



By Sammy Spokes Character

Hola! We are excited to share our latest newsletter with you, packed with information about the latest developments in the SA-SAMS Modernisation Project!

A lot has happened since the last time I updated you. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) and its governance structures have taken key decisions that are proving to benefit the project positively. One of the key decisions adopted was to expand the new system pilot to the rest of the provinces, which has been happily accepted by the sector. We have already seen noticeable changes in how the provinces are embracing the project as opposed to earlier days. We can only grow from here in delivering the system that will enable the sector to meet its goals and objectives in enhancing the basic education in South Africa.

Well, enough of that – this is what the project has been up to for the first half of 2023.



Let us catch up

Since the last newsletter, there have been remarkably interesting developments on how the project will be implemented henceforth.

First, to fast-track the project delivery, the DBE recommended a phased approach to the project which was accepted by the NECT Board and the Project Steering Committee. Phase 1 will focus on customizing development to the functionality in the current SA-SAMS system. Phase 2 will concentrate on the modernisation requirements.



Second, the DBE key governance structures approved the decision to include all the provinces as pilot sites for the new SA-SAMS system, replacing the original pilot sites of the Free State and North West. This will ensure all provinces are actively involved in the soft launch testing and build capacity for technical and functional support.

To ensure the success of this pilot, the provincial EMIS teams are working closely with the project team to implement the activities that will make this new pilot a success.

In summary, some of the salient developments on the project have been the following:

- The Project is currently working on raising additional funding to complete the modernization journey in 2026.
- Release 1 and 2 (Manage School and Manage Learner) functionalities have been completed, and to date eight (8) provinces' superusers have been trained in functionalities except for Western Cape. The latter's training will be scheduled for a later date following the discussions with the WC Department of Education leadership team on 31 July 2023.

- Release 3 functionality (Manage Human Resources) was completed successfully in August 2023, and the planning for training is well in progress.
- The Release 3 Human Resources functionality has already been deployed in the sandpit as of August 2023 and the training of the superusers will commence thereafter on dates still to be determined with the DBE and the provinces.

Current Progress

The current section provides brief highlights and key milestone dates from the Project Management Office workstreams delivery for the first half of the year.

Business Analysis & Process Improvement Workstream

- Review and walkthrough of Manage School functional requirement specification (FRS).
- Signoff of FRS - Manage Human Resources.
- Planning for Curriculum module workshops.
- Analysis of the current SA-SAMS Curriculum Module
- Signoff of Manage School FRS.
- Signoff of Manage Learner FRS
- Design workshops for Curriculum and Assessment.
- Document Curriculum setup FRS.

Development, Integration & Deployment Workstream

- Release 1 and Release 2 additional changes are being completed and ready for testing.
- Finalise new DevOps Framework/Processes for weekly deployments to ensure more rapid delivery of the software.
- Finalizing the Data Quality work breakdown structure

Architecture, Infrastructure & Testing Workstream

- Supporting DBE with:
 - DBE finalising signoff of User Acceptance Testing for Release 1 & 2.
 - User Acceptance Testing (UAT) Scripts for Release 3.
 - Supporting the DBE to finalise the proposal from SITA for cloud hosting, capacity building and testing.
- System Integration Testing for Release 3
- Finalised Test Execution for Manage Human Resources.
- Retest outstanding defects for School, Learner, and Human Resources modules.
- Readied UAT environment.

Release 3 Test Plan ready for signoff

Change Management & Training Workstream

- All provinces are now part of the pilot progress meeting which is now held every third week of the month.
- A monitoring and tracking template has been developed and has been shared with the provinces to track pilot activities such as user acceptance testing, training, change management, training, and communications.
- Release 3 training preparation, design, definition, and co-ordination is underway.

Achievements to Date

- Completed : Phase 1 DBE Walkthrough for Manage Human Resources FRS.
- Completed : Phase 1: DBE Walkthrough for User Role Matrix (System Admin, MS, ML, MHR).
- Completed: Sign off User Roles Matrix (System Admin, MS, ML, MHR)
- Phase 1: Release 4: Manage Curriculum Business Analysis and Process Improvement workstream planning completed.
- Completed Manage Human Resources Development (MHR). Deployed MHR Development to System Integration Testing (SIT) environment.
- Completed: SIT Testing: Signoff Test Scripts, Execution and Test Plan for Release 1, 2 & 3.
- Completed: System Integration Testing – Release 3: Completed Test Scripts, Execution and Test Plan, ready for finalization.
- The defects logged for Release 3 (HR).
- Completed: R1 and R2 training for Mpumalanga Province superusers
- Completed: Updated the revised Change Management Strategy for the revised pilot approach.
- Completed: Data Strategy including Data Quality Framework Completed.

What's Next?

The following project activities have been planned for the latter part of 2023:

Release 1 and 2 close-off:

- ➔ School Management Functional Requirements Sign-off – Oct 2023
- ➔ Bug Fixes on R1 and R2 and get signoff from SIT – Aug 2023
- ➔ System Integration Testing of Bug Fixes on R1 and R2 sign off - Sep 2023
- ➔ Sandbox training for Release 1 & 2 – Aug 2023
- ➔ Signoff User Acceptance Testing for DBE– Aug 2023

Release 4 milestones:

- ➔ Manage Curriculum: Document Curriculum and Assessment FRS – Feb 2024
- ➔ Manage Curriculum Development – April 2024
- Development Strategy for Release 4
- ➔ Release 3 training preparation, design, definition, and co-ordination is underway.

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- ➔ The defects logged for Release 3 (HR).
- ➔ Completed: R1 and R2 training for Mpumalanga Province superusers
- ➔ Completed: Updated the revised Change Management Strategy for the revised pilot approach.
- ➔ Completed: Data Strategy including Data Quality Framework Completed

Release 3 milestones

- ➔ Sign off Manage School FRS – Oct 2023
- ➔ Sign off Manage Learner FRS – Oct 2023
- ➔ Sign off Human Resources FRS – Oct 2023
- ➔ Unit testing of School, Learner, and HR modules – Aug 2023
- ➔ Bug fixes for Release 3 – Aug 2023
- ➔ SIT completed and Signed off – Sep 2023
- ➔ Trial Automation Test for SIT – Sep 2023
- ➔ Deploy School and Learner changes to SIT, Sandbox and UAT environments – Aug 2023
- ➔ Deploy OpenEMIS Dashboard and Data Integrator and Data Manager – Aug 2023
- ➔ Deployment of Release 3 to Sandbox – Aug 2023
- ➔ User Acceptance Testing Scripts – Aug 2023
- ➔ Logged Defects for MHR in SIT, before closing off obtain sign off – Aug 2023
- ➔ System access for Superusers and training – Aug 2023
- ➔ Signoff UAT Testing for R3 – Aug 2023
- ➔ Signoff new Pilot Approach Training Strategy – Aug 2023
- ➔ Release a Quarterly Newsletter on Release 1, 2, and 3 progress. – Aug 2023
- ➔ Align communication and stakeholder engagements to follow-up on Release 3 milestone. – Aug 2023.



Sammy says:

"Look out for your provincial User Acceptance Training announcements for October 2023."

Until then – Sharp Sharp..."

As always, I am looking forward to sharing yet another exciting milestone achievement for SA-SAMS Modernisation!