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Workplace Skills Plans Submission Deadline 2018 by Gideon Gerber



Reminding businesses about the importance of submitting Workplace Skills Plans before 30 April 2018.

The Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) and the Annual Training Report (ATR) are instrumental in the establishment of a demand-led skills development system which is responsive to the social and economic needs of South Africa.

Why is workplace skills planning so important?

The purpose of workplace skills planning is to outline how organisations will address their training and skills development requirements. WSPs support employers in the recognition and implementation of various *skills development programmes* such as learnerships and internships that will deal with skills gaps within a company.

Where businesses require Skills Development to be recognised on their B-BBEE Scorecard for B-BBEE compliance purposes, the below documents should be submitted to the sector specific SETA before 30 April 2018:

- **A Workplace Skills Plan (WSP)** – An organisation’s articulated training plan for the period April 2018 – March 2019.
- **An Annual Training Report (ATR)** – A report on actual training and development initiatives completed during the previous year.
- **A Pivotal Training Plan** – A strategic plan aligned to industry-specific scarce skills that may be required within the business.
- **A Pivotal Training Report** – A Scarce Skills report articulating the outcomes of the preceding year’s Pivotal Training Plan.

What are the benefits of submitting a Workplace Skills Plan?

- An organisation will qualify to ***recover 20% of their skills spend as a Mandatory Grant*** allocated from Skills Development Levies already paid to SARS.
- An organisation ***becomes eligible to apply for Discretionary Grants*** from the affiliated SETA, provided that a WSP has been accepted and approved by the SETA. These grants can assist the organisation to effectively implement skills plans, e.g. Learnerships, Internships or Skills Training Programmes as indicated on submission of the WSP and ATR.

What are the consequences of failing to submit a Workplace Skills plan?

Although it is not compulsory by law for businesses to submit a WSP and Pivotal Report, there are certain adverse consequences should a business fail to do so. These consequences include, but are not limited to the following:

- Zero points will be earned for the *Skills Development* element on the *B-BBEE scorecard*.
- Forfeiture of Mandatory and Discretionary Grants.
- Unsuccessful tender bids as tenders may be subject to rigorous pre-qualifying criteria such as submission of a WSP.

The WSP is generally compiled by a qualified Skills Development Facilitator (SDF) and then submitted to the sector specific SETA. Formulating and submitting these documents can be very time consuming.

SERR Synergy has a team of experienced *Skills Development Facilitators* (SDFs) who assist businesses with the completion and submission of these plans and reports by acting as SDFs on your behalf. With only a few days left for submitting the WSPs and Pivotal Plans, we advise companies to submit these sooner than later. These submissions are done online and experience has shown that online submissions are somewhat burdensome because of possible downtime of the system.

About the author: *Gideon Gerber* is one of the founding directors of *SERR Synergy* and an admitted High Court attorney with more than 30 years' experience in Business Structuring & Compliance, Training, Skills Development and Business Compliance in South Africa, the UK and Namibia. He obtained his Master's Degree in Law from the University of Pretoria with a research thesis on *B-BBEE Fronting*. Gideon is a regular speaker at various B-BBEE seminars and writes articles for the *Business Day* and *Landbouweekblad* that concerns B-BBEE Matters.

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