeholders interviewed were aware of service charters.

This category provided some of the highest positive ratings in the survey, indicating high levels of knowledge of service standards and obligations of the W&R SETA in terms of these.

Issues flagged were the knowledge of and/or existence of a W&R SETA service charter and how service standards are communicated within the organisation and with beneficiaries and partners.

4.7 **Access to Information**

There were no apparent trends in responses based on size of enterprise or its location.

4.7.1 *Accessibility of information on the W&R SETA and its services*

72 (90 %) of enterprises felt W&R SETA information was accessible. Six (7,5%) felt information was not accessible; and two (2,5) – did not know.

Seven (77%) key stakeholders felt information was accessible; one (11%) – did not feel information was accessible; and one (1%1) was uncertain.

4.7.2 *Relevance and usefulness of W&R SETA information*

68 (85%) of enterprises surveyed felt information on the W&R SETA was relevant and useful. Eight (10%) - Did not and four (5%) - Did not know.

Eight (88%) out of nine (9) key stakeholders responded positively indicating that the information was relevant and useful. One respondent indicated that '*accessibility was not 100%*'.

4.7.3 *Accuracy and reliability of information provided by W&R SETA*

70 (87%) enterprises felt information provided by W&R SETA was accurate and up to date. Six (7,5%) indicated – No; and four (5%) – Did not know. Seven (77%) out of nine (9) interviewees indicated that information was accurate and up to date. The two respondents with concerns were from partner institutions and had previously responded that information was accessible but that it was not accurate, was not always relevant to the change of pace of the industry, and it was sometimes outdated.

In both the survey and stakeholder interviews reference was made to the website and online services when addressing the issue of accessibility of information. This needs to be interrogated further, in terms of levels of access to the internet and usage of online services. This may differ in case of co-operatives, micro-enterprises and the informal sector, rural areas, which were adequately represented in the scope of this research.

4.8 **Redress and Complaints Management**

The existence and effectiveness of complaints management system is an important accountability measure. From a customer satisfaction perspectives, it provides remedies to address problems, and from the side of the institution it is an important mechanisms to identify and rectify challenges in its systems.

4.8.1 *Awareness of complaints mechanisms*

67 enterprises (83%) were aware of mechanisms to report their dissatisfaction with the W&R SETA. 13 (16%) indicated they were not aware.

Six (66%) interviewees were aware of mechanisms to report their dissatisfaction with the W&R SETA but three (33%) indicated – No.

The latter is of concern noting that one of the positive responses included a staff member of the W&R SETA so actual knowledge by external stakeholders of complaints mechanisms is substantially lower. One staff member declined to comment, and the other indicated there were no mechanisms except for the whistle blowing hotline or Face book page. On closer examination of responses respondents referred to fraud hotline, stakeholder surveys, and engagement with management demonstrating in fact, how complaints are dealt with currently. Clearly there is some confusion as to the distinction between a corruption/fraud hotline and a mechanism to address complaints experienced by customers in addition to emailing management or responding on social media. This warrants further interrogation.

4.8.2 *Ability of W&RSETA staff to handle complaints*

65 (81%) enterprises surveyed felt the W&R SETA staff were able to handle their complaints quickly and efficiently. 15 (18,7%) indicated a lack of satisfaction providing a negative response.

Eight (88%) out of nine stakeholders interviewed indicated – Yes.

Again there was no distinction in responses by province or size of enterprise. The lack of knowledge of the existence of systems, and the absence of a dedicated system to manage complaints outside of the fraud hotline or remedial engagement via management or social media, requires further attention.

4.9 Value for Money

There was no distinction in responses by participants based on either size of enterprise or provinces.

4.9.1 *Whether W&R SETA offerings provided value for money*

69 enterprises (86%) surveyed felt that W&R SETA offerings were value for money. Six (7,5%) felt they were not and five (6%) did not know. Eight (88%) of the nine (9) interviewees responded positively to this question. One internal stakeholder (W&R SETA) declined to respond.

4.9.2 *Whether W&RSETA offerings were economically efficient.*

70 enterprises (87%) surveyed felt the offerings were economically efficient. Seven (8,7%) felt they were Not, and three (3,7%)- Did not know. Eight (88%) of the nine (9) interviewees indicated – Yes. One elaborated indicating that ‘the Media Information and Communication Technologies (MICT) SETA offers learners R 38 000 whilst the W&R SETA offers learners R18 000’ and felt there was room for improvement.

In summary the majority of respondents felt the W&R SETA offered value for money and offerings were economically efficient. However this does not necessarily apply across the board to all enterprises given the limitations of the sample. The views of cooperatives and informal sector will need to be investigated provide a more accurate assessment of all enterprises.

4.10 Co-operatives and Small Informal Businesses

As indicated previously, due to the under-representation of the informal sector in the sample, this question had to be discarded for survey participants.

Key stakeholder interviews addressed the issue of co-operatives and small informal business. When asked if the W&RSETA had skills development programmes that address the needs of co-operatives and small informal businesses only six interviewees responded with five positive responses. One participant indicated

that a lot more could be done to include more small businesses. *'A lot can be done in terms of small businesses, this goes back to the representation, if it can be opened up - small businesses can participate more. Small business issues don't normally filter through and are not heard. Small businesses have barriers to entry (e.g. Access to technology, access to emails and access to Wi-Fi).'*

Of those stakeholders which rated the quality of programmes provided to co-operatives and small informal businesses, the majority (five out of six) provided positive responses. One respondent felt there needed to be further research to determine the reach of these programmes and their effectiveness.

It is clear from these results that additional research is required on this sector. Issues including the accessibility of the W&RSETA to cooperatives and informal enterprises, relevance of programmes for this sector are key areas for further inquiry.

4.11 Batho Pele Principles

A significant number of enterprises (21 – 26%) surveyed responded with 'Don't Know' when asked to rate the W&R SETA with regards to the Batho Pele Principles. Eight (10%) provided a rating of 'Excellent'; 34 (42,5%) – 'Good'; and 17 (21%)– 'Average'. Five (55%) stakeholders interviewed indicated – 'Good', one (11%) responded felt there was still room for improvement and another raised concern that 'community members are never consulted when learning programmes or qualifications are drafted'.

The 26% - "Don't know" responses from those surveyed requires further investigation. Read with responses from stakeholder interviews in which two did not respond and two indicated they were not familiar with the concept, there appears to be some of ignorance as to what the 'Batho Pele' principles are.

The apparent lack of understanding and /or knowledge of Batho Pele Principles by a sizeable component of survey respondents indicates need for greater education and awareness raising of Batho Pele principles and their relevance to the work of the W&R SETA.

4.12 How the W&R SETA could improve services to enterprises

52 (65%) enterprises surveyed provided complimentary feedback indicating they were satisfied with the W&R SETA services and felt nothing further needed to be done by the W&RSETA. This included a cross section of enterprises in both size and location. Almost one third of enterprises (22 - 28%) provided feedback as to what they would like to improve. These inputs can be categorized as follows:

- **Communication:**

Ten comments directly addressed the issue of communication namely:

- The need for more frequent communication (three participants made a general point about this).
- The need for the W&R SETA to listen more to their stakeholders and provide more information on products.
- That communication was poor e.g. email requests sent without due dates.
- The need for the W&R SETA to communicate more with clients. 'We just pay our levies, that's it. We don't even see them'.
- The need for the W&R SETA to follow up with their clients more regularly.
- The need for more communication on what courses are available.
- To advertise more.

- **Feedback on queries**

Related to communication, three participants emphasized the need to provide feedback in relation to queries, in particular. The following areas were identified that required attention:

- The need for more W&R SETA staff to assist with queries as feedback takes too long.
- The need to investigate why the W&R SETA take so long to feedback on queries.
- The need for more feedback on funding processes.

- **Financial support**

Two participants raised the issue of the need to address financial support:

- To provide higher stipends than currently allocated monthly and ensure that the stipend sufficiently accounts for the cost of transport for beneficiaries.

- **Customer Service**

Seven participants raised concerns regarding the customer service. Concerns raised included:

- 'They should deliver on their promises and need to handle clients better '.
- 'They don't hold to their promises, bad customer services'.
- To 'meet people's recommendations'.
- The need to improve the manner in which clients are 'dealt with'.
- Having more 'able' work ethics.
- To upgrade service standards.
- To increase the availability of offerings.

Key stakeholders' recommendations addressed:

- **Service standards:**

The need to improving services offered to clients by through:

- Improved quality assurance to improve response time;
- more effective engagements;
- providing an easy to use solutions i.e. company training needs analysis, a clear invoicing procedure that is understandable; and
- improved accessibility and clearer communication.

- **Research:**

The need for more/and better research

- to evaluate the W&R SETA engagement with members

- to identify communities needs so that qualifications are crafted to more accurately address particular community needs.
- **Use of technology:**

The need for more strategic thinking around the 'new world of work and learning' e.g. digital portfolio of evidences; digital fully integrated system of learner management with added benefits of E-learning; systems to upload completed assignments; digital solutions for clients i.e. to do the Workplace Skills Plan or Annual Training Report.

The findings as a whole demonstrate above average levels of customer satisfaction with the W&R SETA. Areas warranting further attention, if addressed, could improve the W&R SETA's performance and enhance customer service, which will contribute to the effectiveness of the W&R SETA and its impact.

The results of the survey and key stakeholder interviews indicate a positive trajectory for the W&R SETA in terms of its relationship with wholesale and retail enterprises and key stakeholders. The findings do however identify areas for improvement and further research. These are discussed in greater detail below.

Further research is however required to investigate the quality of engagement and responsiveness of the W&R SETA to the informal business sector, which was not addressed in the scope of this research.

5. Recommendations

This section of the report provides strategic recommendations related to the focus of the research assignment – customer satisfaction. The research findings demonstrate that the majority of participants were satisfied with the services provided by the W&R SETA. However, notwithstanding positive ratings, participants did make recommendations on how they felt the W&R SETA could improve. The recommendations below focus on addressing those performance gaps and challenges which were flagged and warrant further attention.

5.1 The Use of Technology

Greater attention needs to be focussed on the integration of information and communication technology systems across the W&R SETA functions. This includes ensuring offerings respond to the challenges of the 4th Industrial Revolution; use of online platforms for learner management and E-learning; digital solutions for clients; tracking and quality assurance of applications and queries; management of invoices and payment.

Providing online access to clients on the status of their applications/ queries will have additional benefits of improving transparency and enhance customer relations.

5.2 Effective Stakeholder Engagement and Strategic Partnerships

There is a need to clarify strategies dealing with beneficiaries/customers/ clients i.e. enterprises, and other stakeholders with which strategic partnerships are required such as tertiary and research institutions, business associations etc. Engagements with strategic partners should be extended to include a broader range of institutions (research, tertiary, business associations etc.), which can support, advise and add value to the work W&R SETA. These stakeholder meetings should be better planned and held at regular intervals. Consideration should further be given to adopting a differential approach to different categories of stakeholders by hosting separate forums and engagements for different constituencies.

5.3 Organizational Values

Capacity building and training of frontline services must focus on the ability to respond to queries; improving efficiency and communication between different divisions of the W&R SETA to reduce the time taken to resolve queries. Monitoring mechanisms to flag outstanding queries need to be put in place to alert managers on outstanding matters requiring attention. Quality assurance mechanisms should also flag time frames and

communication with clients when queries are received, whilst they are pending, and when providing feedback when matters are resolved.

Communication systems between the W&R SETA and clients and stakeholders could be improved. Similarly, mechanisms need to be put in place to address issues arising with the processing of applications (i.e. queries and delays) and matters related thereto, and complaints management.

There is a need to improve knowledge and understanding of Batho Pele principles with enterprises, stakeholders and W&RSETA employees.

The existence of a W&R SETA service charter needs to be clarified, and better communicated both internally and externally.

5.4 Accessibility

In addition to the use of the website, mechanisms to improve accessibility to information, availability of programmes and services of the W&R SETA need to be investigated further. This includes interrogating whether current marketing strategies are adequate and effective in reaching desired constituencies. innovative methods both online and offline need to be investigated to improve: the marketing of W&RSETA offerings; dissemination of information; improving engagement with a broader range of small and micro enterprises; and management of learners.

5.5 Financial Matters

The efficacy of raising current stipends and providing further financial support e.g. travelling fees should be further investigated. Improving access to financial support could improve participation in rural areas, and with small and micro enterprises. Further research is required to interrogate if financial constraints are reason for poor participation in stakeholder events.

5.6 Areas for Further Research

In addition to the issues flagged above, the need for further investigation and research should be considered in the following:

- To evaluate the W&R SETA systems of engagement and communication with clients and stakeholders. The need for strategies that address the needs of clients/beneficiaries and other partners i.e. business associations, tertiary and research institutions.
- To qualitatively investigate the nature, reason and consequences of delays in the delivery of W&R SETA services.
- To improve the process of identifying needs to ensure offerings and qualifications accurately address particular community needs and targeted constituencies.
- To strengthen monitoring and evaluation to address both the quality of services rendered but also the extent to which programmes and interventions accurately and effectively address sector needs.
- To investigate barriers and reasons why some enterprises in the sector are not affiliated to the W&R SETA.
- The need to develop and maintain a comprehensive database of enterprises registered with the W&R SETA.
- The need to engage directly with micro enterprises including the informal business sector to identify how the W&R SETA can improve its relationship with this constituency; and improve its accessibility given particular conditions under which the sector operates.

6. Conclusion

The wholesale and retail sector is a significant contributor to the South African economy employing (21% of the active labour force) and making a sizeable contribution to the country's gross domestic product.

Improving customer relations by addressing performance gaps and challenges is key to enhancing both the effectiveness of the W&R SETA and its impact. This will enable it to grow its representation of enterprises and its offerings, which will in turn improve the functioning of the sector contributing to growth in employment and ultimately contributing to broader developmental objectives of the country.

The findings of this research are promising indicating above average positive customer satisfaction with the W&R SETA. However, more research is required to interrogate whether the interventions of the W&R SETA are bearing fruit for all categories of enterprises – large, medium and small, and the formal and informal sector. The findings also assist in flagging areas for further research and interrogation both within the W&R SETA and in its relationship with clients and partners.

The report further identifies where the W&R SETA can improve including improving efficiencies of its systems through technology; monitoring and evaluation systems to monitor performance; employing a differential approach to different categories of stakeholders to address specific concerns of each constituency; strengthening frontline services and addressing factors contributing to delays in processing applications, queries etc.

At the time of finalising this report South Africa is facing the devastating social and economic consequences of the corona virus epidemic. The W&R SETA, like many other institutions will be faced with new challenges on how to respond to this crisis, both in terms of its ability to deliver services during the epidemic, and its role in rebuilding the wholesale and retail sector in months and years to come. Its ability to engage effectively with its stakeholders in a meaning manner will require ingenuity and innovation.

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APPENDIX 1: Data Collection Tools

Customer Satisfaction Survey

Section A: Introductory Questions

i. What is the size of your enterprise?

Select

- Large (>149)
- Medium (50-149)
- Small (1-49)
- Unknown

ii. Where does your company operate?

Select more than one

- Eastern Cape
- Free State
- Gauteng
- KwaZulu-Natal
- Limpopo
- Mpumalanga
- North West
- Northern Cape
- Western Cape
- Outside of South Africa

iii. Is your enterprise a member of the W&RSETA? YES/NO

If NO -

iv. Has your enterprise had any contact with the W&RSETA? YES/NO

If YES-

v. Does your enterprise pay levies to the W&RSETA? YES/NO

vi. Are you a member of any other SETA? YES/NO

Section B: Questions for members of W&RSETA

1. How would you rate the W&RSETA in terms of efficiency - based on your enterprise's dealings with it? 0-5
2. How would you rate the quality of programmes provided by the W&RSETA? Rate 0-5
3. Have you participated in stakeholder engagements with the W&RSETA? Y/N If yes, how effective were these engagements? 0-5
4. In your engagements with the W&RSETA have you been treated with courtesy and consideration? Rate 0-5
5. Are the W&RSETA services accessible to your enterprise? (in your area?) Y/N
6. How would you rate the W&RSETA frontline services? Rate 0-5
7. Do you feel the frontline services are adequately trained to assist with your queries? Y/N
8. Do you receive adequate feedback from the W&RSETA with regard to your applications? Y/N
9. Have you attended engagements with the W&RSETA? Y/N
- 9a. If YES (to above) have the engagements addressed the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided to enterprises?
10. Do you feel the W&RSETA takes on board the inputs from all enterprises? Y/N
11. Do you feel the W&RSETA addresses the needs of your enterprise? Y/N
12. Are you aware of the level and quality of services your enterprises is entitled to from the W&RSETA?
13. Are you aware of W&RSETA service charters setting out the standards of services? Y/N
14. Is information on the W&RSETA and its services accessible? Y/N
15. Is the information available on the W&RSETA relevant and useful? Y/N
16. Is the information provided accurate and up to date?
17. Are you aware of mechanisms to report your dissatisfaction with the W&RSETA? Y/N
18. Have W&RSETA staff able to handle your complaints fast and efficiently? Y/N
19. Do you feel the W&RSETA offerings provided value for money? Y/N
20. Do you feel the W&RSETA offerings economically efficient? Y?N

Section C: Co-operatives and small informal businesses

21. In your opinion does the SETA have skills development programmes that address the needs of co-operatives and small informal businesses? Y/N
22. How would you rate the quality of programmes provided to co-operatives and small informal businesses?
Rate: 0-5

Section D: Recommendations

23. How do you rate the W&RSETA with regards to the Batho Pele Principles? (Read more about the Batho Pele principles here: <http://www.kzncomsafety.gov.za/Default.aspx?tabid=232>)
24. How do you feel the W&RSETA can improve its services to enterprises?

Interview Schedule – Key Stakeholders

Name _____

Institution _____

Position _____

Provincial Focus

National

Focus

Please indicate province _____

Questions:

1. How would you rate the W&RSETA in terms of efficiency in dealing with stakeholders? Rate: 0-5
2. How would you rate the quality of programmes provided? Rate: 0-5
3. How would you rate stakeholder engagements of the W&RSETA? Rate: 0-5
4. Do you feel W&RSETA staff are orientated towards service of its customers? Y/N
5. Do you feel W&RSETA services accessible to all stakeholders? Y/N
6. Overall how would you rate W&RSETA frontline services? Rate: 0-5
7. Do you feel W&RSETA frontline services adequately trained to assist customers? Y/N
8. Do you feel the W&RSETA provides adequate feedback from the with regard to applications.
Y/N
9. Have you attended stakeholder engagements with the W&RSETA? Y/N
10. In your opinion, do stakeholder engagements address the nature, quantity and quality of services to be provided to enterprises? Y/N
11. Do you feel the W&RSETA takes on board the inputs from all enterprises? Y/N
12. Do you feel the W&RSETA addresses the need of different enterprises? Y/N
13. In your opinion, are enterprises aware of the level and quality of services they are entitled to from the W&RSETA? Y/N
14. Are you aware of W&RSETA service charters setting out the standards of services? Y/N

15. In your opinion is information on the W&RSETA and its services accessible? Y/N
16. In your opinion is the information available on the W&RSETA relevant and useful? Y/N
17. In your opinion is the information provided accurate and up to date?
18. Are you aware of mechanisms to report your dissatisfaction with the W&RSETA? Y/N
19. Do you feel the W&RSETA staff are able to handle complaints fast and efficiently? Y/N
20. Do you feel the W&RSETA offerings provided value for money? Y/N
21. Do you feel the W&RSETA offerings economically efficient? Y/N

Co-operatives and small informal businesses.

22. In your opinion does the SETA have skills development programmes that address the needs of co-operatives and small informal businesses? Y/N
23. How would you rate the quality of programmes provided to co-operatives and small informal businesses?
Rate: 0-5.

Recommendations

24. How do you rate the W&RSETA with regards to the Batho Pele Principles? (Read more about the Batho Pele principles here: <http://www.kzncomsafety.gov.za/Default.aspx?tabid=232>)
25. How do you feel the W&RSETA can improve its services to its customers?

APPENDIX 2: List of survey respondents

Ackermans	DFO	Makro	Snoekies Food
4 Square Wholesale Cash n Carry	Dion Wired	Mambo Storage and Home	Soda Bloc
A. Bassa & Sons C.C. Wholesale Merchants	Dischem	Mansoor's Trading Wholesaler	Spec Savers
Absolute Pets	DLC Food Distributors	Maraj Wholesaler	Spitz
Access Cellular	Docrats Crockery Wholesalers	Marine Wholesalers	Splush
Aheer's Cash n Carry	Dot Graphics Supply	Mario's Meat Wholesalers	Sportsman Warehouse
Akhalwaya's & Frolos Factory Shop	Durban Furniture Mart	Mass Supply	SteelMart and Hardware
Alif Wholesaler	Edenvale Wholesale	Masscash	Stefano R
All Leather	Elegance Fabrics	Mat & May	Stop Perishable Wholesalers
Allway Agencies	Elgin Free Range Chicken	Matus Durban	Street Fever Durban
Alvi's Collection	Enlightenment Food Products Distributors	McCoy Glass Wholesaler	Stuart Graham Fabrics
AMC Cookware	Esquire	MCE Switch Gear	Studio M
Apeco Pty Ltd	Eufrasia	Midlands Eggs	Suffolk Meat Supplier
AQ Chicken	Euro Suit	Milga Manufacturing	Sunrise Cash n Carry
ASICS	Europa Art	Models Liquor Distributors	Supa Foods
Baby Republic	Exclusive Books	Moksa Electrical Wholesaler	Supa Packers Fish Processors Pty Ltd
Bacon Bikinis	Exotic Tobacco & Fragrances	Momo & Co.	Super Chicken Centre
Balobi Trading	ExperiMax	Montagu Trading Co.	Super Flora Distributor
Balucci Leather	Eye Q	Mountain Meat Traders	Superb Hyper
Bambata Unisex Fashion	Fathima Wholesalers	Mr Board	Superga
Bassa's Textile Plaza	Faureal	Muellers Optometrists	Supershop Retail & Wholesale
Beds from Home	Ferreira Electrical Wholesaler	Nessa's Hyper Store	Synnergy Distributors
Bidfood Empangen	Fish Bait Sea Products	NIM Agencies	TFS Wholesaler Vryheid
Big Blue	Fish n Chips	Not just salt	Thalassina
Bisco Plus	Flower Centre	Ocean Best Trading	The Body Shop
Blue Collar White Collar	Freedom of Movement	Office London	The Crazy Store
Board Riders	Freeway Toyota	Omega Paint and Hardware	The Cross Trainer
Bodhania Wholesalers Pty Ltd.	Fresh Flowers on Florida	Oranje Rivier Wine Cellars	The Fishermans Deli
Boss Exports	G Couture	Oskava	The Smart Food Company
BOVA Safety Sportswear	Game Store	Pak Persian Carpet	The Space
Boxer	Game4U	Panjivan Trading Co.	The Tobacconist
Brand Avenue	GG Trading	Parco Bags	The Toy Factory Shop
Bride & Co.	Grayston Meat	Patio Warehouse	The underwear Factory
Build A Bear Workshop	GSA Traders KZN	PC International	Timberland
Cachet-Johannesburg	Gym Wholesalers	PCK Distributors	Tool Wholesale
Café Coton	H2O Water Bar	Pearl Distributors	Touch Life
Canopy King	Handbag n Luggage	Performance Office Supplies	TransPharm
Canyon office T/A Vuvuzela Office & IT Services	HAWK Electrical and Industrial Wholesaler	Pete and Kats	U Save SA Distributors
Cardies Sharing Lifes Moment	I Fashion	Phillips Price Mart	Umbro SA
Carducci	Illovo Sugar - Umzimkulu Mill	Plastics for Africa	Union Electrical Wholesalers
Carrol Boyes	Impo Wholesalers	Quantek Electrical Wholesaler	Urban Republic
Chalmar Beef	IQ Discount and Electrical Wholesaler	Rafal Wholesale and Retail	V D P Prestige Distributors CC
Chatsworth Egg Nest	JE Living	Rands Distributors	Verimark
Checkers	Jetina	Rani's Fish Shop	Voltex - Briardene

Cherry Melon	JP Cigarette Wholesalers	Reebok	Voltex Retail Supplier
Chester Butcheries	Jumbo Crown Mines	Regal Meats	Vryheid Cash n Carry Wholesaler
Chipkins Catering Supplies	King Cake Party City	Ricky's Chicken	We Fix
Chothio Brothers	KwaZulu-Natal Hardware Distributors	S Buy Wholesaler	Wholesale Hardware
CITILEC	KZN Envelopes	SA Framing	Wholesale Meat Services
Clothing Mart	La Marina	Samsonite	Windy Willow Wholesale Nursery
Clothing Re-labelled	Lakato Pty Ltd	Seaview	Wing Girl
Code	Leaf jewellery	Selborne Carpet Wholesaler	Winston Sahn
Cosmetic Company Store	Letang	Shamilla's Fashion	Wolf Bros. Jewellers
Cotton On	Liberty Food Service Marketing Agents & Distributors	Shoes Connection	X-kids
Crazy Groceries	Lions Den Biltong	Shweta Wholesale Cosmetics	Yokico
Dawood Distribution KZN	Lite-Glo Electrical Wholesaler	Sibanye Wine	Yougazi
Décor East Persian Carpets	Luggage Warehouse	Silk by Design	Zaks Stationer
Delta Petroleum-Fuel Wholesaler	Lux Society	Simply Natural	Zetty Electrical Wholesale
Dev Land	Magent Electrical Supplies	Sissy Boy	Zulchem
Devia SA			