




<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Department of Agriculture and Rural Development</b>
<b>Programme</b>	<b>Administration</b>
<b>Policy</b>	<b>e- Learning Policy</b>
<b>Policy Number</b>	ref. 3/11/P
<b>Compiled by</b>	<b>Directorate: Human Resource Development</b>
<b>Approval</b>	 _____ <b>HEAD OF DEPARTMENT</b> _____ <b>DATE:</b>

## 1. PREAMBLE

- 1.1. The Human Resource Development Strategic Framework : Vision 2015, seeks to adopt a wide set of options for capacity building in order to respond to the varying needs and requirements and build the capacity of employees in the Public Service to undertake their responsibilities.
- 1.2. Steady improvements in the provisioning of training opportunities by the departments to their employees have been recorded, but there are still few exceptions, particularly in the rural areas because of the increased cost of delivery, the lack of training providers, and in some cases the unavailability of facilities.
- 1.3. Access to training is still limited and unavailable in the right place, at the right time and for the target audience. Therefore e-Learning can improve access, promote uniformity in standards and significantly reduce the cost of capacity development.
- 1.4. Complementary training delivery methods such as e-Learning must be promoted to empower public servants to develop themselves and be encouraged to maintain currency with developments in their respective fields.
- 1.5. Research has shown that e-Learning leverages online internet based technology to place the learner at the centre of learning cycle and allows the learner to carry out self-directed learning rather than simply being given knowledge and expertise through face-to-face classroom learning.
- 1.6. People with disabilities can benefit from e-Learning and these benefits include flexibility of time, location and instructional mode that are made possible through learning technologies.
- 1.7. e-Learning makes it possible for public servants who, in addition to their official duties have family responsibilities and therefore have limitations on time available for training and development.
- 1.8. E-Learning is a strategic initiative requiring collective responsibility at National Provisional and Organisational levels.
- 1.9. Departments must take responsibility for the successful implementation of the Public Service e-Learning Policy Framework within their departments.

- 1.10. e-Learning fosters the idea of a self-directed learning model where an individual takes full responsibility for his/her learning needs, diagnoses his/her needs, formulates his/her goals, identifies available resources, and evaluates his/her outcomes. It is suitable for learners who prefer to learn on their own and for learners who need to learn very technical skills at a specific level and pace.
- 1.11. While the Public Service e-Learning Policy Framework provides guidelines for the e-Learning, implementation will be informed by the context of utilisation within individual departments.

## 2. DEFINITION

- 2.1. e-Learning is a term used for training intervention and materials that optimally utilise Information and Communications Technologies (ICTs) to support and enhance on online-learning.
- 2.2. e-Learning can include a number of delivery approaches, ranging from performance support for individual learners to the collaborative construction of knowledge and sharing of resources through technology.
- 2.3. The policy recognises the following forms of e-Learning :
  - a) Multi-media learning.
  - b) Technology-enhanced learning.
  - c) Computer-based instruction.
  - d) Computer managed instruction.
  - e) Computer based training.
  - f) Computer assisted instruction or computer aided instruction.
  - g) Internet based training.
  - h) Flexible learning web based training.
  - i) Online education virtual education.
  - j) Virtual learning environment.
  - k) Mobile or m-learning, and
  - l) Digital education.

- 2.4. The integration of ICTs in course offerings depends on a number of factors, which include but is not the availability of technical resources the nature of the learning materials and the profile of the target audience.

### 3. RATIONALE

- 3.1. The intention of the Public Service e-Learning Policy Framework is to :

- 3.1.1. Outline the way in which e-Learning should be implemented and utilised within the Public Service.
- 3.1.2. Provide an enabling mechanism for public servants to understand their role in e-Learning and how to make use of e-Learning for capacity building.
- 3.1.3. Focus and coordinate e-Learning in the public service and interlink it with other capacity building initiatives to create a stronger learning culture and enhance accessibility to training and development.
- 3.1.4. Enhance speed to competence with flexible capacity building interventions with an improved government delivery system.
- 3.1.5. Allow for the personalisation of training for each employee, thus enabling the tailoring and tracking of individual employees training plans to ensure organisational goals, and
- 3.1.6. Facilitates the provision of appropriate technology and resources in order to provide learners with the freedom to determine when and where they wish to learn.

- 3.2. e-Learning as a mode of delivery can achieve amongst other, the following :

- 3.2.1. access to learning opportunities that would otherwise not have been available to learners.
- 3.2.2. Minimise the time spent by learner away from the workplace, and
- 3.2.3. Minimise ancillary costs, such as travelling, accommodation and catering.

#### 4. SCOPE OF APPLICATION

- 4.1. The Public Service e-Learning Policy Framework is applicable to all public officials employed by the department listed in Schedule 1, 2 and 3 of the Public Service Act 1994 as amended.
- 4.2. This Public Service Learning Policy Framework forms part of the overall Human Resource Development Strategy for Government and should also be used in conjunction with other regulatory documents as discussed in Section 5.

#### 5. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS

- 5.1. Human Resource Development Strategic Framework for the Public Service : Vision 2015.
- 5.2. National Skills Development Strategy (NSDS).
- 5.3. National Qualifications Framework.
- 5.4. Public Service Act 1994 as amended
- 5.5. Skills Development Act 97 Of 1998
- 5.6. Skills Development Levies Act 9 Of 1999
- 5.7. Public Finance Management Act 1 of 1999
- 5.8. Directive on utilisation of Training Budget.
- 5.9. E-Government strategy.
- 5.10. Directive on compulsory Induction Programme.
- 5.11. The electronic communication Act of 2005.

#### 6. APPLICATION OF THE POLICY

This Public Service e-Learning Policy Framework is premised on that :

- 6.1. e-Learning is another delivery method for widening access to learning and development and the content must be based of formally approved and accepted courseware specially targeted to the Public Services.
- 6.2. e-Learning is optimally utilised where appropriate infrastructure, knowledge and skills are developed, to support the programme.

- 6.3. e-Learning implementation is standardised, and the learning management system should enable the rollout of the training.
- 6.4. The availability of e-Learning specifications can limit duplication of effort, shorten lead times to training and development, improve productivity and reduce costs.
- 6.5. Standardisation can improve communication and mutual understanding of e-Learning in the Public Service.
- 6.6. Standardised e-Learning implementation enhances the applicability of lessons learned and promotes continuous improvement in the programme.
- 6.7. The types and purpose of standards include :
  - a. Conceptual standards to enable comparison.
  - b. Implementation standards to enable interoperability of the systems.
  - c. Level standards to define quality.
- 6.8. Programmes selected for delivery by means of e-Learning must meet criteria such as suitability in the design of content, target audience and resources,
- 6.9. Support structure as the Departmental Training Committee that will ensure the mainstreaming of e-Learning in the capacity building within the department.
- 6.10. The design of learning materials and assessment strategies are underpinned by pedagogies that support e-Learning.
- 6.11. Suitably qualified training providers are utilised to facilitate the e-Learning process.
- 6.12. In as far as it is possible, accommodation of the target audience should be taken into account, with regard to computer literacy to ensure optimal learning. However, for practical purpose, training will be conducted in English but the content and instructions can be customised to the language of the learner within reasonable means, and
- 6.13. This requires the review and revision of the current Information and Communication Technology (ICT) infrastructure to support training and development.

## 7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### 7.1. PRINCIPLES

- 7.1.1. Training resources should be allocated to meet transformational priorities.
- 7.1.2. Training must be budgeted for adequate time is made available for training.
- 7.1.3. Below are the roles and responsibilities of stakeholders which are mostly generic to training and development :

The Human Resource Practitioners shall :

- 7.1.3.1.1. Undertake to integrated the Public Service e-Learning Policy Framework with other HRD departmental policies.
- 7.1.3.1.2. Keep abreast of available capacity building intervention in order to select and advise on appropriate training and development solutions,
- 7.1.3.1.3. Intergraded planning for training and development interventions within organisational planning and including resources, and
- 7.1.3.1.4. Create an enabling environment for e-Learning by means of the development and implementation of relevant departmental policies and regulatory documents in line with this Public Service e-Learning Policy Framework.

#### 7.1.3.2. LINE FUNCTION MANAGERS

In order to facilitate the smooth running of the programme managers shall :

- 7.1.3.2.1. Plan and identify their own development needs, that may be met through e-Learning.
- 7.1.3.2.2. Analyse learning and development needs of employees to identify relevant e-Learning interventions.
- 7.1.3.2.3. Integrate planning for employees' career development within departmental planning.
- 7.1.3.2.4. Ensure employees have equal access to e-Learning opportunities.
- 7.1.3.2.5. Assist employees in scheduling e-Learning courses.
- 7.1.3.2.6. Create an enabling environment for the successful completion of e-Learning interventions.
- 7.1.3.2.7. Agree on objectives in relation to the transfer of learning following course completion.



### **7.1.3.3. EMPLOYEES**

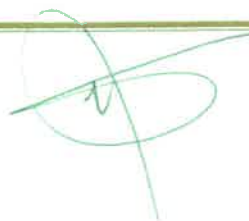
Below are some of the roles and responsibilities for the employee :

- 7.1.3.3.1. Upon selection by the candidate/employee of a programme for development and such programme has been approved in line with the Personal Development Plan (PDP), the employee must then :
  - a. Discuss learning and development needs with the line manager considering appropriate learning interventions.
  - b. The employee will have to undergo an induction course before commencing with the programme.
  - c. Ascertain if such a programme does exist with the preferred service provider.
  - d. Plan and schedule e-Learning to fit appropriately with other work duties.
  - e. Dedicate time for the completion of interventions.
  - f. Discuss learning outcomes with the line manager and share learning with others.
  - g. Reflect on learning outcomes benefits and plan for the transfer of learning, and
  - h. Complete and submit the evaluation summary report at the end of all interventions.

### **7.1.3.4. SERVICE PROVIDER**

Service providers are expected to :

- 7.1.3.4.1. Have appropriate experience in capacity building using e-Learning.
- 7.1.3.4.2. Be fully functional in the e-Learning environment.
- 7.1.3.4.3. Provide high quality materials suitable for e-Learning in the Public service.
- 7.1.3.4.4. Set realistic time frames for completion of assignments taking into account that learners will be executing normal duties in the work place.
- 7.1.3.4.5. Provide technical support during the course of the intervention.
- 7.1.3.4.6. Provide administrative support during the course of the intervention.
- 7.1.3.4.7. Provide academic support during the course of the intervention, and
- 7.1.3.4.8. Provide post –course support to promote learner achievement.



- 7.1.3.4.9. Provide the learner with an introduction to the course, to include at least the following :
- a. The purpose of the course.
  - b. Learning objectives.
  - c. Estimated required study time.
  - d. The structure of the course.
  - e. Estimated elapsed time required to complete the course.
  - f. Any materials (books, software etc) to be supplied by the learner and
  - g. The hardware and software required to use the materials.

#### **7.1.3.5. DEPARTMENTAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY UNIT**

- 7.1.3.5.1. The Departmental information Technology (IT) unit must provide technical support to HRD Unit with regards to selection of appropriate Learning Management Solution (LMS) as per the departmental information technology (IT) policy.
- 7.1.3.5.2. The Departmental IT Unit must assist HRD unit with :
- a. Creating of reasonable access to appropriate hardware and software to support e-Learning.
  - b. Contract management of the LMS vendor/s including negotiating licences.
- 7.1.3.5.3. The Departmental IT Unit must assist employees requiring requisite computer literacy to enable use of the selected LMS, and
- 7.1.3.5.4. The Departmental IT Unit must ensure that the implementation of e-Learning in the department and the associated LMS is within the departmental IT policy framework and such does not compromise the departmental IT security and other relevant laws.

## **8. INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENT AND SUPPORT**

The Department should take note of the areas highlighted below :

### **8.1. ELIGIBILITY**

Every employee is eligible for e-Learning Programme.

### **8.2. METHOD/APPLICATION**

e-Learning should ideally be used as stand-alone intervention but also to enhance traditional learning and therefore blended method is preferable.

### **8.3. TIME ALLOCATION**

- 8.3.1. Individuals must be provided with dedicated time and space to complete e-Learning interventions within their working hours.
- 8.3.2. Employee undergoing training and development through e-Learning must be allowed time during working hours to access e-Learning as it would be the case with employees attending lectures in a conventional learning mode.
- 8.3.3. Time used by employee to access e-Learning must be discussed and agreed upon between the employee and the supervisor.
- 8.3.4. Line managers must consult with the Directorate: Human Resource Development, should they require any assistance when dealing with time allocated for training and development.

### **8.4. ALTERNATIVES TO E-LEARNING**

- 8.4.1. e-Learning is one of many capacity building approaches. There may be particular reasons why individuals feel that they cannot fully benefit from e-Learning such as issue around accessibility and requisite knowledge and skills.
- 8.4.2. Where possible alternative methods must be explored to ensure that individuals have access to key information in order to meet their learning and development needs effectively.



## 9. RESPONSIBLE USE OF E-LEARNING

9.1. Provisions regulating responsible use of information technology in the department will apply to ensure that there is responsible use of e-Learning and the related hardware and software.

## 10. E-LEARNING INFORMATION SECURITY

10.1. The Learning Management Solution must make provision for stringent e-Learning information security in order to protect learners and all those involved in e-Learning.

10.2. The security measures must include :

- a. **Identification and Authentication** : Protecting against unauthorised login and validating the end users' identity prior to permit them server access.
- b. Locking users out of capabilities that are not included in their user profiles.
- c. Segmenting system permissions so that they map to the levels an specific kinds of permissions that the department requires.
- d. **Integrity** : protection of data from transmission errors and malicious acts.

## 11. GLOSSARY

These terms will be used to reference e-Learning. The use of standardised terminology can promote communication and mutual understanding about e-Learning:

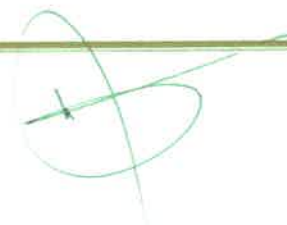
### 1. Accessibility

This refers to the practice of making e-Learning materials and actives usable for people, including those living with disability.

### 2. Assessment

Evaluating a learner's actual skill or knowledge level based on the expected skill or knowledge for a person in the same job, position or assignment.

### 3. Asynchronous learning



A self-paced learning event ; learners are online at different times and cannot communicate without time delay. Examples including knowledge and resource sharing using a web-based discussion board.

**4. Authoring tool**

Software application used to produce interactive learning materials that bring together all components of a course, such as text presentation, graphics and links.

**5. Bandwidth**

Rate of data transfer, measured in bits per second.

**6. Broadcast**

Transferring learning content to numerous learners simultaneously, for example via satellite broadcast or an IP (Internet Protocol) multicast from a single source.

**7. Computer-based training**

Any instructional event that can be accessed via a standalone computer, these interventions are typically delivered to individual learners.

**8. Content item**

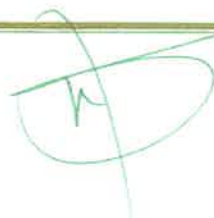
Information stored in a database and used to communicate knowledge and/or skills. It can be in any media format, including text, graphics, animation, video, audio and HTML plug-in. It is combined with practice items and assessment items to create a RIO.

**9. Content on demand**

Immediate availability of content via a network of an offering packaged in a media format such as audio on demand (AOD) and video on demand (VOD).

**10. Delivery**

Any method of providing training and education, methods include instructor-led training, web-based distance learning, interactive broadcast, videos and printed material.



**11. Digital divide**

This refers to the gap between individuals and/or geographic areas at different socio-economic levels with regard to both their opportunities to access ICTs for training and development.

**12. Distance learning**

The learning facilitator and learners are separated by time and/or location, courses are delivered to remote locations via synchronous or asynchronous means.

**13. eBook**

Information and graphics are organised in technology-mediated lessons or chapters.

**14. Electronic classroom**

A classroom equipped with multimedia devices that are used to enhance learning.

**15. E-literacy**

This refers to the range of knowledge, skills and values needed to appropriately use ICTs for training and development. This includes computer literacy, media literacy and information literacy as well as thinking and learning skills.

**16. Evaluation**

Any method used to gather information about the impact or effectiveness of a learning event, measurements might be used to improve the offering, determine if the learning objectives were achieved, or determine if the offering has been of value to the organisation.

**17. Facilitator**

This refers to a person who cultivates learning by utilising technology according to pedagogies that enables technology-mediated learning.

**18. Feedback**

Interaction between the learner and the facilitator or system, feedback enhance the quality of learning experience.



**19. Flexible learning**

Learning is delivered irrespective of time and distance, learning can be delivered when needed and reduces time to competence.

**20. Formative assessment**

Activities that reinforce the material being learned, a learner is given the opportunity to apply knowledge, skills and values. Some assessment activities provide feedback and mentoring. The learner's performance may or may not be affected by the results of formative assessment activities.

**21. Infrastructure**

This includes logistical arrangements from the implementation of e-learning interventions.

**22. Instructional designer**

This is an individual who (using systematic methodology and instructional theory) creates content for learning interventions.

**23. Instructor-led training**

A scheduled event conducted by an instructor, either in a classroom or online, this is sometimes referred to as leader-led training (LLT) or a lecture.

**24. Interoperability**

This refers to the ability of diverse technological systems and organisations to collaborate.

**25. Knowledge check**

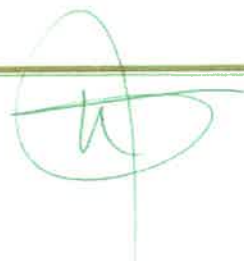
A question or learning activity that gives learners immediate feedback, allowing them to determine whether they can apply skills and knowledge just learned in a reusable information object.

**26. Lab**

A physical or virtual-on activity designed to help learners meet skills-based learning objectives.

**27. Learner**

This is anyone who accesses information to increase his or her skills and knowledge.



**28. Learning event**

This is an activity in which a learner increases his or her skills and knowledge.

**29. Learning objective**

A statement that establishes a measurable outcome, an objective is used as an advanced organizer to indicate how the learner's acquisition of skills and knowledge will be measured.

**30. Localization**

Modifying an offering to meet the specific needs of a geographic area, product or target audience, for example distinguishing between the public financial management act and the municipal financial management act.

**31. Mandatory training**

This refers to training and development required by management.

**32. Metadata**

This is information about content that allows it to be stored in and retrieved from a database.

**33. Offering**

Any learning intervention or service that is made available to a person as either an on demand event (the offering can be accessed by the at any time) or a scheduled event (the offering is made available at a predetermined time).

**34. Prescriptive learning**

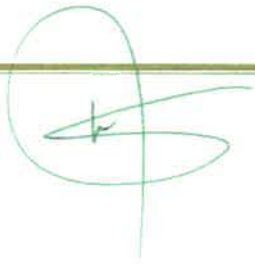
Matching a learner with offerings designed to fill gaps in the learner's knowledge and skills.

**35. Remediation**

Feedback is used to increase a learner's knowledge and skills relative to a specific learning objective.

**36. Reusable information object (RIO)**

This is a collection of content and assessment items based on a learning objective.



**37. Reusable learning object (RLO)**

This is information, based on RLOs, overviews, summaries and assessments that support a specific learning objectives.

**38. Scalability**

This indicates the ability of systems, people and processes to handle growing amounts of work effectively.

**39. Self-assessment**

A learner determines his or her level of knowledge and skills.

**40. Self-paced learning**

A learner determines his or her level of knowledge and skills.

**41. Strategic partner**

This refers to traders in product for e-Learning.

**42. Subject-matter expert (SME)**

This is an individual who has substantial knowledge about and skills in a specific subject.

**43. Synchronous learning**

Real-time learning that can include immediate, two-way communication between participants.

**44. Technology-mediated learning**

This refers to the support of learning by means of the use of an optimal blend of ICTs.

**45. Virtual classroom (VC)**

A scheduled offering is available at multiple locations(either desktop or classroom) via a network.

**46. Web-based training (WBT)**

An instructional event can be accessed via the internet, also referred to as online learning.

**47. Scalability**

This indicates the ability of systems, people and processes to handle growing amounts of work effectively.



## 12. Policy Monitoring, Evaluation and Review

This policy shall be monitored and evaluated yearly. It shall be reviewed every two years or as and when necessary.

