



Republic of South Africa

Terms of Reference

for



**The South African
Inter-sectoral Forum
for
Early Childhood Development**

Terms of Reference

South African Inter-sectoral Forum for Early Childhood Development (ECD)

ADOPTED: 18 November 2014

1. INTRODUCTION

The Government of South Africa's Medium Term Strategy Framework, setting out the government's strategic plan for 2014 to 2019, prioritised early childhood development against the backdrop of the National Development Plan: Vision 2030 (NDP) for this period in Outcome 1 (quality basic education) and outcome 13 (an inclusive and responsive social protection system), which will give significant impetus to implementation of early childhood development services in the next five years. The Government of South Africa promulgated the Children's Act No 38 of 2005 on 1 April 2010 which regulate the establishment, management and monitoring of ECD services. The Department of Social Development is the lead Department in the regulation and provisioning of ECD services for children from birth to school going age in partnership with Departments of Basic Education (DBE), Health (DOH) and other relevant government departments.

There is enough evidence to suggest that the best way to give children the best start in life is through an integrated approach to early childhood development. It has been shown that focusing on a single aspect of child's needs does not benefit a child developmentally. The integrated approach to a child's development ensures that all aspects of a child's needs are met resulting in a holistic development particularly in the fundamental areas of a child's development such as social, communication, cognitive, physical, emotional, sensory, spiritual, moral aspects.

In ECD an integrated approach is when policies and programmes converge towards providing and meeting all of the children's needs and rights for their total wellbeing and development so as to actualise their fullest potential. In 2005 the government of South Africa with support from UNICEF developed the National Integrated Plan for Early childhood Development (NIPECD). The NIPECD reasserts the leading role of the Government in formulating, implementing and monitoring policies and programmes on early childhood development, whilst recognising the important role-played by non-governmental, community-based organisations and corporate institution.

The development and implementation of NIPECD provided South Africa with an opportunity to establish and engage with inter-sectoral/interdepartmental collaboration, including public/private partnerships, towards achieving integrated ECD provisioning for children birth to four years with the focus on children birth to four years. One of the greatest achievements of the NIPECD has been that the ECD stakeholders in the country have been awakened to the discourse about the importance of integrated ECD services and both government and the NGO sector were motivated to consider how to implement it. The NIPECD had much publicity both nationally and internationally as an example of an appropriate plan for integrated ECD provision. The lifespan of the NIPECD was for five years which came to an end during the calendar year 2010 after which a review process was initiated and completed.

In 2011/12 there were three initiatives, i.e. the Review of the National Integrated Plan for ECD, the ECD Diagnostic Review and the National ECD Conference, which significantly impacted in the country's early childhood development landscape. The aim of the said processes was to review ECD service provisioning, coordination and implementation for children birth to four years in South Africa. These three parallel initiatives provided findings and recommendations which were merged into one document named "*South African Integrated Programme of Action for Early Childhood Development - Moving Ahead*" (2013/14-2016/17)", which was approved by Cabinet on 18 September 2013.

All of the above processes recommended that two structures be identified for the coordination and implementation of ECD services in South Africa. The first structure is the existing National Interdepartmental Committee for ECD (NIDC) comprising government departments and government agencies and the second structure is the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for Early Childhood Development comprising government departments, government agencies, international partners, corporate institutions, community-based organisations, non-governmental organisations, faith-based organisations, training institutions and research institutions and allied health professionals.

An integrated approach to ECD is critical to the provision of coordinated programmes for the development of children and should be strengthened through a variety of partnerships.

The stakeholders also participate in the delivery processes and provide services such as training and learning and support material to ensure that an integrated approach will reach young children.

2. MANDATE

The purpose and mandate of the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for Early Childhood Development is to form an united platform upon which the Government and the Non-Government Sector engaged in ECD service delivery will work together to enhance the integrated delivery of the ECD services in South Africa.

3. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD will be established at a national level with the following roles and responsibilities:

- (a) Serve as a platform to share and promote early childhood development services to all children;
- (b) Serve as a consultative forum on major developments in ECD with the view to implement, improve, and expand delivery of ECD services across the country;
- (c) Promote collaboration and synergy in the implementation of the South African Integrated

Programme of Action for Early Childhood Development-Moving Ahead (2013/14-2016/17);

- (d) Serve as a consultative forum for the development and reviewing of all existing policies that impact on ECD services, the development, care, education and well-being of young children;
- (e) Provide a platform for a dialogue on early childhood development at a national level;
- (f) Mobilise for the availability of the required financial and human resources to implement the South African Integrated Programme of Action for Early Childhood Development-Moving Ahead (2013/14-2016/17);
- (g) Guide and direct early childhood development services to children with disabilities, to the poor and vulnerable population of children, their families and communities;
- (h) Supporting, the implementation of the South African Integrated Programme of Action for Early Childhood Development-Moving Ahead (2013/14-2016/17) at national, provincial and local levels.

4. MEMBERSHIP

- 4.1 The membership for the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD will be drawn from the following based on specific criteria:
- (a) National ECD non-governmental organizations;
 - (b) Corporate institutions;
 - (c) International partners;
 - (d) ECD training institutions; (private and public sector)
 - (e) Research institutions;
 - (f) National government departments (relevant government departments);
 - (g) National government agencies (relevant national government agencies);
 - (h) Private Foundations and donors (providing services and/or funding on ECD)
 - (i) Publication companies (providing services on ECD)
- 4.2 The criteria for National ECD non-governmental organizations participation in the forum is that only NGOs working on at least four(4) provinces will be regarded as National and allowed to participate in the forum.
- 4.3 The National Inter-departmental Committee for Early Childhood Development (NIDC for ECD) will be responsible to chair the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD and will ensure the optimal operation of the forum towards the implementation of Integrated ECD programmes and services for young children.
- 4.4 In the absence of a chair from the National Inter-departmental Committee for Early Childhood Development (NIDC for ECD), a co-chair shall be appointed from the non-governmental sector.
- 4.5 The secretariat for the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD shall be provided by the NIDC for ECD. The secretariat shall oversee the operational matters of the forum as well as related administration.
- 4.6 Each member organisation as contemplated in paragraph 4.1 shall confirm the name of at least two persons (permanent member and alternate) that will be designated members to attend the forum. This shall be reconfirmed on a bi-annual basis. Written appointment letters for representatives shall be forwarded to the secretariat.

4.7 Following the appointment of permanent members as indicated in paragraph 4.6, members shall attend the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD meetings twice a year (once in six months) to ensure continuous contribution to the operations of the forum. Members who do not attend three successive meetings without any apology shall forfeit their membership.

4.8 The full member list of the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD will be managed by the National Inter-departmental Committee for Early Childhood Development.

4.9 There shall be no remuneration associated with being the member of the forum.

5. MEETINGS

- 5.1 The South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD shall have at least two meetings per year (once in six months) scheduled on day/s and times as agreed to by all members.
- 5.2 Notices to meetings that shall include a preliminary agenda and shall reach all members at least five working days before the scheduled date for the meeting.
- 5.3 Minutes of the previous meeting shall be sent to members within three weeks after a meeting as to ensure execution of decisions and review of discussions.
- 5.4 The attendance of meetings is obligatory by all members. If a permanent member is not able to attend, he or she shall designate his or her designated alternate member to attend the meeting.
- 5.5 Failure to attend three successive meetings without any apology shall lead to the withdrawal of the membership.
- 5.6 The chairperson of the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD may at any time call for an *ad hoc* meeting to deal with urgent matters that require immediate attention. Notice of *ad hoc* meetings shall be given at least a week in advance.
- 5.7 The National Department of Social Development as the lead department will carry the cost of the venue and conference package for all the members.
- 5.8 All participants to the meetings will be responsible for their own travelling and accommodation costs.

6. QUORUM REQUIREMENTS

- 6.1 A minimum of ten members is required for the meeting to be recognised as an authorised meeting for the recommendations or resolutions to be valid.
- 6.2 The quorum must contain at least one member from five National government departments and/or National government agencies and five members from stakeholder groups.

7. OPERATIONAL PLANNING

- 7.1 The operation of the forum shall be based on the "South African Integrated Programme of Action for Early Childhood Development-Moving Ahead

(2013/14 to 2016/17)" as well as other emerging sector priorities related to ECD.

7.2 The forum shall establish sub-committees as it deems necessary for the execution of its mandate. The following permanent sub-committees shall be established and each committee shall be led by a different departments and partners:

7.2.1 Training and Curriculum sub-committee, led by the Department of Basic Education.

7.2.2 Monitoring and evaluation sub-committee, led by Department of Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation in the Presidency.

7.2.3 Communication and Advocacy sub-committee, led by UNICEF.

7.2.4 Policy and legislation sub-committee, led by the Department of Social Development.

7.2.5 ECD Donor sub-committee to be led by the Department of Social Development.

7.3 The terms of reference will be reviewed annually to ensure effectiveness and efficiency.

8. CONSULTATION AND BROADER PARTICIPATION

8.1 No individual member may consult or communicate on behalf of the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD without the explicit mandate of the forum.

8.2 The forum may, from time to time, allow internal and external parties with a core interest in young children to make presentations at its meetings based on the following criteria:

(a) All requests to make presentations must be submitted in the form of a short concept note with the following headings:

- i. Issue to be discussed;
- ii. Relevance to young children;
- iii. Link with the South African Integrated Programme of Action for Early Childhood Development-Moving Ahead (2013/14-2016/17).

(b) The said concept note will be considered at the NIDC for ECD meeting with the purpose to determine whether:

- i. The information that will be shared by the requesting party serves the interest of young children and is aligned to the the South African Integrated Programme of Action for Early Childhood Development-Moving Ahead (2013/14-2016/17) as well as other emerging sector priorities related to ECD;
- ii. The interested party has its core business or a significant part of its business related to young children at a national level (where requesting parties have their main interest

at provincial or local level, they will be referred to relevant tier of government);

iii. After consideration of the application to make a presentation by the NIDC for ECD meeting, the committee will either accept or reject the request to make a presentation.

iv. In case of accepting the request the secretariat will inform the relevant party on the date and time that they will present to the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD meeting.

v. In case of a rejection of the request to make a presentation, the secretariat will inform the requesting party accordingly.

vi. Parties who are afforded the opportunity to make a presentation at a meeting of the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD meeting shall do so at their own cost.

8.3 One representative each from the Department of Social Development, Department of Health, and Department of Education from each of the 9 provinces shall be invited to attend the forum's meetings.

8.4 One representative from South African Local Government Association (SALGA) and National Development Agency (NDA) from each of the 9 provinces shall be invited to attend the forum's meetings.

9. COMMUNICATION AND REPORTING

9.1 The NIDC for ECD shall provide minutes of the forum meetings to the Social Cluster, Presidency and Cabinet, if required to do so;

9.2 The responsibility for the drafting and submission of the minutes rests with the secretariat of the National Inter-departmental Committee for Early Childhood Development in consultation with all members of the forum.

10. MONITORING AND EVALUATION

10.1 The South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD shall ensure keeping records of the following;

- (a) All discussions in the form of minutes;
- (b) All correspondence related to the South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD;
- (c) Attendance lists of all meetings.

11. DISBANDMENT OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN INTER-SECTORAL FORUM FOR ECD

The South African Inter-sectoral Forum for ECD can only be disbanded by agreement and instruction of the Director General from the Department of Social Development or by recommendation from the Social Cluster.