



agriculture

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Department:  
Agriculture  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

# **INTERNATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR**

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## **ACRONYMS**

AADP	African Agricultural Development Programme
AET	Agricultural Education and Training
AgriBEE	Agricultural Black Economic Empowerment
ASGI-SA	Accelerated and Shared Growth Initiative of South Africa
BATAT	Broadening Access to Agriculture Thrust
BEE	Black Economic Empowerment
BTOR	Back to Office Report
CASP	Comprehensive Agricultural Support Programme
CGIAR	Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research
DoA	Department of Agriculture
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
HRD	Human Resource Development
HRM	Human Resource Management
IFAD	International Fund for Agricultural Development
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NRM	National Resource Management
NRS	National Regulatory Services
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
RIPA	RIPA International
SA	South Africa
SADC	South African Developing Community
SAQA	South African Qualifications Authority
UN	United Nations
USDA	United States Department of Agriculture
WFP	World Food Programme
WTO	World Trade Organisation

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The dawn of the democratic era in South Africa in 1994, resulted in the looking afresh at the challenges facing this country. It was realised and subsequently encapsulated in policies that there was a need to redress the anomalies fostered by systems that previously supported an exclusive policy. These exclusive policies led to skewed human resource development.

Huge disparities in the level of education among people in the agricultural sector need to be addressed with great urgency.

The challenges identified, need to be dealt with in order for South Africa to move from its current status to the strategic objective of ***“equitable access and participation in a globally competitive, profitable and sustainable agricultural sector contributing to a better life for all”*** (The Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture).

The international training strategy will attempt to capitalize on opportunities that exist, especially in the subject areas where skills are lacking, in order to measure up to the challenges faced by the sector.

This international training strategy is a direct response to the “Broadening Access To Agriculture Thrust” (BATAT) programme which promotes the broadening of access to human resource development.

### 1.1 BACKGROUND

The redressing of the imbalances of skewed human resource development and the improvement of the skills level of people in the SA agricultural sector, is key in achieving the objectives of the Strategic Plan for South African Agriculture but will require a structured approach to optimally utilise training opportunities that exist.

The need for improving skills in the agricultural sector is based on the fundamental element of human capacity building. The SA government has committed itself to programmes that give impetus to investment in human capital.

The most desirable aim of the international training strategy is strengthening the country’s position in terms of regional and global competitiveness, and the building of competence that will enable South Africans to address development issues in-country, be internationally competitive and to support other African countries in addressing issues for development of the region.

The international training strategy is informed by the Skills Development Act (No.97 of 1998) which was promulgated to ensure the development of skills and competencies of the workforce in SA by encouraging workers to engage in training programmes.

The dawn of democracy in SA ended a long history of isolation. The end of isolation meant that for the first time SA would become an active and legitimate

participant in global affairs. Being an active participant meant SA had to be involved in global economic competition.

## **1.2 MANDATE**

The International Training Strategy for the Agricultural Sector derives its mandate from sources such as The International Training Programme Policy, The AET Strategy, The Skills Development Act and the HRD Strategy for the DoA.

### **International training programme policy**

The International Training Programme Policy sets out guidelines for the creation of a framework for the training of people in the agriculture sector in SA. The framework provides for the effective and coordinated implementation of international training programmes. Through this framework the DoA will avail resources enabling access to the training programmes.

### **The AET Strategy**

The aim of the AET strategy is to improve the image of agriculture and facilitate equal access to training and education opportunities in the agricultural sector through the harmonization of training programmes and curricula. It further aims to continually assess the impact of changes in the agricultural environment and determining the needs of the sector in order to develop strategies to overcome its challenges.

### **The Skills Development Act (Act 97 of 1998)**

The purposes of this act are to enable the development of the skills of the South African workforce, through encouraging employers to provide employees with the opportunities to acquire new skills, to encourage workers to participate in learnerships and other training programmes and to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination and to redress those disadvantages through training and education.

### **HRD Strategy for the Department of Agriculture**

The mission of this strategy is to maximize people development, management and empowerment through quality skills development. The strategy aims to develop human resource capacity through relevant skills programmes in order to improve living standards and enable effective and equitable service delivery.

## **1.3 CURRENT CHALLENGES**

Challenges facing the sector can be summarized as follows.

### **Skills shortages**

SA is currently facing shortages of skills in certain subject fields in agriculture. These fields are described as scarce agricultural skills and include but are not limited to the areas of veterinary sciences, agricultural engineering, agricultural economics, agricultural development and agriculture production which include viticulture and biotechnology, as identified through the AET strategy. We need to

address these skills shortages through structured training interventions to enable a productive agricultural economy. The skills shortages are limiting factors to the proper development of the sector and the country as a whole.

### **Processing and manufacturing**

SA has many natural resources which supply the raw material to industries. Much of these raw materials are exported for processing and manufacturing abroad, leading to great economic benefits to mainly developed countries and such processed goods and products are returned to SA at very high cost.

### **Development programmes**

Many national programmes have been launched in the view of developing the industry and the economy as a result. These programmes require skilled and competent drivers and implementation agents.

### **Drive to become self-reliant**

SA has the potential and the inclination to become self-reliant. Currently SA is largely dependant on donor assisted training and interventions in certain skills areas. SA strives towards being less dependant on donor assistance to cope with development issues in the country and region.

### **Globalization**

Globalization resulted in the leveling of playing fields for all role players in economies around the world. In order to remain competitive role players must ensure they are at the forefront of developments and innovations. SA must stay abreast of current regulatory issues, trade matters and technological developments, in order to be competitive and an equal opposition/partner.

International training can ensure the acquisition of new technologies, innovations and skills, the exposure to leaders in the various fields, the building of a resource base where information can be sourced from and the networking with organisations and individuals from developed and developing countries.

## **1.4 OPPORTUNITIES**

Since 1994 there has been an increased international goodwill towards SA. This is demonstrated in the many bi-lateral and multi-lateral agreements that have been signed between SA and many of the outside countries. These agreements are characterised by trade, training and technology transfer. As a result many agricultural training programmes have been offered to SA.

The international training providers have been active in disseminating information on training opportunities to SA, mainly focussing on agriculture production and resource utilisation and management.

The most prominent include the Cochran Fellowship Programme, which is the USDA's Foreign Agricultural Service, International Cooperation and Development

Initiative which provides training to international participants from countries across the world.

Since 1995, SA has been invited to take part in this programme and candidates are nominated by the DoA, are screened and ultimately selected by the Cochran Fellowship Office, to attend training relevant to their career in the USA. The main aim of the programme is to develop young South Africans through providing short term training courses on specific topics.

Other prominent programmes include JICA, Galilee College in Israel and RIPA International. The majority of these training programmes such as the Cochran Fellowship, JICA and others made itself attractive on the basis of their waiving of tuition fees for the participants from SA. The dilemma with donor programmes however is they do not always address the training needs of SA.

Many other opportunities are available through forums to which SA has membership, such as the Cairns Group, The Commonwealth which provide expertise training and consulting services to member countries, CGIAR, EU which is channeling large amounts of foreign aid into SA for development projects and with which SA recently (2004) signed the Trade, Development and Co-operation Agreement, IFAD, FAO, the South-South Cooperation, UN, WFP and the WTO.

Some of these bodies and/or agreements do not offer structured training programmes, but if South Africans work in collaboration with missions executed by them, valuable training will be gained.

## **1.5 BENEFITS**

The direct benefits of international training are the development of the competency of human capacity in the sector and the skilling of its workforce. Acquisition of skills will render the economically viable population internationally competitive. International training must lead to the point where SA has the skills and is capable to address development issues in-country and abroad.

International training will focus on the appropriate skills required to drive fundamental DoA key programmes such as ASGI-SA, CASP, AADP, AgriBEE, etc.

**ASGI-SA** which seeks to remove the constraints that inhibit economic growth rests on optimising public investment. International training is a key element of public investment in human capital. Emphasis on education and skills transfer forms a critical component to address removing barriers to sustainable economic growth which will be achieved through structured international training.

**CASP** aims to provide support and assistance to promote agricultural development, especially among land reform beneficiaries, will succeed through the implementation of a structured international training programme. CASP is

founded upon aspects of technical assistance, training and capacity building and information and knowledge management. The international training programme will target training opportunities that will provide skills in these areas.

**AADP** is a programme that will enable SA to assist neighbouring African countries in development issues through mainly providing technical support, technology sharing and harmonisation of standards. This will strengthen relationships on the continent and develop the continents' economic base.

For emerging farmers to function to their full potential in mainstream agriculture, which **AgriBEE** aims to achieve, training of the highest quality, of the relevant nature and of latest technology is required. The international training programme will be structured to give access to emerging farmers to training interventions that address these areas.

## **2. INTERNATIONAL TRAINING STRATEGY FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR**

### **2.1 VISION OF THE STRATEGY**

The vision of this international training strategy is guided by the vision of the DoA HRD strategy, namely a **competent and skilled agriculture sector** aimed at better service delivery and the attainment of the core strategies of the sector plan.

### **2.2 MISSION**

The mission of this strategy is to access and optimally utilize international training opportunities, build capacity, enrich skills, develop competencies for the empowerment, transformation and development of human capacity in the sector.

### **2.3 PRINCIPLES GUIDING THIS STRATEGY**

The principle guiding this strategy is that it must lead to good returns on investment. It must further lead to measurable outcomes which can be benchmarked to ensure the sector objectives are met, and they include:

- 2.3.1 facilitating training that is linked to the SA agricultural sector objectives
- 2.3.2 facilitate training in scarce agricultural skills and new innovations and technologies
- 2.3.3 facilitating training of individuals that will drive employment equity and transformation in the sector
- 2.3.4 facilitating training that will promote competency and enable better service delivery
- 2.3.5 facilitate training that are needs driven and strategically linked to the broader human resource development plan of the government
- 2.3.6 facilitate equitable access to training



## **2.4 SPECIFIC OBJECTIVES**

The specific objectives of the international training strategy are to facilitate training in subject areas where the SA agricultural sector is lacking and also developing skills that will enable South Africans to become leaders in their fields.

The international training strategy enables the DoA to, in consultation with stakeholders, formulate a skills development target. This target will be set in realistic terms based on current international training opportunities and the skills needs, with emphasis on the scarce skills in the agricultural sector. It is envisaged that targets be projected for periods of 5 year terms.

## **2.5 SPECIFIC AREAS OF INTERNATIONAL TRAINING**

The specific areas of training that will be addressed through international training will be adjusted from time to time as the needs of the sector change. Currently the skills needs in the SA agricultural sector, among which the scarce skills have been identified as:-

- veterinary sciences
- agricultural economics, trade and business
- agricultural engineering
- food sciences
- agricultural sciences
- viticulture
- horticulture
- plant pathology
- bio-technology

Other fields of training will include Legal Studies, Intellectual Property Rights, Quality Assurance and best practice in Financial Management Standards, Human Resources Development and Human Resources Management.

## **2.6 IMPACT DERIVED FROM INTERNATIONAL TRAINING**

The likely impact that will be derived from the international training is the development of personnel. The emphasis will be placed on developing those skills that are inadequate and will be informed by a skills needs analysis. Building of expertise and developing competencies will be key outcomes of the training interventions.

## **2.7 SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

This strategy will allow the DoA to facilitate training for the entire agricultural sector in SA including persons inside and outside the DoA. Emphasis is placed on eliminating skewed participation and to identify programmes that will encourage the development of potential trainees from the designated groups.

## **2.8 AREAS OF FOCUS**

The training will be implemented using various methods and these include staff/student exchange programmes, shadowing consultants/industrial placements, full-time and part time undergraduate and post graduate studies, short courses, conferences and seminars.

### **2.8.1 STAFF / STUDENT EXCHANGE PROGRAMME**

Exchange programmes provide opportunities for staff and/or other potential trainees to be deployed in organisations elsewhere. This arrangement leads to practical on-the-job training. This will include management, professional, technical and student exchange programmes with governments, research institutions, universities and companies abroad. This arrangement will be guided by the secondment policy of the DoA.

### **2.8.2 SHADOWING CONSULTANTS / INDUSTRIAL PLACEMENTS**

Industrial placements (internships) will be encouraged where trainees (learners) work in conjunction with experts in various fields of scarce and critical skills in the agriculture sector in SA and abroad. This seeks in particular to impart high level skills to various professionals and technicians in the sector.

### **2.8.3 UNDERGRADUATE STUDIES**

Undergraduate study fields will be informed by the skills needs analysis and will be guided by the Sector Strategic Plan objectives and the capacity to provide such skills. Study areas will include the skills required to drive national programmes such as ASGI-SA, AADP, CASP and AgriBEE and will focus on those study fields where South African Academic Institutions are unable to produce the desired capacities needed by the sector within a given timeframe. The training must be technological in nature and address the issues and problems faced by the beneficiaries of these national programmes.

### **2.8.4 POST-GRADUATE STUDIES**

Topics for post-graduate studies will be determined by the skills need in the country and is informed by the Sector Strategic Plan objectives. This will include all the study fields identified in 2.5 but with a strong focus on processing and manufacturing skills. Emphasis must be placed on practices that are sustainable.

### **2.8.5 SHORT COURSES**

Short courses focussing on areas of trade, import and export programmes and regulatory issues will be targeted as key areas of training. Short course training will be focussed but not limited to areas of sustainable development, risk management, monitoring and evaluation, Total Quality Management, contingency planning, project and investment appraisal and auditing. Emphasis

for training will be placed on processing and value-adding to raw material. Training will also focus on consumer demand and needs in the global market.

## **2.8.6 CONFERENCES AND SEMINARS**

Appropriate and motivated conferences and seminars that offer an element of training and have strategic importance, such as events around international regulatory issues, trends, best practices and standards, will be targeted as international training interventions.

## **3. ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES**

### **3.1 MINISTER**

The minister will be responsible for the approval of attendance to international training programmes in line with the International Training Programme Policy.

### **3.2 DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

The Director-General is responsible for monitoring and evaluating of the impact of international training programmes and to ensure that it is in line with the objectives of the DoA and the sector in line with the International Training Programme Policy.

### **3.3 DIRECTOR: Education, Training and Extension Services**

The Director must ensure that procedures are in place to facilitate the accessing of training programmes from international training providers. The Director will also be overall responsible for the dissemination of information to external stakeholders and for the coordination of training programmes and the liaison with all stakeholders involved.

### **3.4 HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT**

Directorate Human Resources Management must ensure that officials, who obtained approval to attend international training programmes and interventions, comply with all procedural requirements for leave and absence from work. HRM must assist in ensuring that officials are trained in accordance with the HRD strategy objectives.

### **3.5 OTHER DIRECTORATES**

Directors of relevant directorates are responsible for disseminating relevant training information within their respective units as well as to provinces where it is relevant.

Directorates must guide the Directorate Education, Training and Extension Services in terms of the preferred institutions with which training, specific to their fields, is preferred.

### **3.6 INTERNATIONAL TRAINING COMMITTEE**

The training committee scrutinises training interventions and applications to such training programmes. The committee will agree on standards for international study programmes.

### **4. PAYMENT OF EXPENSES**

The Directorate Education Training and Extension Services will pay for the return airfare for all participants of international training interventions in line with the International Training Policy. The relevant directorates are responsible for a daily subsistence allowance to the appropriate trainee. Where training is not subsidised by the training provider, the Directorate of the relevant applicant, must fund from their own budgets or source funding elsewhere to enable the payment for the training programme.

### **5. MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

Monitoring and evaluation of training programmes is a fundamental element to ascertain whether programmes meet the required standards as highlighted under the principles guiding this strategy.

The Directorate Education, Training and Extension Services will supply the International Training Committee with reports, including Back to Office Reports (BTOR) on a quarterly basis.

The Directorate Education, Training and Extension Services will establish an alumni forum of beneficiaries of international training programmes and on a tri-annual basis organise alumni conferences with the intention to seek feedback on the impact of the training programmes completed.

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