
GENERAL NOTICE

NOTICE 1769 OF 2007

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TRAINING ACT, 2000 (ACT NO. 52 OF 2000)

NATIONAL NORMS AND STANDARDS FOR FUNDING ADULT LEARNING CENTRES (NSF-ALC)

I, Grace Naledi Mandisa Pandor, Minister of Education, after consulting with the Council of Ministers and with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance, hereby publish the National Norms and Standards for Funding of Public Adult Learning Centres in terms of section 22 and 29 of the Adult Basic Education and Training Act, 2000 (Act No. 52 of 2000), set out in Schedule.



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GNM PANDOR, MP

MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Date: 6 December 2007

SCHEDULE

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DEFINITIONS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND ACRONYMS

- ABET Adult Basic Education and Training
- Adult Basic Education and Training means all learning and training programmes for adults from level 1 to 4 where level 4 is equivalent to –
- grade 9 in public schools; or
- national qualifications framework level 1 as contemplated in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995);
- “ALC” Adult Learning Centre
- “CE” Centre Evaluation
- Certification of public adult learning centre means that a centre is deemed capable of managing and accounting for public funds in line with the ABET Act and the Public Finance Management Act
- “Department of Education” the national Department of Education
- “fund” the fund of the PALC contemplated in section 23 of the Act
- “governing body” a governing body for a PALC contemplated in section 8 of the Act
- Head of Department..... head of a provincial department of education

"IQMS"	Integrated Quality Management System as per Collective Agreement Number 8 of 2003 at the Education Labour Relations Council
"Minister"	the Minister of Education
NSF-ALC	Norms and Standards for the Funding of Adult Learning Centres
NNSSF	National Norms and Standards for School Funding (in terms of the South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996))
PALC(s)	Public Adult Learning Centre(s) as per the Act's "public centre" (section 3)
PED(s)	Provincial Education Department(s), the department established in terms of section 7(2) of the Public Service Act, 1994 (Proclamation No. 103 of 1994), which is responsible for education in a province
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999)
"private centre"	a private centre contemplated in section 1 of the Act
"public centre"	a public centre contemplated in section 1 of the Act
"the Act"	Adult Basic Education and Training Act, 2000 (Act No. 52 of 2000)
"the Policy Document"	Policy for Adult Basic Education and Training, Department of Education, 1997

PART 1

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the document is to provide national norms and standards for funding public adult learning centres and the granting of subsidies to private centres.

2. INTRODUCTION

Legal and Policy Background

1. The ABET delivery sub-system is being progressively put in place as part of the broader transformation process in the education system. The institutionalisation of the delivery system is being implemented through the setting up of governance structures, the professionalisation of ABET educators, the development of curriculum and standards, the establishment of quality assurance mechanism and the setting up of an ABET assessment system. These components are now consolidated by the development of these Norms and Standards for Funding of Adult Learning Centres ("NSF-ALC").
2. Section 29 of the Bill of Rights in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 establishes the right to education in these terms:
 "(1) Everyone has the right-
 (a) to a basic education, including adult basic education; and
 (b) to further education, which the state, through reasonable measures, must make progressively available and accessible"
 (section 29 (1)). "
3. The ABET Act, 2000 (Act No. 52 of 2000) ("the Act") lays the basis for the development of norms and standards for funding. Section 22 places an obligation on the Minister to develop norms and standards specifically for the funding of public Adult Learning Centres (ALCs).
4. Section 29 of the Act gives the Minister the prerogative to develop norms and standards or conditions for granting subsidies to private ALCs.
5. The Act aims at establishing "a national co-ordinated adult basic education and training system which promotes co-operative governance and provides for programme-based adult basic education and training" (Preamble to the Act).

Funding Challenges

6. The Provincial Education Departments (PEDs) are the primary funders of ABET. PEDs are themselves financed largely through shares of the national Equitable Share Fund. This fund is distributed as general grants.

Provincial priorities determine the sectoral distribution of these funds, over which distribution the national level has only limited legal and constitutional authority, though it has considerable potential intellectual and moral leadership authority.

7. Current PED resourcing of ALCs is unpredictable. It is unclear on what basis budget allocations are made to public ALCs and, therefore, fluctuate from one year to the next. This creates challenges for programme planning and implementation.

The need for change

8. Section 21(3) of the Act obliges the Member of the Executive Council to provide sufficient information to ALCs regarding funding. The implementation of the section within the framework of the norms and standards for funding ALCs should enable predictability and stability in the funding of centres. This would ensure that ALCs are able to plan properly within the funding framework developed in this document.
9. The ABET Act recognizes ALCs as legal persona. This enables ALCs to determine their mission and the management of their affairs. The allocation of funding to ALCs will be a key lever for consolidating this legal status.
10. Combined with the Act's injunction that the ABET sector ought to be programme-based, the funding to which Section 22 refers is then to be interpreted as funding a public ALC's various programmes, that is, funding that provides each public ALC with a meaningful budget. Thus, the call of the Act is for quite a radical reconstruction of the financial aspects of the ABET sub-sector.
11. Public funding of ALCs must involve a certain level of standardisation of offerings. The state cannot have open-ended commitments to funding; it must have a clear, measurable sense of what it is paying for, and who is producing at an adequate level. At the same time, adult education worldwide is characterized by clients whose needs are not always standard. At present, experimental and non-formal adult education takes place with largely private funding, or with non-normed funding by public bodies other than Provincial Departments of Education, with the state's education authorities playing largely a quality assurance role. But there is a social need for public funding that can be for programmes that are differentiated and non-formal yet accountable. This form of funding is catered for in the document.

Reconceptualising ABET provisioning

12. Resources and capacity must be made available in Provinces to set targets and support ABET provisioning as well as PALCs. In particular:

- (a) PEDs must enhance their management capabilities in the Provincial Education Departments and as well as in the PALCs, since a shift to formula-based funding will be accompanied by greater institutional autonomy for these PALCs.
 - (b) PEDs must enhance effective financial monitoring of PALCs programme budgets, PALC's and NGO's.
 - (c) PEDs must vastly improve the management information systems, where information reaching PEDs and the DoE is a by-product of good management at the PALC level. The current system would need to be strengthened through the development of additional instruments and systems.
13. The development of a new funding framework implies that current modalities of programme and institutional delivery need to change. Changes envisaged are as follows:
- (a) Reconfigured ALC governance structure in accordance with section 10 of the Act. A process of an institutional audit would be done so as to gather the required data for the merging of ALCs.
 - (b) It is envisaged that merged ALCs comprising various sites would be established with a diversity of programmes targeting adult learners. These programmes would allow for the provision of skills to a variety of adult learner needs.
 - (c) Flexible modes of delivery such as open learning, technology based programmes and contact mode would characterise the reconfigured adult learning centres.

Scope of applicability

14. These NSF-ALC apply:

- (a) Uniformly in all provinces, and are intended to prevail in terms of section 146 (2) of the Constitution.
- (b) To public adult learning centres, as defined in the ABET Act.
- (c) To any not-for-profit private adult learning centres, in terms of the ABET Subsidies and Grants Framework as set out in paragraph 47, consistent with section 29(1) of the Act. Section 29 states that the Minister may, by notice in the Government Gazette, determine norms and standards or conditions for the granting of subsidies to private centres after consultation with the Council of Education Ministers and with the concurrence of the Minister of Finance.

15. These NSF-ALC do not apply to funds raised by public centres through their own efforts in terms of section 23 (c) of the Act, except as in paragraph 46.

16. The new funding approach will comprise two key elements: 1) funding of programme-based ABET, and 2) funding in the form of the subsidies and grants framework.

3. FUNDING OF PROGRAMME BASED ABET

Programme based ABET

17. "Programme-based ABET" will be understood, for the purpose of these NSF-PALC, as a funding approach that involves the actual transfer of funds or spending rights to PALCs on a predictable, uniform, enrolment-driven formula basis, in exchange for the accomplishment of certain "programmes" for educating adults. A funding programme is all the education and training activities that are associated with the achievement of a specific policy objective. This is in distinction to a traditional approach based on direct provisioning of individual goods or human resources to Centres. The total funding will involve most costs incurred by the PALC, including educators even though educators are not employees of the PALC but continue to be employees of the PED.

Personnel

18. If a PALC is to be a true cost centre and it is to be funded on a per-learner basis, it would presumably have to meet its educator costs out of the transferred funds, either implicitly (through a paper budget that includes educator cost) or explicitly (through an actual monetary budget). Total educator costs would therefore have to rise and fall with some agility as the number of learners increases or decreases. This could be accomplished via increases or decreases in the number of educators or via increases or decreases in the salary mix, by altering the skills and seniority mix of the educators. This is extremely difficult to accomplish from a central location in the system. The natural implication is that the mix of educators at a PALC would have to be managed at PALC level, even if the educators remain employees of the PED. Post allocation would be driven by the funding available, not just at province level but at each PALC, and it would be up to the PALC with planning assistance from the PED, to manage growth or reduction in personnel cost.
19. Public adult learning centres will be allocated posts according to a post distribution model. The model should take into account various factors such as number of learners, programmes offered at the centre, time-frames for the duration of programmes and skills programmes to be offered.

Non- Personnel

20. "Funding of programme-based ABET" will be understood, for the purpose of these NSF-PALC, as a funding approach that involves the actual transfer

of funds or spending rights to public centres on a predictable, uniform, enrolment-driven formula basis, in exchange for the accomplishment of certain curriculum programmes for educating adults. The funding will consist of non-personnel costs such as:

- (a) Curriculum offerings in line with credits;
- (b) Costs for accessing physical facilities;
- (c) Learning Support Materials; and
- (d) Learning and teaching aids including equipment for skills programmes.

21. Priority programmes to be funded will be the following:

- a) Basic Literacy programmes
- b) Skills programmes
- c) Fundamentals (Communication and Numeracy) and
- d) Other priority programmes as determined by the Department of Education.

The proposed funding framework

A phased approach

22. Because of the complex and challenging context of ABET, these NSF-ALC will provide for a phased approach. The phasing in will proceed through a process of certification of public adult learning centres to receive funding on a programme basis. The funding approach will be phased in through a process whereby more and more public adult learning centres become certified to be funded under the programme approach.

23. By certification of public adult learning centres it is meant that an adult learning centres is deemed capable of managing and accounting for public funds in line with the ABET Act and the Public Finance Management Act. Certification will be granted by Provinces. Conditions for certification will be determined by the Head of Department in consultation with stakeholders. A management checklist will be developed as part of the conditions for certification.

24. In non-certified adult learning centres, there will be changes in how they are currently provisioned. PEDs must provide paper based budget allocation based on enrolments. In addition, PEDs must ensure that properly set up governance structures are in place and functioning. Financial management systems should be put in place in line with Section 24 of the Act.

25. A number of public adult learning centres henceforth referred to as certified public adult learning centres will start to be funded on a programme basis. Public adult learning centres will undergo a process of certification as to readiness to receive funding for programmes. Those

that are certified will move onto the programme-based approach. Those not certified will receive capacity-building so as to enable them to be certified as soon as possible. Provincial officials should be trained to assist non-certified adult learning centres.

26. The phasing-in period will thus be driven by the speed at which public adult learning centres can be certified. However, for planning purposes, PEDs must schedule a process whereby all public adult learning centres can expect to be certified by 1 January 2010 or 3 years after the gazetting of these norms, whichever comes first. At the end of the phasing-in period, the funding norms, and the systems needed to implement them will cover all public adult learning centres. Each PED must develop a plan to ensure that all existing public adult learning centres are certified by 1 January 2010. The plan must be filed with the Department of Education. It must include the full financial costing and human resource implications of achieving the following goals by the specified date:

- (a) Ensure the provision of ABET services to all adults who wish to enrol in adult learning centres to pursue studies up to ABET level 4.
- (b) Ensure that all public adult learning centres are certified through the provision of capacity-building.
- (c) Ensure that all public adult learning centres are funded as per these norms.
- (d) Ensure that ABET staff at PED level and district level have sufficient capacity and have been trained to implement these norms.

Funding-related improvements in certified public adult learning centres

27. The proposed funding improvements being normed include:

- (a) A formula-based approach to funding the certified public centres;
- (b) An approach to quality-enhancement performance related to total funding.

A formula-based approach in certified public adult learning centres

28. Certified public adult learning centres will be funded by the ABET programme in a PED on a formula basis, based on ABET programmes and credits. This will fund learner achievement of credits across all pre-GETC ABET levels (1, 2, and 3) leading to the GETC (ABET level 4).

29. The formula-based approach will consist of these key elements:

- (a) Learner enrolments expressed as full-time equivalents, while considering issues such as level of academic achievement, class size, language barriers, comprehension levels.
- (b) The second determinant will be a set of "prices" for the credits. These "prices" will be calculated so as to cover all recurrent costs

directly associated with running a high-quality but cost-effective centre.

- (c) The third determinant will be an institutional business plan for the provision of a certain number of credits to a certain level of enrolment in a quality-managed fashion similar to the IQMS developed for schools.
 - (d) The formula will have a fixed component so as not to disadvantage small centres.
 - (e) The DoE and the PEDs must, after thorough research, include a factor for rurality into the funding formula for centres.
30. The enrolment used in the formula, as described in this section, will include only enrolments of learners enrolled on an individual basis, that is, learners not sponsored, and paid for, by a corporate client (public or private, for-profit or non-profit).
31. Each adult learning centres will be required to produce an annual performance-linked institutional plan. The plan must specify enrolment targets and the total number of credits to be delivered, as well as unit standards to be delivered, for the coming year, as well as medium-term (3 year) goals. The performance-linked institutional business plan will be used to inform the allocation of funds to individual public adult learning centres.
32. Given that the funding is based on planned enrolment targets for the coming year, each adult learning centres will have a predictable level of funding, at the beginning of the year that will allow it to operate for the year. The enrolment target is not a pre-set, arbitrary target, but one that is sensitive to the normal operating conditions of adult learning centres, and is sensitive to the fact that enrolment in adult learning centres tends to fluctuate during the year. Funding is based on planned enrolment, not actual enrolment. Planned enrolment will be informed by past enrolment. If this planned enrolment is much greater than the actual enrolment, PEDs will provide a report to the Department of Education.
33. The PED must inform public adult learning centres in advance every 3rd quarter of the year of the criteria for its quality rating. Adult Learning Centres will be evaluated in the period before the first funding cycle. Using the evaluation procedures, an adult learning centre will be rated on a 4-level scale: "Outstanding," "Meets Expectations," "Satisfies Minimum Expectations," or "Unacceptable."
34. If a public adult learning centres that has received a "Satisfies Minimum Expectations" rating, has met its enrolment target, and there are reasonable expectations of growth in demand, the adult learning centre's enrolment target and budget could be increased.
35. The enrolment target, and the means whereby the adult learning centre will attain a "Meeting Expectations" quality rating, together with the budget and educators requested from the PED, will form the core of the

institutional business plan that is submitted to and must be approved by the PED.

36. If an adult learning centre falls below standards in its ability to maintain enrolment during the year, or receives an "Unacceptable" quality rating in its Centre Evaluation, the PED will require that the adult learning centre's business plan does not increase planned enrolment in the following year. An adult learning centre receiving an "Unacceptable" rating will be evaluated the next year, otherwise evaluations will take place every three years. An adult learning centre receiving such a rating will receive capacity development to enable it to improve its rating the next year. If the quality rating remains at "Unacceptable" for one more year, and if there are alternative adult learning centres in the area near the under-performing adult learning centre, then the adult learning centre's business plan must decrease enrolment in accordance to a number determined by the PED as part of the adult learning centres's planning. The process of closing a public adult learning centre will be followed as in section 6 of the Act.

Approach to quality-enhancement performance incentives

37. The proposed approach contains an incentive for quality improvement, but does not tie performance to funding in any direct way. The incentive consists of enrolment growth. As adult learning centres are evaluated, they will grow in a number of ways. First, their quality will become known, and they will attract more enrolment. Enrolment growth will tend to provide incentives because with payment fixed on a per-learner credit basis, growth in enrolment will allow adult learning centres to take advantage of economies of scale, both in terms of the fixed costs in the adult learning centres but also by increasing class size to more economical levels. On the contrary, poor ones will have their enrolment limited via the approval of their annual plans.
38. Adult Learning Centre-level quality indicators, to be used in the Centre Evaluation, will focus on:
- (a) Trend in learners' achievement of unit standards.
 - (b) Utilisation of human resources that goes significantly beyond normal or desirable hours per credit and may hence be considered wasteful.
 - (c) The quality of learners' response to teaching and to the centre's general environment.
 - (d) The operational characteristics of the centre.
39. These principles will be made operational to certified public adult learning centres during the phase-in of the implementation of these NSF-ALC. The indicators will be similar to those enunciated in the Policy Document (section 5.6 on Assessment as well as Appendix 2), and will be made part of the Centre Evaluation.

40. A centre evaluation team will visit each adult learning centre every three years, unless an adult learning centre receives an "Under Review" rating, in which case it will be evaluated again the year following the rating. It would also receive capacity development during the year. An evaluation the following year, rather than three years later, will allow the adult learning centre to shed its negative evaluation as soon as possible. It will also provide an automatic and quick feedback on how well capacity development is working.
41. Each PALC will be required to inform all learners of its evaluation. The evaluation results will be prominently displayed on a notice board similarly highly visible place in the PALC.
42. The adult learning centre must be evaluated and rated by the evaluation team prior to the annual general meeting of the centre.
43. The yearly calendar for the adult learning centre funding cycle during the phase-in period will be as follows.

Months in the yearly PALC cycle	Actions to be taken	Entity responsible
At least three months before next cycle starts.	1. Centre Evaluation- rating of adult learning centres 2. Explanation of areas needing improvement 3. Determination of level of enrolment and credits expectation for next cycle	Centre evaluation team from the PED or through Technical Assistance
At least two months before cycle starts	1. Centre governing body develops plan 2. Plan is communicated to and negotiated with PED	Centre governing body with assistance from PED or through Technical Assistance
At least one month before cycle starts	PED informs adult learning centres regarding plan approval and indicative funding to be received by the centre	PED
At least one month before cycle starts	Centre governing body discusses funding from PED at annual general meeting	Centre governing body
At least two weeks before cycle begins, and quarterly thereafter	PED transfers funding to centre	PED
Continuous	Technical support on finance, quality improvement, reporting, and other systems issues	PED and through Technical Assistance

	key to the application of the NSF-ALC	
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PART 2

4. INCLUSIVE EDUCATION COMPONENT AND PROMOTION ASPECTS

44. Aspects of inclusive education in public adult learning centres, as they may require norming within the NSF-ALC, will be normed once norms and standards for funding of inclusive education, in general, are finalised.

5. PRIVATE OR PUBLIC NON-PED FUNDING AT CERTIFIED AND NON-CERTIFIED CENTRES

45. Adult Learning Centres are encouraged to seek clients (private and public sector organizations, NGOs, SETAs, etc.) who are sponsoring learners at the ALC in the ABET NQF level within the GET band. The following norms apply:

- (a) Per-learner charges to be assessed from these clients for learners they sponsor may be set by a properly-constituted centre governing body, not by the general meeting of learners or by the management of the ALC. However, planned or existing income from corporate bodies must be taken into account in the ALC's budget.
- (b) The level of such charges may be set at any time deemed useful by the ALC.
- (c) Income from charges to clients must enter the ALC fund in the same manner as any other income.
- (d) Book-keeping and audit methods will be developed to prevent ALCs from double-charging for learners funded through the formula. At a minimum, the sum of the learners sponsored by the PED and those sponsored by other clients have to equal the total number of learners at the ALC.
- (e) The charges to corporate clients must not be lower than the "prices" contained in the formula whereby the ALC is funded by the PED. In other words, the ALC must treat the PED as its preferred client.
- (f) Adult Learning Centres must follow a clear and transparent pricing policy with clients, similar to what will be in use for funding by the PEDs. ALCs are encouraged to take advantage of the costing methodologies developed for the formula funding, as a way to price their offerings to non-PED clients.
- (g) Adult Learning Centres' offering programmes to clients other than the PED must be included in the yearly plan that is to be approved

by the PED. If the programmes to non-PED clients are made mid-year, the ALC must seek permission from the PED in writing.

6. THE ABET SUBSIDIES AND GRANTS FRAMEWORK

46. As discussed in paragraph 11, there is a need for a formal approach to publicly fund mainstream ABET provision, but there is also a need for public funding of a less formal nature, and that also allows more collaboration between various government departments and initiatives. These NSF-ALC establish formula-based funding of ALCs in a manner that allows for predictability of funding in ALCs and encourages curricular transformation. However, the NSF-ALC also assume, and encourage, a standardised and relatively formal set of offerings. Less formal, community-based provision also needs to be encouraged.

47. In order to support less formal and innovative provision, the Minister of Education will develop conditions for the granting of subsidies or grants. This will be regulated via a set of regulations separate from these NSF-ALC. These regulations will be developed after the gazetting of the norms and will be based on the following principles:

- (a) The granting of subsidies to private registered ALCs will be in line with sections 27 (1), 29 and 31 of the Act. Private ALCs will not be required to undergo certification, but are to adhere to the criteria to be developed in the conditions for granting subsidies to private ALCs.
- (b) The funding will be close-ended in any given year. A fixed amount will be made available by the PED each year. This amount is not driven by enrolment or any formula and is established irrespective of the number of potential applications.
- (c) The funding of ABET private ALCs will be by application and will be competitive if there are more applications for funds than funds available.
- (d) There will be a fixed upper limit on the size of award to any entity, so as to encourage competition. A minimum size will also be created to ensure efficiency.
- (e) The criteria will be sensitive to context and disadvantage. Applications from disadvantaged community organisations will be favoured according to the conditions for the granting of subsidies or grants to be developed.
- (f) The funding will be open to entities registered as non-profit with the Department of Social Development.
- (g) Applications bringing matching grants or some form of non-public funding from individuals, Foundations, NGOs, or the for-profit sector, will receive extra points in the awards decisions, to a degree to be established in the regulations for the Fund.

- (h) Applications addressing scarce skills, as determined by the National Skills Authority will receive extra points in the awards decisions, to a degree to be established in the regulations.
- (i) Whilst the awards will not attach specific monetary values to levels of accomplishment, in terms of unit standards or credits, as the formula-based funding of public ALCs does, there will be reasonable guidelines for the amount of funding per learner, to ensure that the funding is approximately in line with the formula-based funding covered elsewhere in these NSF-ALC.
- (j) All grantees will be subject to periodic evaluations similar to those applied to the public ALCs under formula-based programme funding as described in section 33 of these NSF-ALC. The evaluation will be conducted by evaluators who are appointed by, and are directly accountable to the Department of Education.
- (k) Strict records and databases containing, at a minimum, data on the rejected and successful applicants, size of award requested (successful or not), numbers to be served, numbers actually served, as well as the results of the periodic evaluations will be maintained.

7. FUNDING IN THE FET BAND

48. Nothing in these norms precludes public ALCs from offering services in the FET NQF band. However, public ALCs must ensure that record-keeping and accounts are sufficiently detailed so that the PED can assess whether PED funds intended for the ABET-level programmes are in fact used for those programmes. The certification process will develop financial tracking mechanisms necessary to ensure that public centres can report on the proper usage of funds and resources intended for the ABET level.
49. Furthermore, the PED must ensure that the use of resources and funds in the FET band, but at public ALCs, is attributed to the FET programme in the PED's vote structure. Use of ABET programme funds for the offering of FET-band programmes is not acceptable and is interpretable as a violation of section 39 of the Public Finance Management Act (No. 1 of 1999), and of the programme-definition guidelines in the "Education Sector Strategic Planning Framework and Formats." The former stipulates that Accounting Officers must ensure that funds are spent in accordance with the Department's vote, whereas the latter stipulates that the objective and purpose of the ABET programme is to provide education as per the ABET Act. The ABET Act, in turn, stipulates that ABET consists of NQF level 1 or up to Grade 9, as defined in the South African Qualifications Authority Act, 1995 (Act No. 58 of 1995).
50. Other than the above requirement, these NSF-ALC do not norm the public funding of offerings in the FET band.
51. The determination of private or public non-PED contributions in the FET band, to cover public centre offerings in the FET band, must follow the

procedures used in determining private or public non-PED contributions for the ABET-level offerings as detailed in section 5. In addition, public centres must include any offerings in the FET band to individuals in their yearly planning.

52. The yearly public centre evaluation described in sections 37-42 will include evaluation of programmes in the FET band.
