Table of Contents

1. Introduction p.1
2. Background pp.1-3
3. Community Development Qualification Conceptualisation pp.3-5
4. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Conceptualisation pp.5-6
5. Problem Statement p.6
6. Purpose of the Study p.6
7. Significance of the Study p.6-8
8. Methodology p.8
    - 8.1. Research Setting/Location p.8
    - 8.2. Target Group and Sample pp.8-9
    - 8.3. Study Paradigm and Design pp.9-10
    - 8.4. Evaluation Objective and Sub-objectives of the Study p.10
    - 8.5. Main Evaluation Objective p.11
    - 8.6. Evaluation Sub-Objectives p.11
    - 8.7. Evaluation Research Questions pp.11-12
9. Operationalisation pp.12-13
10. Ethical Considerations pp.13-14
11. Time Frame pp.14-15
12. Indicative Budget Breakdown of RPL Cost pp.15
13. Conclusion pp.16

Annexure 1: The PCM Basic Format

Annexure 2: Strategic Level Theory-of-Change Logic Model for Community Development Professionalisation

Annexure 3: Theory-of-Change RPL Logic Model

1. Introduction

The purpose of the document is to provide background, justification and methodology for a Community Development PRL pilot project. The motivation behind this pilot project is to integrate the learning of persons currently working in the field of community development as they have knowledge and/or skills from various fields due to the absence, until recently, of a stand alone community development profession with its own qualification frameworks and career path. Integrated learning would provide these individuals who come from various directions/disciplines to move towards a common purpose/end result of community development professionalisation. The recently developed community development qualifications frameworks at NQF levels 4, 5, and 8 is intended to serve the purpose of the said single career pathing/mainstreaming in community development. It is for this reason that a community development RPL model needs to be developed and assessed (i.e. community development RPL pilot project) in order to not only achieve integrated learning in the field of community development but also improve and standardize the knowledge, skills and attributes of persons in this sector. Thus, the content of this proposal should not be regarded as an implementation/roll-out plan for the pilot project, but rather as a scientific methodological research proposal that would guide the development of an implementation/roll-out plan, which would then also include the critical risk factor areas for the pilot project implementation. However, a basic format for the project cycle management (i.e. implementation/roll-out plan is provided in an annexure at the end of this proposal as an indication of the content that will be put together after the positive response to this research proposal.

2. Background

The strategic importance of integrated learning towards professionalisation of community development is grounded in the International Sustainable Community Development (ISCD) focus and the South African Intergovernmental Relations and Service Delivery framework. The ISCD focus is based on the United Nations Brundtland Commission's definition that is most often quoted and states that sustainable development is "development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs" (Brundland, 1987). This definition is the basis on which the International Institution for Sustainable Development (IISD) base their core business which is "environmental, economic and social well-being for today and tomorrow" (IISD, 2005).

The South African Presidency's Intergovernmental Relations and Service Delivery (IRSD), aims to transform the South African state and government. The South African democratically elected government of 1994 was faced with transforming the wide disparities in levels of income and development due to centuries of racial segregation and apartheid. Transformation would involve the democratisation of state institutions, redressing inequality and extending services to all levels of society. This required economic policies focusing on poverty alleviation and service delivery. A number of reform initiatives were required in order to realize these policies (IRSD Report, 1999). Some of these initiatives were: a) fiscal reform emphasizing equity among spheres of government and multi-year transparent budgeting; b) the Public Service Act (South Africa, 1997:Act 97 & 13) that ensures a single public service at both national and provincial levels, resulting in the successful integration of pre-existing homeland administrations; and c) the municipal elections of December 2000 that resulted in the establishment of 284 municipalities, thus positioning local government as the

key site for service delivery and development. Local government thus plays a very important role in the intergovernmental relations in South Africa (South Africa, 2005: Act 13). The object of intergovernmental relations is to establish a system in which all spheres of government plan together to provide a coherent approach to service delivery and community development. This should be achieved by means of Integrated Development Planning (IDP). The cornerstone of integrated planning is the participation in municipal IDPs by national and provincial sector departments (public sector) and private sector to ensure: a) implementation of national policy and legislation; b) enabling integrated service delivery to the community between public and private sectors; and c) promotion of sustainable development.

Community development is of strategic importance due to its relevancy to every government department through the programmes of the South African government such as: a) the War-on-Poverty; b) Local Economic Development (LED) Programme; c) the Extended Pubic Works (EPWP) Programme; d) the Integrated Sustainable Rural Development (ISRD) Programme, etc. These policies and programmes clearly articulates at least four community development perspectives which have been adopted by the democratic government of South Africa in its effort to improve the lives of its citizens, which are the income, basic needs, social exclusion and the sustainable livelihoods perspectives. The *income perspective* is founded on the logic of income poverty, which clearly undermines the significance of non-income poverty. This perspective influenced the country's approaches to community development and poverty alleviation which were operationalized through, amongst other policy instruments, GEAR, ASGISA, EPWP, Social Assistance and income generation and job creation poverty relief projects. The *basic needs perspective* concerns itself with assistance to the poor by promoting and supporting their access to sanitation, security, clean water, shelter, education, appropriate clothing, health and such other necessities. This perspective has been operationalized to some extent through programmes such as the RDP, the ISRDP/URP, the IDPs as well as the War-on-Poverty campaign.

The *social exclusion perspective* seeks to reduce deprivation, vulnerability and inequality which continue to plague this country and its citizens. The key policy instrument guiding this perspective is the Bill of Rights which is enshrined in the Republic of South Africa's Constitution (Act 108 of 1996). The *sustainable livelihoods perspective* stresses the requirement for ordinary people and communities to be assisted, through the construction and strengthening of an appropriate "asset base" that enables them to pro-actively identify, define and practice particular strategies for coping with their conditions of poverty, vulnerability and hardships. The challenge for South Africa has been the capacity to consolidate these perspectives into a comprehensive community development approach that is inclusive, integrated and coherent (Luka, 2011).

The above-mentioned political- and socio-economic factors all indicate the need for a sustainable and integrative community development intervention strategy. It is this integrative community development intervention strategy that acts as the foundation and focus for the newly developed SAQA frameworks at NQF Levels 4, 5 & 8 in Community Development, as it enhances and promotes holistic community well-being. The said qualification frameworks development process has ensured: a) consistency and uniformity in the implementation of unit standards; b) linkage of community development professional needs to specialised qualifications; c) compliance of community development qualifications

with relevant legislation and regulations; and ultimately d) commencement of the process towards professionalisation of community development (Luka, 2011).

The wide interest in community development within intergovernmental- and multi-sector private stakeholders emphasized the need for an interdisciplinary trained (i.e. integrated learning) individual who can facilitate sustainable integrative community development. Integrated learning ensures the finding of integrated solutions for the complex environmental- and social-economic needs that can not be addressed by any single discipline. This will be possible with the said new qualification frameworks in community development with exit level outcomes (ELO's) geared towards critical cross-field outcomes (CCFO's) (attributes) which inculcate respect for intercultural, trans-disciplinary and sustainable approaches to sustainable, integrated and holistic well-being of communities, families and individuals.

3. Community Development Qualifications Conceptualisation

Community development is a broad term applied to a variety of disciplines in society; its origin can be traced back to the 18th century. From inception community development has aimed at a better life for all. Defined by the United Nations, as early as 1963, as:
"…to connote the process by which the efforts of the people themselves are united with those of government authorities to improve the economic, social and cultural conditions of communities, to integrate these communities into the life of the nation and to enable them to contribute fully to the national progress. This complex of processes is, therefore made up of two essential elements: the participation of the people themselves in an effort to improve their living, with as much reliance as possible on their own initiative; and the provision of technical and other services in ways which encourage initiative, self help and mutual help and make those more effective. It is expressed in programmes designed to achieve a wide variety of specific improvements". This definition establishes the different skills and abilities needed by successful community development professionals, as well as the capacities which they will apply in assisting and empowering communities to take initiative in acquiring a better life for themselves in a more effective and sustainable manner.

The objective of community development is to build healthy functioning communities. This is achieved through social change as identified and driven by the community themselves and to the extent that is required, support through the provision of resources and services in ways that serve the holistic developmental needs of the community. Community development is distinguished by application of a holistic, rather than a sector, point of view (Maistry, 2011). There is a generally recognized set of characteristics that differentiates community development from other forms of community-related activities. Its distinguishing characteristics include:

i. Focus on a unit called "community."
ii. Conscious attempts to induce non-reversible structural change. It is generally understood that once structural change takes place in a community system, that system cannot return to the original configuration.
iii. Use of paid professionals/workers to facilitate community development.
iv. Initiation by groups, agencies or institutions external to the community unit.
v. Emphasize community participation.
vi. Use a holistic approach (Cook, date unknown).

Community development comprises two components:

i. *Psychosocial* – (Social/human) focussing on people empowerment in order to retain human dignity, maintain self-respect and live in harmony both within families and within the community. At this level community development focuses on the human person as a social being with psychosocial needs and abilities orientation, self-esteem and dignity.
ii. *Structural* – (administrative/technical/systematic) focussing on capacity building in order for people to plan, manage, monitor and evaluate their own development initiatives. At this level community development takes the form of a systematic process whereby there is adherence to phases of project/programme cycle management.

The *Psychosocial* component requires the community development professional to have capacity and skills, amongst others in leadership, facilitation, mediation, conflict resolution, group dynamics and mobilisation. This involves capacity to handle the integrative and interlinked facets of human behaviour in everyday life. Community well-being depends on the psychosocial balance of people which means their ability to interact with other human beings (and the environment) in a healthy, organised and balanced manner.
The *Structural* component requires the community development professional to have capacity and skills in organisational and integrative programme cycle management. Successful programme management calls for skills, amongst others in research methodology, logical cause and effect analyses, participatory appraisal techniques, business and financial management as well as international and national developmental policy and procedures.
Both components require a systematic integrative planning and management approach by the community development professional.

The manner in which community development is defined, its objective, distinguishing characteristics, psychosocial & structural components and it holistic and integrative approach accumulatively contributes to the following strengths and possible outputs:

- It is focused on human development. (The White Paper on Population Policy makes it clear that sustainable human development is only possible if a balance can be achieved between population, relief from poverty and the environment.)
- It is institutionalised in local government. (The White Paper on Local government refers explicitly to a '...developmental local government'. Each local government is required by law to initiate an integrated development process, to formulate an integrated development plan and to budget accordingly.')
- It is linked to a full-time and paid employee, the community development practitioner, who is able to facilitate and coordinate the process of community development.
- It has the potential to decentralise decision making to the community.
- It reinforces the notion of participation and furthermore reinforces the possibility of dialogue. Dialogue deepens understanding, builds relationships and creates opportunities (social capital).
- It ensures an indigenous knowledge basis of how to deal with social challenges. In this way people learn through social networks of support and knowledge to survive and exercise agency and resilience**.**

- It promotes the values and principles enshrined in authoritative international and national policy documents, namely the United Nations Declaration on Social Development, Human Rights Conventions and Declarations, the Millennium Development Goals and the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa.
- Community development when focused on all communities in South Africa, has immense potential for nation building.

Community development and national integration is fundamental to human survival. This integration also involves integration of learning from various disciplines but also qualification levels – thus necessitating RPL towards a single career path in community development. Suitably qualified professionals working in the field of community development with the relevant psychosocial and structural knowledge, skills and attributes are an essential component in the holistic and integrative empowerment of communities towards overall and sustainable well-being.

4. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) Conceptualisation

Recognition of learning can be obtained in an informal and formal manner which could be at the workplace, family, community and/or personal reading. Thus, the recognition of prior learning (RPL) could have the following purposes:

i. *Access*: the evaluation of candidates to assess wether they meet the necessary entry requirements;
ii. *Social justice*: RPL is then applied in terms of equity;
iii. *Pedagogy* (rather androgogy – dealing with adults): this involves a 'teaching' element; and
iv. *Credit accumulation*: RPL in order for candidates to achieve the required credits for placement within a specific qualification.

The RPL process consists of the following seven overall steps:

i. Pres-screening of candidates which takes on the form of a discussion to explore the reasons why the candidate wants to go through RPL followed by the identification of the knowledge this candidate has acquired. The above are then linked with an appropriate qualification or unit standard (part qualification) in order to identify the career path opportunities for the candidate.
ii. Based on the above first step; a discussion follows with regard to the portfolio development process by the candidate – i.e. linking experience or own practice with theory. The portfolio development process involves supporting the candidate which can take on the form of counselling, supervision and/or institutional support of which the latter could be a challenge regarding the after hours supports that might be required by this adult learner/candidate.
iii. The above steps are followed by the provision of the exit level outcomes (ELO's) of the relevant qualification in preparation towards the development of the portfolio of evidence (POE).
iv. Development of the POE by the candidate and the submission thereof for assessment.
v. Assessment of the POE as well as indicating if there is still matters to be addressed for further competencies.

vi. Certification (in the case of a full qualification) or else the candidate achieves the necessary credits in order to enter into a qualification for study.

Mentioning was made above with regard to credit accumulation towards a qualification; i.e. Transfer of Credits. Transfer of credits is a process where the number of credits accumulated by a candidate from different qualifications is assessed for similarity in order to acknowledge the applicable ones towards another required/prospective qualification. It is envisaged that the Transfer of Credits will form an important part of the RPL process for this community development. This process will be conducted with the application of a qualification matrix in order to see which qualifications are mostly aligned with the new community development qualifications.

5. Problem Statement

The absence in the past of a standardised and professional career path in community development has resulted in the lack of standardised and quality assured knowledge, skills and attributes amongst persons working in the field of community development. This is evidential, especially amongst public sector officials; as indicated in several skills audits which were conducted within several public sector departments. These audits also indicated the lack of standardisation regarding position titles and salary grading within, as well as, between public sector departments – all of which are results from the lack of, until recently, a single standardised community development qualification and career path linked with a community development policy framework for South Africa. The recent developed community development qualifications frameworks now provide the framework for a standardised and professional career path in community development; however, it resulted in the vast need for career path mainstreaming (integrated learning) of persons currently working in the field of community development but coming from various sectors and functioning at different levels.

Addressing this need would require a generic scientific RPL model for community development to validate and measure the impact of career path standardisation and professionalisation.

6. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop a reliable and valid generic RPL model for community development which could assist FET's and HEI's, public- & private sector, NGO's and policy makers with standardisation and professionalisation of a community development career path – one that would ensure quality, effectiveness and efficiency and thereby linking and aligning itself with the concepts of quality assurance, accountability and policy changes of the relevant stakeholders.

7. Significance of the study

Community development is an integral part of the South African developmental system and has been adopted by various public sectors and private sector entities as an approach, philosophy, process, method and strategy to address basic material, physical and psycho-social needs of poor and vulnerable communities. Community development has faced a variety challenges and obstacles, some within its own practice and others in the external

environment. By its nature, community development is cross-cutting and implementation is often challenged by a plethora of policies and programmes that are not coherent and integrated and coordinated The non-existence of an overall Community Development Policy to guide implementation of community development work and a Strategy to link efforts across sectors, agencies and the full range of policies issues also impacts on service delivery.

Community development is facilitated by practitioners and workers in the public and non-governmental sectors mainly community based organizations, most of whom are not adequately and uniformly trained as the curriculum offered by institutions of further education and training (FET) and higher education institutions (HEI's) is not standardized. This accounts for the lack of a consistent, concrete and rounded definition of what community development and its outcomes are as well as the adoption of different approaches. Community development is also not yet recognized as an occupation or a profession in South Africa. This is as a result of the non-existence of an occupation framework that defines community development, its scope of practice and standards to ensure an understanding of community development values and principles by practitioners and reflected in their work. The lack of recognition of community development as an occupation has not only impacted on the status of the practice but also the morale and service delivery of the persons and organizations that are involved (Luka, 2011).

Educating a new generation of community development practitioners is an imperative in democratic South Africa. Qualifications in community development at different levels are aimed to maximize the value given to experiential learning, and to maximize community access to further education, training and professional qualifications. Currently, qualifications in Community Development at levels 4, 5 and 8 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF) have been registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) (Maistry, 2011). These newly developed qualifications frameworks in community development opened the opportunity to address the above-mentioned current situation in South Africa, but it will require several processes, (one of which will be an RPL process of persons currently working in community development), in order to achieve coordination across sectors and alignment at national, provincial and local levels; training, support, mentoring? and development of practitioners and community based organizations for the occupation; recognition of community development as an occupation and processes towards professionalisation.

The result/impact of the RPL process will therefore feed into the several processes in order to achieve the above-mentioned. Thus, the RPL process is significantly inter-related to the overall process of community development professionalisation, of which the overall purpose of the latter being the promotion of sustainable and vibrant communities in South Africa. Another significant benefit of the RPL process will be the support of linkages and relationships (tripod) that it will bring about between HEI's, FET's and community development employers of the NGO, public and private sectors Annexure 2-3 to this proposal are diagrammatic illustrations of the process towards community development professionalisation by means of a logic model indicating the theory-of-change that will be followed towards achieving the said overall purpose of sustainable and vibrant communities.

This inductive RPL process will therefore require a strong emphasis on integrated learning as its core principle as well as not loosing site of the mentioned alignment and linkages that are required to address the concerns of the current community development situation in South Africa. This core principle of the RPL process will also attempt to adhere to the international and national strategic importance of the new qualifications for this new career path. This process provides for a determined and all encompassing evaluation research project focusing on RPL to provide inductive research findings and recommendations for ensuring quality, effectiveness and efficiency, accountability and/or policy changes that would be required for a successful national standardised community development career path.

8. Methodology

8.1 Research Setting/location

The research setting for the study will be within all nine provinces with persons working in community development from private and NGO sector as well as officials at different post levels of several public sector departments of South Africa in order to assess the RPL model comparability between post levels (relating to different NQF levels) public sector departments in provinces as well as HEI's and FET's in the different provinces.

8.2 Target Group and Sample

The target group for this RPL pilot project will need to be sampled from various sectors; e.g. public sector as well as the NGO and private sector, as all of them currently employ persons in the field of community development. The participation of various stakeholders is therefore imperative for the validity and reliability of the data collection for the RPL pilot project. Stakeholders may take on several functions such as being a: stakeholders (e.g. policy maker), role-player (e.g. FET, HEI or employer) and/or a funder towards the implementation of this pilot project. Key stakeholders, to name but a few, which are required for this pilot project is: SAQA, DSD, DPSA, PALAMA, DLG, DPW, HWSETA, ETDPSETA, LGSETA, PSETA, FET's and HEI's. These stakeholders need to be spread across the nine provinces in South Africa.

Stratified/purposeful sampling technique will be applied for the study and selection criteria which clearly indicate the characteristic and key factors of the candidates (unit of analysis) for the RPL process will be drafted beforehand. It is envisaged that a sample size of a minimum of 1800 candidates are required for this study. The stratified sample of 1800 candidates will be sampled as a minimum of 200 candidates per province consisting of a minimum of 50 candidates amongst four participating public sector departments. The sample candidates will be selected from each of the qualification levels by means of the said staggered project implementation process. For example ensure candidates with:

- No formal qualification (thus RPL be based on years of experience);
- NQF level 4 qualification from a qualification in another relevant field;
- NQF level 5 qualification from a qualification in another relevant field;
- NQF level 8 qualification from a qualification in another relevant field;

The selection for the above will be done by means of a diagnostic tool.

The RPL process of candidates will involve a 'field based' process due to the nature of the community development profession. This process necessitates the selection, appointment and training of mentors, supervisors and managers in order to support the candidates during their RPL field/worked based process.

The research methodology to be applied in this project is programme evaluation – specifically Process Evaluation Design in order to evaluate the inductive RPL Model for community development. This evaluation study for which funding is requested would be the first of three evaluation designs that would be applied to the RPL pilot project process.

8.3 Study Paradigm and Design

The study could be classified under the mixed methods research paradigm as it will be making use of both qualitative as well as quantitative research designs to conduct the research. The purpose of the mixed methods paradigm is not to replace the qualitative or quantitative paradigms, but rather, categorically speaking – mixed methods is the new third pillar in the middle of the research paradigm, with the qualitative paradigm on the left and the quantitative paradigm on the right (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie; 2004:14-15). The research study will be staggered over time due to the readiness and availability of HEI's and FET's to offer the new qualifications. Survey design will be used as the means to gather data for the purpose of the Implementation Evaluation design of the RPL model due to the magnitude of the study.

The purpose of this implementation evaluation design is to improve on the RPL pilot project before conducting a comprehensive implementation of the project. Herman, Morris and Fitz-Gibbon (1987:16) emphasize the necessity for pilot programmes to undergo improvement evaluations. During these evaluations it is important to understand how well a programme is moving towards its objectives in order to bring about the recommendations for change. Improvement orientated evaluation studies therefore have a formative purpose. Mouton (2008:16) distinguishes between two types of formative evaluation purposes: 1) studies with a formative-learning purpose to inform programme staff about the strengths, weaknesses and challenges faced by the programme to be improved, and 2) studies with a formative accountability purpose with the aim of improving the programme within an explicit framework of quality and standards control.

Implementation evaluation studies are suggested by Chen (2005:48) to have an enlightenment strategy and a theory-driven (programme logic) approach. For the purpose of this study the conceptual model of Chen (2005:31) will be applied in order to assess the validity and reliability of the generic community development RPL model. In short; Chen's model indicates the programme theory of all interventions which is based on appropriate implementation of the action model to activate the transformation process in the change model. It assists evaluators with focussing on resource and support requirements (inputs) for interventions that then lead to the change model that relates to the attainment of goals and ultimately impact of stakeholders policies in communities. (Chen; 2005:30-32). A theory-of-change logic model will form the backbone of the Community Development RPL project implementation evaluation study. Theory driven evaluations are sensitive to the political and organisational contexts as well as the relationship between the delivered

intervention and the planned intervention, official goals and operative goals and intended and unintended outcomes (Chen, 1999:18).

Multiple methods of data collection will be used for this RPL pilot study due to the mix method nature of evaluation designs which work with both qualitative and quantitative data collection methods (Mouton;2001:159). These will include structured methods such as questionnaires (for the survey design part of this study) and less structured methods such as individual and focus group interviews as well as on site observations and content analysis of documents of which the latter is for the purpose of designing the RPL model but also monitoring its implementation.

The methodological data collection triangulation will be applied for this study to increase the credibility and validity of the results. Both Punch (2005:95,97) and Neuman (2006:188) state that reliability & validity are central concepts/issues in all measurement. In short, reliability means consistency/dependability and validity suggests truthfulness. Both concern connecting measures to constructs. In quantitative research, reliability means *measurement* reliability: "The dependability of consistency of the measure of a variable" (Neuman, 2006: p.189). Qualitative researchers question the quantitative-positivist ideas of replication, equivalence, and subpopulation reliability ('fixed measures') because they see data collection as an *interactive process* within a context that dictates a *unique mix of measures* that cannot be repeated (Neuman, 2006: p.196). Validity for qualitative researchers is seen in the context of *authenticity* rather than the idea of a *single version of truth* (Neuman, 2006: p.196). There are different types/levels of reliability & validity for qualitative and quantitative research, as suggested by Mouton (1996:111) in his framework for validity. This will be addressed during each part of the study respectively.

Evaluation designs are operationalized by means of an overall objective followed by sub-objective (each with its own research questions) for each stage of the evaluation process. The sub-objectives for this study will follow the four-stage approach suggested by Wholey, Hatry and Newcomer (2004:67-69) and are indicated in the next section of this proposal. The framework of analysis to be applied for this evaluation study will be developed from the data matrix derived from the logic model that will be developed during the clarificatory stage of the evaluation study. The data findings, judgements and recommendations which emerges from the data analysis with regard to the RPL pilot intervention will be presented in a consolidated table that will consist of the following columns: 1) objectives of the intervention, 2) the outputs and outcomes relating to each objective, 3) a brief summary of the implementation results for each outcome, 4) a judgement and recommendation, if required, for improvement of the outputs and/or outcomes.

8.4 Evaluation objective and sub-objectives of the study

The objectives for this formative implementation evaluation study are aligned and will aim to reflect inductively on the process of community development professionalisation by means of a single career path and with special attention to the quality, standards, effectiveness and efficiency of a generic community development RPL model.

8.4.1 Main evaluation objective

The main evaluation objective of the study is to determine whether the Community Development RPL pilot project can in fact provide an integrated learning RPL model towards achieving formal qualifications in the new professional community development career path.

8.4.2 Evaluation sub-objectives

The sub-objectives that follow from the main objective of the study are:

1) To assess the need and feasibility for the Community Development RPL project
2) To evaluate the Community Development RPL project planning and design.
3) To evaluate the implementation of the Community Development RPL project
4) To provide conclusions and/or recommendations for adjustment and/or improvement of the Community Development RPL project.

8.4.3 Evaluation research questions

The evaluation research questions developed for each of the evaluation objectives are based on those suggested by Wholey, Hatry and Newcomer (2004:68-69). These questions are as follows:

Sub-objective 1: *Assess the need for and feasibility of the Community Development RPL project*

1) What are the needs of the target group?
2) What attempts have been made before to implement programs to meet these needs?
3) What were the major implementation obstacles faced by existing and/or similar projects?
4) What do similar implemented projects tell us about the best practices in the field of RPL?
5) What resources are needed to implement an effective RPL programme?
6) What challenges and limitations contribute to the implementation of a RPL programme?

Sub-objective 2: *Evaluate the Community Development RPL project planning and design.*

1) How is the programme theory of the project designed to provide an integrated learning RPL model towards achieving formal qualifications in the new professional community development career path?
2) What action model (components and activities – programme operations) are needed for the success of the Community Development RPL project?
3) Does the action model of the project support the change model of the Community Development RPL project?
4) How will the monitoring and/or making of any necessary changes of the RPL project implementation be done?

Sub-objective 3: *Evaluate the implementation of the Community Development RPL project*

1) Is the Community Development RPL project serving the right target group?
2) What is the opinion of the participants about the Community Development RPL project?
3) Are potential participants rejecting the programme or dropping out? Why?
4) Is the Community Development RPL project producing the expected outputs?
5) Is the RPL project meeting its standards of quality?

6) Is the Community Development RPL project producing its intended short-term outcomes?
7) What implementation obstacles are being encountered?
8) What differences are there between sites?

Sub-objective 4: Provide conclusions and/or recommendations for improvement of the Community Development RPL project

1) Is the Community Development RPL project meeting its implementation goals and targets?
2) Are the participants receiving the outcomes they expected?
3) Is the RPL project producing any unintended positive or negative results?
4) Are significant internal or external events affecting the project, its staff, or its clients?
5) What are the project's strengths and weaknesses?
6) What are the differences in strengths and weaknesses between sites? Why?
7) What are the areas that require improvement?
8) Are the efforts to improve the programme working?

The Community Development RPL evaluation will be conducted in a participatory manner. A logic model is developed for each of the different stages in the Community Development RPL project, as the project is an emergent intervention (i.e. following inductive reasoning). Emergent interventions require a series of logic models that indicate specific activities and causal paths expected to evolve during implementation of each emerging phase of the intervention (Rogers, 2008:39-40).

9. Operationalisation

In order to evaluate the implementation of the Community Development RPL project, the initial need for the project has to be assessed. The assessment of need for the Community Development RPL project relates to the first sub-objective of the study. For this purpose the various skills audits and accredited qualification at the different NQF levels relating to community development will be assessed. From the literature assessment a comparison matrix will be developed that could define, describe and score the different qualifications relevant to the different post levels of the respective participants in the pilot project. The second part of the literature review for this sub-objective will be to determine the challenges and limitations that contribute to RPL projects similar to this one. For this purpose a review will be done on existing research reports regarding integrated learning RPL case studies. Another very important part of the clarificatory evaluation study is that of Stakeholder identification, involvement and role clarification. This is important due to the multi-disciplinary status of the career path in community development.

The results from the first sub-objective will tie in with the assessment of the second sub-objective, which deals with the planning and design of the Community Development RPL project. Four evaluation questions will be asked as indicated earlier. In order to answer these four questions, the evaluators will conduct a series of meetings, focus interviews, observations and workshops with the participants and role-players involved in the project. This will be done in order to conceptualise and write up the Community Development RPL project, so that explicit final theory-of-change logic models could be developed for the implementation evaluation of the project. These first two sub-objectives complete the

clarificatory evaluation of the Community Development RPL pilot project study. The logic models that are the end result of the clarificatory evaluation will be used to address the third sub-objective for the study, which relates to the implementation evaluation of the study. For the purpose of this proposal a set of two implicit logic models have been developed (*see Annexure 2 & 3*) and will form the basis from which to finalize the explicit final theory-of-change logic models when the clarificatory evaluation are being conducted during step one of this RPL pilot research study.

The data for the RPL pilot study will be collected over a period of three years (excluding the completion of NQF level 8), but based on a staggered and phased process which would mean that ones once the results of phase one (RPL NQF Level 4) are available then national full-scale implementation can take place, resulting in the first phase full-scale implementation being possible within twenty (20) months after the start of phase one. The collection method for addressing objective one and part of two will be that of semi-structured interviews with the relevant policy makers, stakeholders and programme staff in order to find out the reason and motivation behind the conceptualisation of the programme.

The second form of data collection method will be that of reviewing literature and documents relevant to the programme, its purpose and strategic importance in order to gain insight from existing literature as to the strengths, limitations and challenges phased by similar programmes. The third form of data collection will be focus group workshops that will first serve the purpose of feedback with regard to the first part of data collection and secondly to validate the findings before the compilation of the programme theory (logic & theory of change models for the programme). The data collection method for the remaining objectives will be that of semi-structured interviews and self developed questionnaires with the participants of the programme, respectively and will be operationalized; using survey design methodology. Data analysis will be done on both qualitative and quantitative data – for which descriptive and inferential statistics will be analysed. Descriptive statistics will be employed to express terms of frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations. Inferential statistics will apply cross tabulations and chi square and results will be accepted significant at a 5% level.

10. Ethical Considerations:

The study will be conducted according to the ethical practices pertaining to research studies in the humanity disciplines. The following guidelines will be followed:

1. Permission to conduct the study will be sought from all necessary policy makers, stakeholders and target groups that will be involved in the study.
2. The purpose and nature of the study will be made available to the research participants by means of an information sheet as well as an explanation by the researchers.
3. Signed, written consent will be sought from all participants
4. The consent form, information sheet and questionnaires will be available in English as it is the language of business and of instruction at the FET's and HEI's.
5. All participants will remain anonymous and information obtained will be handled confidentially and for the purpose of the study only. Identification codes using numbers will be used on data forms to ensure anonymity and the interviews and questionnaires will be conducted and collected personally by the researcher/s –

taking responsibility for ensuring the safe and secure locked storage of the data. Electronic data will be password protected.

6. Participants will be informed that there will be no remuneration for partaking in the study.
7. Participants will be required to sign a MoU with their employers.
8. Participants will be treated with dignity and respect at all times.
9. No perceived psychological risks are expected in this study. All participants will be debriefed. However, should participants be affected by the study and feel that they experience the questions to be traumatic then they will be referred to a counsellor for management.
10. The findings of the study will be made available to the participants and the relevant policy makers, stakeholders and programme staff by means of direct verbal and written communication as well as publication.

11. Time-Frames

Workplan (proposed tasks to be carried out and the expected time frames for the completion of each part for phase 1 (NQF 4) which will be similar for phase 2 (NQF 5) and phase 3 (NQF 8) will have a different time-frame).	**Target Dates per Phase**
Objective 1: *(Evaluation methods: - research review & key informant interviews)* Interviewing intended users of evaluation information; clarifying programme intend from policymakers, stakeholders & managers; literature and records review; explore program reality – plausibility & measurability of programme goals.	3 months
Objective 2: *(Programme logic & theory of change models, program templates & outcome hierarchies).* Assessment of plan & design of the programme: a) instrumentation design & pilot testing; b) interviews & questionnaires; observation schedules; c) data management	3 months
Objective 3: (*Coverage analysis, component analysis, program records & case studies*) Interviews & questionnaires, observation schedules and content analysis	12 months
Objective 4: *(Conclusions, Judgments & recommendations)*. Service delivery pathways, programme model and client feedback	2 months
Envisaged outputs (i.e. publications, patents etc.)	
1) Involve all policymakers, stakeholders & managers in regular site visits and focus group interviews as well as mid-evaluation reports with regard to findings/results of each objective.	
2) Evaluation reporting to national and provincial policy and planning directorates – reflecting the wider lessons drawn which are translated into practice and guidelines for managing policy development and implementation	
3) Presentations at government and other conferences	
4) Publication of results in at least two peer review journals of which one will be through the Canadian and Australian Evaluations associations	

5) Seek to hold national conference in 2013 amongst policymakers, stakeholders and managers - seeking commentary and suggestions with regard to a way forward of duplicating the model internationally

12. Indicative Budget Breakdown of RPL Cost:

Year 1

Item	Cost	Total
Application	220 X 600	132 00
Assessment for credits (FETC)	330 per subject/unit standard @ 23 X 400	3 036 000
Assessment of credits (Certificate (Level 5))	330 per subject/unit standard @ 23 X 200	1 518 000
Administrative costs:	Air fare @ 3000 x 8 x 12	2 880 000
	Accommodation @ 900 x 8 x 12	86 400
	Transport@ 300 x 8 x 12	28 800
Total		**7 681 200**

Year 2

Item	Cost	Total
Application	220 X 600	132 00
Assessment for credits (FETC)	330 per subject/unit standard @ 23 X 400	3 036 000
Assessment of credits (Certificate (Level 5))	330 per subject/unit standard @ 23 X 200	1 518 000
Administrative costs:	Air fare @ 3000 x 8 x 12	2 880 000
	Accommodation @ 900 x 8 x 12	86 400
	Transport@ 300 x 8 x 12	28 800
Total		**7 681 200**
+ 10% escalation from 2011		**8 449 320**

Year 3

Item	Cost	Total
Application	220 X 600	132 00
Assessment of credits (professional degree)	330 per subject/unit standard @ 36 X 600	7 128 000
Administrative costs:	Air fare @ 3000 x 8 x 12	2 880 000
	Accommodation @ 900 x 8 x 12	86 400
	Transport@ 300 x 8 x 12	28 800
Total		**10 229 200**
+ 15% escalation from 2011		**11 763 580**

Total Project Cost (over 3 years): **R27 894 100**

13. Conclusion:

In conclusion; the implementation evaluation of the study will use the logic models to first assess whether the programme theory relates to the integrated learning RPL needs of persons working in the community development environment. The logic models provide the objectives for the Community Development RPL project. The objectives of the project will be used to develop a data matrix which will inform the aspects for evaluation of each objective. The aspects for evaluation will be assessed from data gathered by means of content analysis on the relevant policies, skills audits and accredited curriculum content – to name but a few, structured face-to-face interviews with a tailor-made questionnaire and site observations of programme delivery. The final act of the evaluation is to arrive at conclusions and judgements regarding the aspects for evaluation in order to provide formative findings for the Community Development RPL pilot project, prior to comprehensive implementation. These formative findings will relate to the fourth and last sub-objective of the study, which relates to the client/stakeholder feedback on the Community Development RPL pilot project.

A detailed research implementation plan (inclusive of Gantt charts linked with budget items) will be developed upon receipt of a letter of intent for the funding of this RPL community development pilot project. Annexure 1 indicates the sections that will be addressed in the said implementation plan.

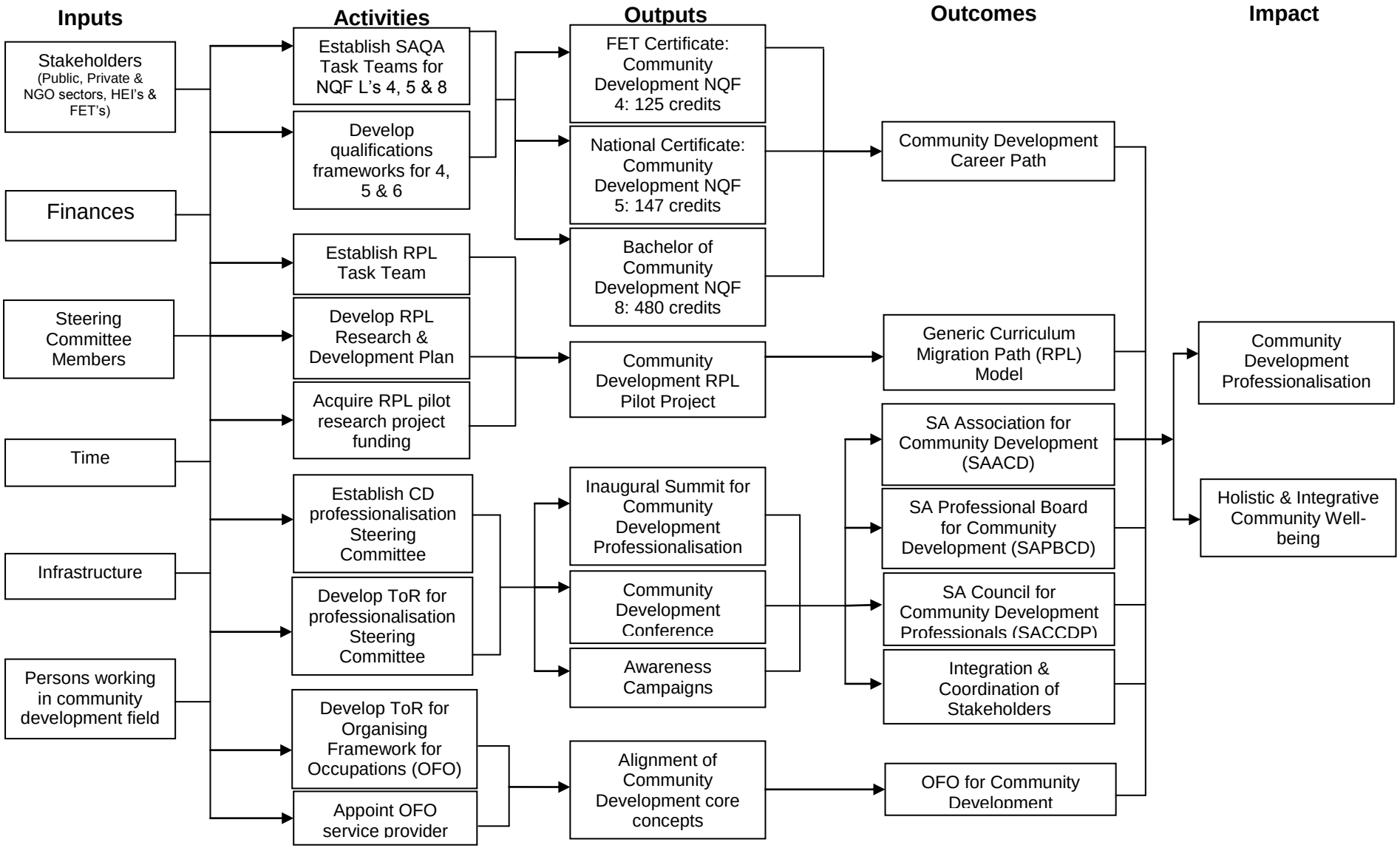
Annexure 1

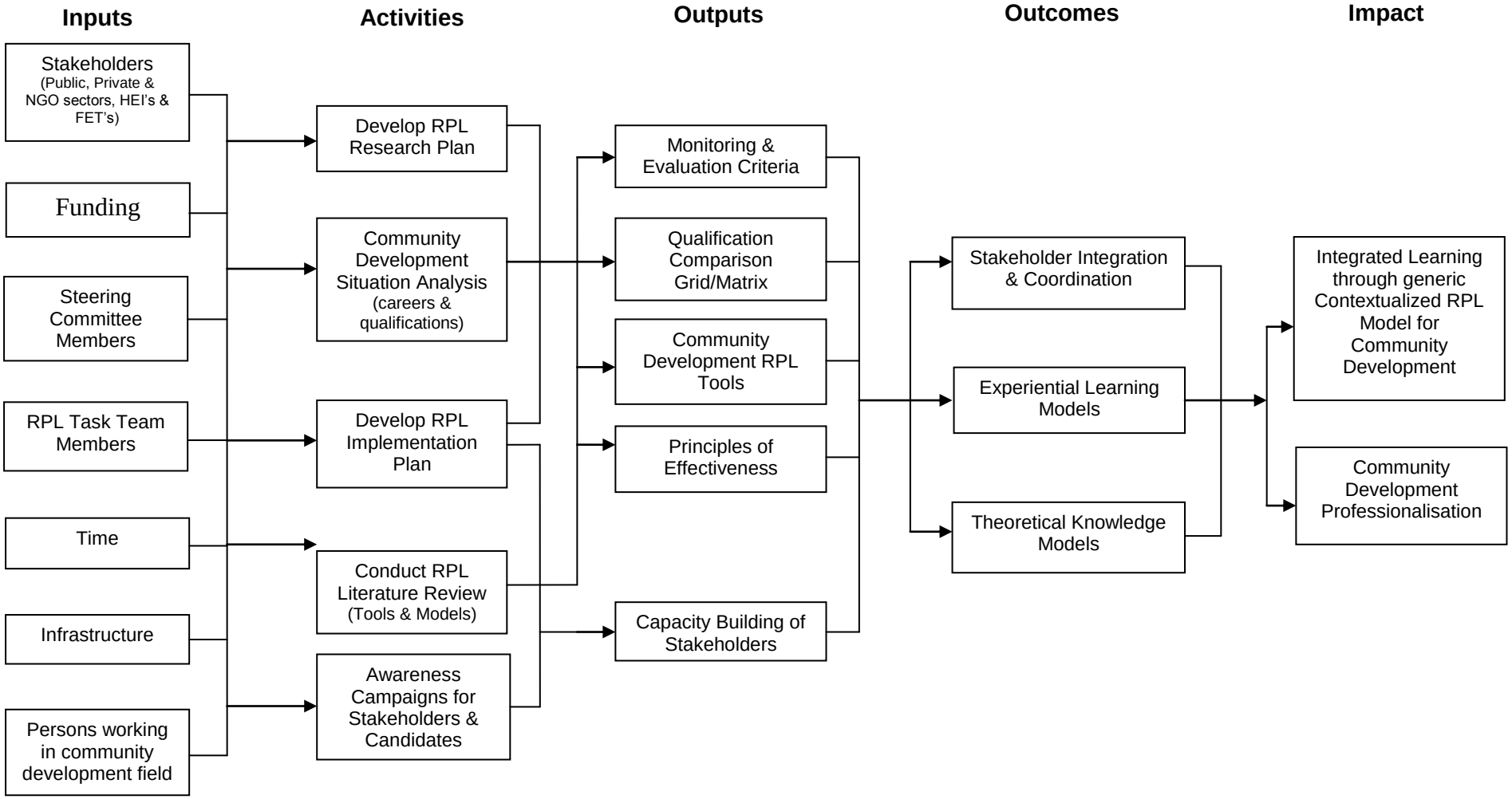
The PCM Basic Format

1. Summary
2. Background
2.1. Government/sectoral policy - Donor policy: coherence/complementarity
2.2. Democracy - Human Rights - Good governance
2.3. Features of sector
2.4. Beneficiaries and other stakeholders
2.5. Problems and opportunities to be addressed (Relevance)
2.6. Other interventions, cooperation with other donors
2.7. Documents available, i.e. evaluations
2.8. Project/program history, including past, present and future application of PCM
3. Intervention (intended and unintended results)
3.1. Overall objectives (Impact)
3.2. Outcome: Project/program purpose (Effectiveness)
3.3. Outputs (Efficiency)
3.4. Inputs and activities (Economy)
4. Assumptions
4.1. Assumptions at different intervention levels
4.2. Risks and flexibility
5. Implementation
5.1. Physical and non physical means
5.2. Organization - procedures - transparency
5.3. Timetable
5.4. Cost estimate and financing plan
5.5. Special conditions: accompanying measures taken by Government
6. Quality Factors ensuring Sustainability
6.1. Policy support
6.2. Appropriate technology
6.3. Environmental protection
6.4. Socio-cultural aspects: - Gender issues -
6.5. participation - empowerment - ownership
6.6. Institutional and management capacity, public and private; decentralization of responsibilities:
subsidiarity
7. Economic and financial viability
8. Monitoring and evaluation
8.1. Monitoring plan and indicators
8.2. Reviews / evaluations
9. Conclusions and proposals
(Including overall sustainability assessment)

Annexure 2

Strategic Level Theory-of-Change Logic Model for Community Development Professionalisation



Annexure 3

Theory-of-Change RPL Logic Model