



DIGITAL SKILLS FORUM TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. Introduction

South Africa has many industry and government digital skills initiatives that are underway, some of which are carried out through industry-government partnerships. The biggest challenge and concern is the silo approach in the development as well as implementation of these initiatives which lead to duplication of resources and general lack of visible impact.

The National Digital and Future Skills Strategy, developed by the Department of Communication and Digital Technologies (DCDT), is intended to provide a framework for the prioritisation of critical digital and future skills as well as to ensure coordinated and integrated implementation across government and various sectors.

The National Digital and Future Skills Strategy recognises the importance of leadership and governance to ensure successful digital skills generation and development for the next five years to ensure future impact. The Strategy proposed the establishment of the Digital Skills Forum as an institutional mechanism that will ensure a coordinated implementation of the digital skills programme. This is also echoed in the recommendations of the diagnostic report of the Presidential Commission on the 4th Industrial Revolution (PC4IR) which acknowledges that the skills development ecosystem is characterised by a silo mentality and expresses concerns about the speed at which entities are able to adapt and change curricula to accommodate the needs of the workplace.

The Digital and Future Skills Strategy states that the Digital Skills Forum will provide technical digital skills support to the broader work of the HRDC and ensure coordinated implementation of the digital skills programme with secretarial support from the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies.

2. Definition of the Digital Skills Forum

A Digital Skills Forum (DSF) shall lead, oversee and coordinate the implementation of the national digital skills programme. A critical function of the DSF is to provide strategic direction to the implementation of the programme, prioritise and coordinate areas of focus, mobilise resources in the form of expertise, funding and institutional support, and monitor performance. The DSF will also advise on the reconceptualisation and structuring of the digital skills development ecosystem in support of digital skills building.

The DSF should link into the Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) given its advisory role on human resource development of the country. It will provide technical digital skills support to the broader work of the HRDC and ensure a coordinated implementation of the digital skills programme.

2.1. Specific roles and responsibilities of members

- 2.1.1. Provide technical digital skills support to the broader work of the HRDC.
- 2.1.2. Facilitate information, expertise, and knowledge sharing.
- 2.1.3. Mobilise resources to support the digital skills programme.
- 2.1.4. Advise and guide the redesigning and streamlining of the skills ecosystem.
- 2.1.5. Advice on the funding mechanism for digital skills building.
- 2.1.6. Oversee prioritization and coordination of various digital skills initiatives.
- 2.1.7. Ensure investment in strategic projects for mass skills development.
- 2.1.8. Monitoring and evaluation of action plan.
- 2.1.9. Endorse the recommendations of the Technical Working Group.

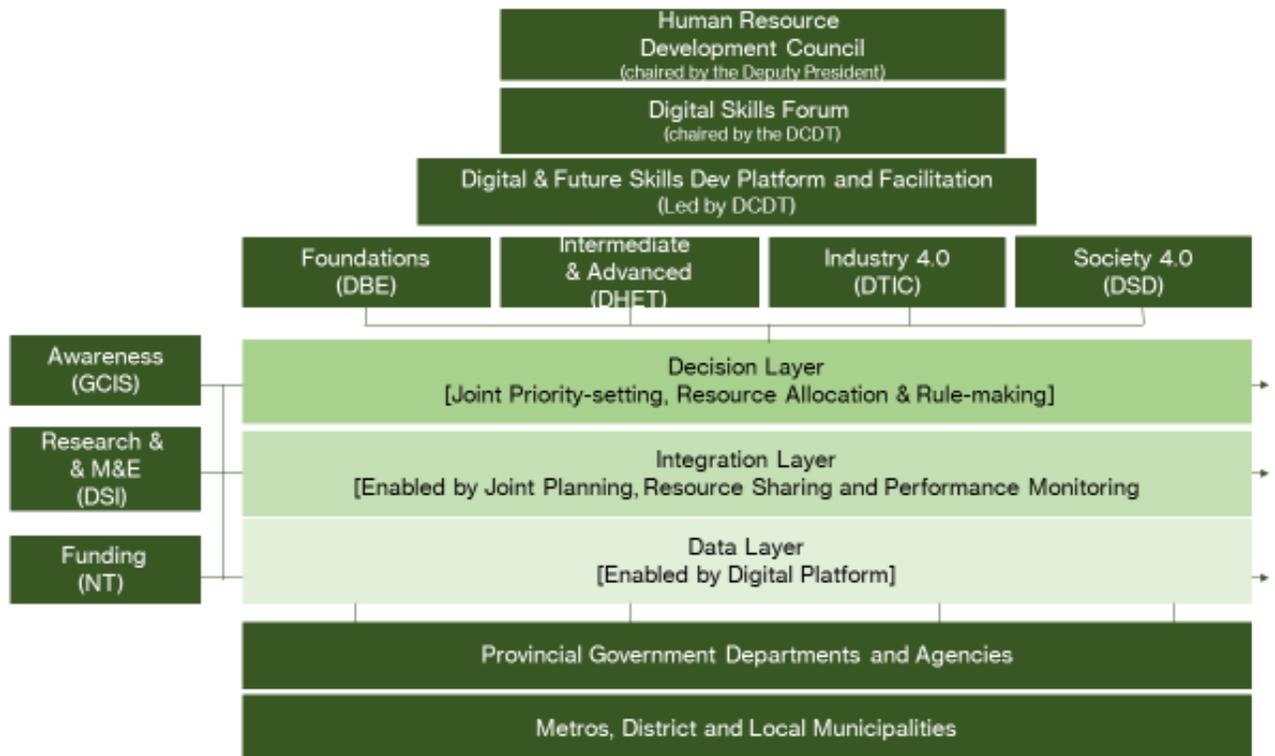
2.2. Composition of the Digital Skills Forum

The complexity of the skills development ecosystem calls for an implementation approach that goes beyond the limitations of bureaucratic forms of organisation, the dominant mode of organisation in the public sector. Whereas bureaucratic forms of organisation emphasise centralisation, authority and control, the network

mode of organisation places emphasis on a plurality of actors, interdependence, and incentives for collective action. Distributed leadership and governance structures premised on the recognition that no one actor or entity has all the knowledge, expertise and resources to enable digital skills development for the country are more suited to the network mode of organisation for addressing the complex challenges of the ecosystem.

The Digital Skills Forum is integral part of the leadership and management architecture of institutional design for the Digital Skills Implementation Programme which incorporates provincial and local government stakeholders as outlined in the figure below.

Figure 1: Institutional Design of the Digital Skills Development Programme Implementation Platform



2.3. Identified Members of the Digital Skills Forum

The Forum will be comprised of representatives of the organizations, departments and institutions listed below. The level of participation for organisations and government entities will be at the Chief Executive Officer or at a “decision making level” as decided by the CEO. An alternate may also attend on behalf of the CEO.

For Government Departments the invitation is sent to Director-General level who may also appoint an alternate who is at a Senior Management Level in the public service.

- 2.3.1. Department of Communications and Digital Technologies
- 2.3.2. Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA)
- 2.3.3. Department of Basic Education (DBE)
- 2.3.4. Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET)
- 2.3.5. Department of Science and Innovation (DSI)
- 2.3.6. Department of Employment and Labour (DEL)
- 2.3.7. Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC)
- 2.3.8. Department of Small Business Development (DSBD)
- 2.3.9. Department of Social Development (DSD)
- 2.3.10. Department of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities (DWYPD)
- 2.3.11. National Youth Development Agency (NYDA)
- 2.3.12. Provincial Departments of Education
- 2.3.13. PMO on the Presidential Youth Initiative
- 2.3.14. National Treasury
- 2.3.15. South African Council of Educators (SACE)
- 2.3.16. National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT)
- 2.3.17. Universities South Africa (USAf)
- 2.3.18. National School of Government (NSG)
- 2.3.19. South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA)
- 2.3.20. Sector Education Authorities (SETAs)

- 2.3.21. Quality Council for Trades and Occupations (QCTO)
- 2.3.22. The Drone Council
- 2.3.23. The IOT Council
- 2.3.24. BPESA
- 2.3.25. Business Unity South Africa (BUSA)
- 2.3.26. National Business Initiative (NBI)
- 2.3.27. Black Business Council
- 2.3.28. MNOs
- 2.3.29. Digital Council Africa
- 2.3.30. Productivity SA
- 2.3.31. National Skills Authority (NSA)

2.4. Term of Office for members

The members of the Digital Skills Forum will be for five years, aligned to the Digital and Future Skills Implementation Programme. The Forum should review and make recommendations on its Terms of Reference on a regular basis.

2.5. Cluster of Interventions to be undertaken by the Digital Skills Forum

Cluster of Interventions	Lead	Key responsibilities
Strengthening digital foundations	Department of Basic Education (DBE) in close collaboration with a Provincial Department of Education, the South African Council for Educators (SACE), the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT), labour unions	The DHET will play an important role in regard to actions and investments aimed at building the digital competence of educators together with HEI faculties and schools of education, the ETDPSETA, DBE circuit managers, subject advisors and related school ICT structures.
Developing intermediate and	DHET in collaboration with the DBE, QCTO,	DHET will take the overall lead and also lead

<p>advanced digital skills</p>	<p>SAQA, Universities South Africa (USAf), the Association of College Principals, HEI Faculties and Schools of Education, SETAs, the Department of Science and Innovation (DSI), Department of Trade, Industry and Competition (DTIC), NEMISA, the National Research Foundation (NRF), Science Councils, the Council for Higher Education (CHE), business association/employer representatives</p>	<p>the implementation of activities related to building a future-ready TVET subsystem, and developing the higher education system as a platform for advance digital skills. In the case of building a vibrant ecosystem for digital entrepreneurship, the DTIC will play a leading role, together with the Department of Small Business Development (DSBD), the Small Enterprise Development Agency (SEDA), DSI (Technology Transfer Station Programme), and NEMISA.</p>
<p>Workplace readiness in the private sector and government</p>	<p>DHET, the National Skills Authority (NSA) ,SETAs, science councils and innovation spaces, universities and TVETs, National School of Government (NSG), Employers' Organisations, Business Associations, Labour Unions</p>	<p>Activities directed at building digital skills for the private sector will be undertaken in collaboration with the DHET. Activities targeting the optimisation of skills for digital government will be led by the DPSA, through the National School of Government (NSG), in collaboration with the Government Information Technology Officers Council (GITOC), the State Information Technology Agency (SITA), Broadband Infracore (BBI), Sentech, the South African Local Government Association</p>

		(SALGA), the Public Services Sector Education and Training Authority (PSETA), and frontline public service departments
Young people not in employment, education and training	Department of Women, Youth and People with Disabilities (DWYPD), through the National Youth Development Agency (NYDA),	A broad range of collaborators are required for the effective implementation of this cluster of interventions, including the Project Management Office in the Presidency, the Government Technical Advisory Centre (GTAC), DHET, the Department of Employment and Labour (DEL, Employment Services of South Africa), the NSA, SETAs, NEMISA, and programmes such as the Youth Employment Service (YES) and the Harambee Youth Employment Accelerator. Stakeholders involved in mobilising support for the Basic Package of Support for young people are also critical SETAs and SALGA
Digital skills development for Society 4.0	Department of Social Development (DSD), in close collaboration with Department of Home Affairs (DoA), Department of Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA), Department of	The data layer is critical to the success of the implementation programme given the critical role information will play mapping digital skills demand and supply, and in facilitating access to services and support in the rollout thereof. A number of

	<p>Sports, Arts and Culture (DSAC), Department of Health (DoH), and other front line service delivery departments, LGSETA, the Services SETA, HWSETA, the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI), National Library South Africa (NLSA), and the Information Regulator South Africa (IRSA) and the National Consumer Commission (NCC).</p>	<p>disparate databases and management information systems exist that do not have standardised frameworks for interoperability and sharing of data. The interventions to create awareness will be led by the Government Communication and Information Services (GCIS), research, performance monitoring and evaluation will be led by the DCDT, and the resource mobilisation and funding will be led by the National Treasury (NT).</p>
<p>Massive awareness campaign on the critical importance of digital skills</p>	<p>DCDT working with the 4IR Project Management Office (PMO)</p>	<p>To prepare citizens to effectively participate in the opportunities and mitigating the risks associated with the 4IR. Such a campaign should harness youth leadership and civic participation to promote the development of digital skills through a multi-media campaign combining face-to-face, community outreach, social media platforms, and public broadcasting media including radio and television. Recruitment of volunteers trained in communicating key messages through various channels including schools, sports clubs and activities, and other community outlets must form a cornerstone of the campaign.</p>

2.6. Meetings of the Digital Skills Forum

The Forum will meet not more than twice per annum in ordinary session. The meeting quorum shall be constituted by 50% of the Digital Skills Forum members.

3. Technical Support

The Digital Skills Forum may establish its Technical Working Groups as it deems necessary. Each Technical Working Group shall appoint a chairperson who will convene working group meetings through the Forum Secretariat based at the Department of Communications and Digital Technologies.

3.1. Frequency of Meetings of the Technical Working Groups

The Digital Skills Technical Working Group shall be convened at least once a month or as deemed necessary by the Chairperson.

4. Secretariat support

The Digital Skills Forum Secretariat will be supported by the Department of Communications (DCDT) and the 4IR PMO within the DCDT.

4.1. Functions of the Secretariat

4.1.1. The Secretariat shall provide personnel for coordinating the meetings, administration of the agenda, and report writing.

4.1.2. The Chairperson shall be responsible for informing the Secretariat about the reporting and/or feedback mechanisms they will choose to employ to facilitate information management in general, as well as report-back on tasks specifically delegated to individual cluster members.
