Developing biodiversity skills, an organisational perspective

National Biodiversity Forum

Date: 23rd May 2012
Our focus

- Game Farm Management
- Environmental Management
- Operational Management
- Ecological Services
- Sustainability Services
- Wildlife Management Services
- Film and Event Management
- GIS and Mapping Services
Some history

• 5 years of implementing graduate internships
• Internal bursaries
• Personal development plans
• Workplace Skills Plans
• Coaching and mentoring
• Project and activity diversity (action-learning)
### Current landscape

#### Macro/sector
- **Development** of the Biodiversity Human Capital Strategy & Green Matters
- **Scarcity** of certain critical skills (STEM)
- Skills strategy is *learnership* focused but diversifying
- **Transformation** of sector...
- **Re-curriculation** and focus on rapid qualification development..
- **Professionalisation** within the sector
- **Surplus** of graduates
- **Growing** cost of skills development

#### Organisational
- **Robust, rapid** and *reforming* growth
- Need for *high performing staff* and *project managers*
- **Recognition** of specialist alongside current career paths
- **Transformation** of the organisation
- Biodiversity skills form the *foundation* of our overall service mix
- Skills levy *compliance*
- **Need** for a integrated human resource development strategy

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**Align and respond**
Findings

Challenges

• Under-graduates and graduates not work-ready
• Student expectations are high
• Focus on new entrants, less on existing biodiversity specialists
• Limitations and budget constraints
• Lack of accredited training providers for occupation-specific skills

Key assumptions

• Biodiversity specialists need a career path (from cradle to grave)
• On-going development required
• Exposure to a range of projects in scale, scope, quality and interdisciplinary
• Soft and technical skills are high priority (diversity, conflict, GIS, etc)
• Align people development processes to brand and organisational strategy
These skills can be categorised as technical such as:

- Advanced GIS programming,
- GIS project management,
- Project management,
- Report writing;

and,

- Environmental law.

Soft skills such as communication, conflict management, diversity management, teamwork, etc.

The concept of skills must be cross-cutting and holistic.
No learnerships for developing biodiversity planners or specialists.

So how do we do it. We use an integrated approach.
Building block approach, a continuum of career development

- **Experiential learning**
  - Structured learning programme
  - Undergraduates
  - World of work
  - Certification-driven

- **Bursaries**
  - Existing staff
  - Post-graduate
  - Research
  - Career-directed
  - Professional registration

- **Internships**
  - Structured learning programme
  - Post-graduate
  - World of work
  - Site and project exposure

- **Short courses**
  - Individual plan
  - Linking personal and professional goals
  - Skills grant driven
What do we need to put in place to kick it off?
Internship development system

Successful development system

- Policy framework
- Physical resources
- Programme structure
- Practitioners
Practitioners that are trained:
- Competent workplace coaches and mentors
- Registered Assessors and moderators
- Available subject-matter-expert trainers

Provisions resources that include:
- Business plan, registered entity, skills levy status, skills plans, skills reports and budget
- Financial processes and policies
- Administration and record-keeping infrastructure
- Training (on and off site) and assessment facilities
- Health and safety compliant provision

Management policies with a range of:
- Performance management system and processes
- Quality management and assurance of learning
- Specific policies including assessment, staff development, administration, programme management, recognition of prior learning (RPL), appeals, etc.
- Procedures and processes relating to all the above.

Programme structure composed of at least:
- Programme or curriculum strategy
- Modular breakdown or structure
- Assessment strategy
- Assessment guides and instruments
- Instruction, coaching plans, trainer or facilitator guides
- Learner workbooks
- Learner resources
- Moderation instruments
- Programme evaluation tools
Thank you very much