

# Accredited Suppliers for Teacher Laptop Initiative

Contributed by Administrator  
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The Teacher Laptop Initiative, spearheaded by the Department of Basic Education (DoBE), addresses South Africa's need for a quality education system and forms part of the cohesive plan by the DoE and other stakeholders in education to improve the overall quality of education by making resources available to learners and educators in the public education sector.

The initiative forms part of the DoBE's objective to improve Information and Communications Technology (ICT) in teaching and learning. A Special Task Team consisting of the combined trade unions (CTU-SADTU and CTU-ITU) and the ELRC was formed in April 2009 to drive this initiative. The Government Gazette No 32207 of 8 May 2009 determined the policy related to payment of the laptop allowance to teachers, and the specifications of the laptops to be availed. Purchases by teachers of laptops within this scheme will be phased in from February 2010, starting with those with the longest service. Provincial Education Departments will implement the project and inform teachers about the venture.

The ICT package will consist of appropriate hardware and software, as well as Internet connectivity, all with prescribed minimum specifications, and covered by insurance. A monthly allowance will be paid to qualifying teachers for a period of 5 years, renewable every 5 years, upon proof of acquiring the computer. The allowance is intended to assist the educators in their learning and teaching experience as well as the administration of their learning and teaching.

The Special Task Team was tasked with investigating models to provide simple, cost effective mechanisms for educators to obtain their own laptop computers over a period of 3 – 5 years. The three approved software suppliers are: Microsoft, Intel and Symantec. Nine consortia are accredited for participation in the initiative in the first phase.

Provisionally accredited suppliers are:

- Dell Laptitude
- Lenovo

- Sahara Systems
- Fujitsu
- MTN
- Telkom and Mustek
- Hewlett Packard
- Pinnacle
- Vodacom

Discussions were held with Microsoft SA and Symantec SA regarding competitive pricing for the necessary software for use of the laptops. SARS was also consulted with a view to exploring the possibility of minimising tax payable on the laptop allowance.

Ultimately the laptop packages will consist of the following:

- Computer laptop
- Microsoft Windows operating system
- Microsoft Office 7 software
- Symantec security software
- Intel Teach training materials
- Department of Education curriculum software
- Connectivity
- Email address activated against individual PERSAL numbers
- Insurance
- Finance

Towards the end of October 2009, arrangements received the approval of the Director-General of Basic Education, Mr Duncan Hindle, who mandated its roll out. A meeting was held at the Eskom Convention Centre on 12th November 2009 with the consortia and teacher unions to inform all parties of the need for the consortia to review their proposals in the light of finalisation of details, and to prepare for the roll out.

Committees were formed at this meeting to address details of the roll out, such as the drafting Memoranda of Understanding between

suppliers and the Special Task Team, and the issue of registration of teachers's purchase of their laptops in order to minimise opportunities for fraud and corruption.