

IBP SCOPE AND INFORMATION

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE CURRENT INTERNET BROADCAST PROJECT (IBP)

Over the last **ten (10) years**, teachers and learners across the Free State have recognized the benefits of receiving **rich media webcasting** for instruction through the Internet Broadcast Project (IBP) – a collaborative project between the **Free State Department of Education (FSDoE)** and **the South Campus (SC) of the University of the Free State (UFS)**. Through the project **expert teachers** present lessons at the studio situated at the South Campus of the UFS and these lessons are broadcasted live via VSAT Internet Access to **83 centres** across the province within **43 towns** in all **5 districts** (including the District Teachers Development Centres – DTDC). This is made possible through video equipment, Webcasting Hardware systems, editing software, and media streaming servers within a MPLS VPN (Virtual Private Network). The technology provided at each school allows learners to view and communicate with an expert teacher in the studio during broadcast at no cost to the school or learner. All lessons can be accessed again after the live session via an online web-based catalogue.

1.2 DEVICES

Each participating school is equipped with 24/7 internet access, a special **all in one (AIO)** computer, data projector and speaker device that is portable and easy to use. Schools can download and distribute the content across various devices, such as DVD, smart phones or tablets. This allows for a broader community of schools and learners to benefit at no additional cost, whether used at school or taken home by learners for homework support and revision.

1.3 CONTENT AND CURRICULUM

The innovative utilization of ICT to build a sustainable and strong teaching workforce, as well as targeted curriculum content for learners form the backbone of this project. Support is provided based on and adapted to the need of both teachers and learners in subjects such as Mathematics, Maths Literacy, Physical Science, Life Science, Geography, History, English, Accounting, Economics and Business Studies. Schools are encouraged to and supported in adapting the content offered to address the needs at their own school. Flexibility allows schools to choose when they watch which lessons, to how many classrooms at the school the lessons are broadcast to and how learners gain access to content after school hours.

1.4 TRAINING

Although most training is done via the **broadcast platform**, the strength of the project lies within the holistic approach to training and support offered to schools. A **blended model** is used to build capacity and ownership, and to provide ongoing technical training and support within the school. A minimum of **two (2) site visits per year** to each school provide an opportunity for the school to receive:

- individual, school specific support dealing with
- project management and administration,
- technical know-how,

- teacher and learner support and
- ICT skills development and
- integration into the class room.

This is paired with the principal, teachers and learners from all participating schools receiving **face-to-face training** at UFS. These sessions allow the key role players to share

- **best practices** in making use of the video content and equipment in their specific subject areas,
- receive **end-user ICT skills training** and
- **feedback** regarding usage.

1.5 TECHNICAL SUPPORT

A dedicated **technical team** at the UFS provides support to schools via remote access but also on-site support when required, even in the most remote areas of the Free State. A dedicated **helpline** is available during all broadcasts. Every school's participation is analysed and **feedback** is provided on a monthly basis to the FSDoE.

1.6 UTILIZATION

During the past seven (7) years, the project has gradually been expanded to include more subjects across more grades. Over this time we have seen a tremendous interest in the utilisation:

- Since the project was launched in 2011, over **5 000 lessons have been recorded and made available on the catalogue**.
- In 2017 alone **>50 000 hours** of lessons were viewed from the web catalogue.
- More than **82 800 lessons have been given to schools for offline viewing**, either by giving it to schools on DVD's or loading it onto their computers during schools visits or training sessions at the UFS. Any FS school or individual learner can receive the content.
- More than two (2) **workshops** are held every year, reaching more than **2 480 teachers, learners or principals face-to-face**. Training at these workshops included
 - direct ICT skills development,
 - project management support and
 - the sharing of best practice.
 - This was supported with district meetings often chaired by the Free State MEC for Education, Dr. Tate Makgoe.
- The current project has the potential of reaching **71 000 learners and 3500 teachers** across the **83 IBP centres every week**. This increases substantially when a broader audience receives access through **downloaded** and **distributed** lessons. Subject Advisors and IBP schools in the districts also assist with the distribution of content.