



**the dpsa**

Department:  
Public Service and Administration  
**REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA**

**Development of interventions  
to improve the quality of  
human resource planning at  
departmental level in the  
public service**

**RESEARCH  
REPORT**



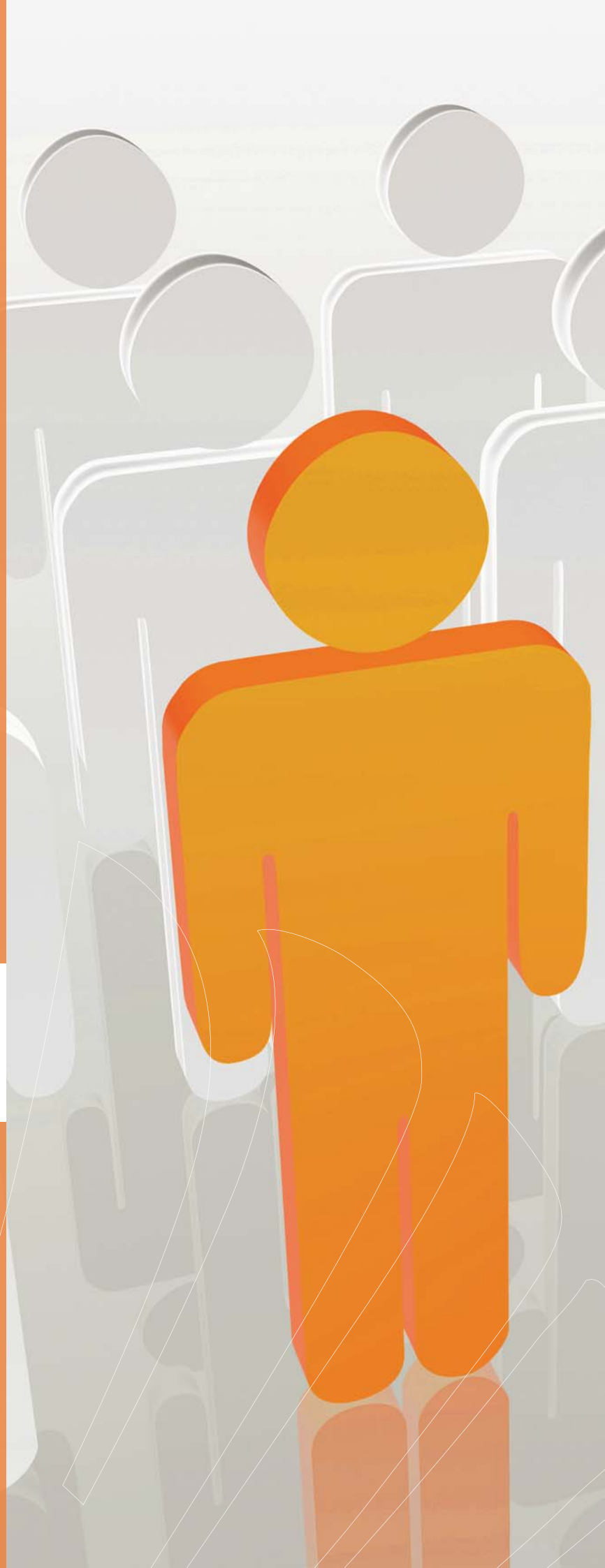
WE BELONG



WE CARE



WE SERVE



'Joint or cross-cutting programmes are a crucial test of integrated and co-operative governance. A framework for managing joint programmes in government has been approved by Cabinet. It is aimed at addressing the weaknesses in the current procedures and processes of planning, budgeting and implementation that are hampered by weak capability to deliver.'

*Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi – Budget Vote 2006*

## BUDGET VOTE 2006

'We have noted with concern the paucity of long-term HR planning in the public service. Accordingly, a project to improve the quality of HR planning at departmental level in the public service commenced during December 2005. The research phase has been completed. It entailed desktop research and information-gathering sessions with sample groups from national and provincial departments. The project will be concluded during the next couple of months, specific proposals will be made and tools will be issued to assist departments to improve the quality of their human resource planning.'

*Minister Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi – Budget Vote 2006*

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</b>	<b>.03</b>
<b>ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS</b>	<b>.04</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION</b>	<b>.05</b>
1.1 Background to the project	.05
1.2 Project objectives and scope	.06
1.3 Methodology and limitations	.07
1.3.1 Methodology	.07
1.3.2 Limitations	.07
<b>2. HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING LANDSCAPE</b>	<b>.09</b>
2.1 Definitions	.09
2.2 Strategic and HR planning	.09
2.2.1 Public Service Act and Regulations	.11
2.2.2 dpsa guidelines on integrated HRP	.13
2.2.3 Public Finance Management Act and Treasury Regulations	.13
2.3 HR development and planning	.13
2.4 International good practice	.14
<b>3. REPORT ON QUESTIONNAIRES</b>	<b>.15</b>
3.1 Framework for interpreting questionnaire analysis	.15
3.2 Background	.15
3.3 Key descriptors	.17
<b>4. FINDINGS: CURRENT HR PLANNING PRACTICES &amp; ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES</b>	<b>.19</b>
4.1 Use of current guidelines	.19
4.2 Use of EE plans/other tools	.20
4.3 Common framework for HRP	.24
4.4 Reliance on consultants	.26
4.5 Content and templates for HR plans	.27
4.6 Monitoring and evaluation	.29
4.7 Formal document approval	.30
4.8 Impact on service delivery/integration	.31
4.8.1 The extent of human resource units' involvement in the development of the HR plan	.31
4.8.2 The development of an HR plan in the past	.32
4.9 Organisational challenges	.42
4.9.1 Restructuring and re-organisation	.42
4.9.2 Leadership, accountability and management	.42
4.9.3 Role definition in the human resource function	.45
4.9.4 Process and design	.48
4.9.5 Information management/sources	.53
4.9.6 Training and development	.56
4.10 Role of the dpsa	.59
4.11 Conclusions	.62
<b>5. RECOMMENDATIONS</b>	<b>.63</b>
5.1 Proposals for broad human resources planning framework	.63
5.1.1 Leadership and accountability	.63
5.1.2 Responsibilities of line managers	.63
5.1.3 Process and design of the HR plan	.64
5.1.4 Content and templates for HR plans	.65
5.1.5 Information system and demographics	.66
5.2 Role of dpsa	.66
5.2.1 Definition of HR planning	.67
5.2.2 Profile and structure of the HR function	.67
5.2.3 Monitoring and evaluation	.68
5.2.4 HR forum/learning network	.68
5.2.5 Training and development for HR planners	.69
5.2.6 Improved communication on guidelines	.69
<b>6. WAY FORWARD AND CONCLUSION</b>	<b>.70</b>

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The views contained herein currently represent the views of the respondents and not necessarily those of the dpsa/GTZ.

The logo for GTZ (German Agency for Technical Cooperation) is displayed in a red, lowercase, sans-serif font.

# ABBREVIATIONS & ACRONYMS

ABBREVIATION/ACRONYM	DETAIL
ASGISA	Accelerated and shared growth initiative of South Africa
DoD	Department of Defence
dpsa	Department of Public Service and Administration
EE	Employment Equity
FOSAD	Forum of South African Directors-General
FS	Free State
FTE	Full-time equivalent (i.e. a person providing a specified number of hours of work – e.g. 40 hours per week)
GEAR	Growth, Employment and Redistribution plan
GTZ	German Agency for Technical Cooperation
HR	Human Resource(s)
HRP	Human resource plan/planning
MDG	Millennium Development Goals These are internationally accepted goals to address poverty. South Africa has committed to these goals.
MTEF	Medium-Term Expenditure Framework
MTSF	Medium-Term Strategic Framework
PERSAL	Personnel and salary system
PFMA	Public Finance Management Act, 2000
PGDS	Provincial growth and development strategy
PSC	Public Service Commission
PSR	Public Service Regulations, 2001
RDP	Reconstruction and Development Programme
SAQA	South African Qualification Authority
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
ToR	Terms of reference
palama	Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy

## I. INTRODUCTION

### I.1 Background to the project

The Public Service Commission's State of the Public Service Report 2005 postulates on page 40 that *'[i]n the second decade of our democracy the public service should be a natural first choice of employment for skilled and dedicated South Africans keen to make a contribution to society'*. It goes on later to propose that *'to reach this point, a sophisticated human resource planning capacity is needed'*.

The White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service<sup>1</sup> sought to define the initiatives needed to shift the public service from its centrally controlled and process-driven orientation towards:<sup>2</sup>

- A public service representative of all the people of South Africa
- The treatment of all public servants as valuable resources
- A focus on service delivery outcomes
- Results-driven management
- Accountability for actions by all public servants
- Conducting business professionally, transparently and ethically.

One such initiative is a new framework for human resource management. Contained within this framework is the human resource planning component, which places a central focus on ensuring that the public service has the human resources needed to meet all operational objectives. The aim of HR planning for the organisation, as defined in the White Paper, is to:

- Obtain the quality and quantity of staff required by the public service
- Make optimum use of its human resources
- Anticipate and manage surpluses and shortages of staff
- Develop a multi-skilled, representative and flexible workforce responsive to a changing operational environment.

The White Paper<sup>3</sup> defines the following three steps for HR planning:

- An assessment of the human resources required to deliver against the operational objectives derived from the strategic plan

- An assessment of the organisation's existing human resource capacity
- A plan for closing the gap between current and future human resource capacity required within a finite financial resource allocation.

Eight years after this White Paper a significant amount of work still needs to be done within the public service. The State of the Public Service Report also suggests that the *'current human resource management framework is incomplete in certain fundamental areas, contributing to poor performance'*<sup>4</sup>. The report highlights career pathing and performance management as necessary components of an effective talent management strategy for the public service.

It is markedly apparent, despite pockets of excellence, that effective human resource strategies are not being implemented with any significant degree of efficacy, and the public service continues to experience a severe skills shortage that cuts across many spheres of government and appears to be concentrated in local government. This skills shortage is continuing to have an increasingly negative impact on service delivery within the public service.<sup>5</sup>

At a parliamentary briefing in February 2006, the Deputy Chairperson of the PSC, Mr John Ernstzen, stated:

*'Notwithstanding the strides that the public service has made in the area of human resource management, there still remains room for improvement. We still maintain that areas such as recruitment and selection, performance management, **human resource planning**<sup>6</sup>, the challenge of HIV/AIDS and employment equity need more attention if the public service is to maximise human potential as envisioned in Chapter 10 of the Constitution'*.

This focus on HR planning is further supported by an extract from the Government Programme of Action that specifically refers to the action taken by the dpsa to address the HR planning function in government.

<sup>1</sup> Government Gazette, 31 December 1997

<sup>2</sup> White Paper on Human Resource Management in the Public Service, 1997 p9

<sup>3</sup> Chapter 4, point 4.2.2, p30

<sup>4</sup> The State of the Public Service Report 2004, p38

<sup>5</sup> 'Skills gap retards delivery, MPs told' in Business Report Wednesday, September 7, 2005

<sup>6</sup> Our emphasis.

# INTRODUCTION

The above points to the importance of this project and an opportunity for the dpsa to play a catalyst role in transforming the public service and contributing directly to improving service delivery.

ACTIONS	DEPARTMENTS	TIME FRAME	PROGRESS UPDATE - 01 FEB 2006
Interventions to strengthen HR planning and function in government	dpsa palama	Ongoing	Donor funding was secured and a service provider has been appointed to review the HR planning framework. The service provider submitted a draft project plan during Jan 06.

Source: Government Programme of Action – Updated Feb 2006<sup>7</sup>

## 1.2 Project objectives and scope

The overall objective of the project was to determine interventions to assist departments and improve the quality of their human resource plans.

The deliverables and scope of the project were established in the terms of reference (ToR) – see *Appendix A*.

The two key deliverables set for the project were:

1. A research report (the final draft of this report) that
  - (a) contains a qualitative assessment of the human resource planning practices applied by selected departments – see the findings in *Section 4* and *Section 5* below;
  - (b) proposes an appropriate human resource planning methodology and framework for departments that will take into account the available skills base in the country – see comments on HR development and implementation proposals in the conclusion; and
  - (c) contains recommendations regarding the implementation and quality control interventions necessary with regard to such a proposed human resource planning methodology. This would clearly identify the future role of the dpsa in the planning context – see *Section 6* for recommendations.
2. A revised human resource planning guide that will be informed by and aligned with the proposed human resource planning methodology and framework for use by departments. The guide will be concise and practical and

will be aligned with the regulatory framework that governs human resource management in the public service. Where applicable, it will (*inter alia*) –

- (a) provide practical step-by-step guidance on procedures, techniques, etc;
- (b) describe how to conduct human resource demand and supply forecasting;
- (c) describe the pitfalls to be avoided; and
- (d) contain templates that can be readily (or with minor adaptations) used by departments.

The revised human resources planning guide will create a tool that will facilitate greater integration within departments and an overall improvement in service delivery. It will also lay the foundations for the creation of an early warning system that links the HR plans to the government’s programme of action and long-term vision and goals. These could include the Millennium Development Goals, the 2014 or 2010 visions of the respective departments and provinces, as well as the provincial growth and development strategies.

<sup>7</sup> Full programme available at <http://www.info.gov.za/aboutgovt/poa/report2005/govadmin.htm>

## 1.3 Methodology and limitations

### 1.3.1 Methodology

Upon signing of the contract, the project planning phase (phase 1) was used to finalise the details concerning project management, logistical arrangements, skills transfer and other issues. A project charter (see *Appendix B*) was prepared for presentation, consideration and approval by the Project Steering Committee. This set the broad framework for the management of the project and listed, amongst others, the:

- Objectives and deliverables
- Key project personnel
- Stakeholders
- Criteria of success and consequences of failure
- Assumptions, risks and constraints
- Contingency plans
- Key dates in the project
- Project control.

A detailed project plan was developed that identified the necessary milestones and mapped the process to be followed to ensure that the project would be delivered on time by the proposed target date. At the inception of the project it was agreed that the project dates listed in the ToR were far too ambitious. The final date set for project closure by the joint DPSA/GTZ project team was amended to 9 June 2006.

Phase 2 of the project covered the research and liaison. This also included ongoing desktop review of the relevant documents. As part of liaison, it was agreed to have focus group meetings in the Free State (with Northern Cape representatives) and North West provinces and a joint meeting of national departments and Gauteng province.

The methodology proposed and adopted for the research was the completion of a research questionnaire that covered amongst others the current practices, challenges and key elements of a guideline and the future role of the dpsa. The research questionnaire went through a number of iterations with the joint DPSA/GTZ project team. See *Appendix C* for the final questionnaire. See *Section 3* for a summary of the statistics relating to the questionnaire. The research questionnaire was developed in MS-Excel 2003 format. This had its own limitations, as discussed below.

Upon completion of the first draft of the research report and after consultation with members of the dpsa project team, select members and the consultants returned to the Free State (with Northern Cape representatives) and Mpumalanga to verify the findings from both the focus group sessions and the questionnaire analysis. The information was presented to the attendees and issues were debated and discussed where appropriate. In some

instances, important suggestions were made by attendees, particularly regarding the revised HR planning guidelines. Despite a limited and disappointing turnout in Mpumalanga, the return visits were important. Firstly, the project team delivered on its February promise to return to the provinces to complete the verification process and, secondly, it was an opportunity to thank people for their participation and answer any questions that arose as a result of the process. Overall, the project team was satisfied with the outcome. Information from the verification phase has been integrated into the body of the report.

### 1.3.2 Limitations

While the Free State focus group workshop was easily set up and well attended, there was limited progress with the North West province. It was therefore decided to approach the Mpumalanga provincial government to host the second provincial focus group. The first focus group workshop took place in Bloemfontein, where the research questionnaire was piloted. The second focus group workshop subsequently took place in Nelspruit.

It must be further noted that the focus group workshop in Pretoria had limited success. The Gauteng provincial government did not form part of the original sample and was only included due to its location in the province. However, there were no representatives from the Gauteng provincial government, and only eight national departments were represented.

The Excel file for the research questionnaire was protected to ensure that respondents could not alter any of the fields. The consulting team and the project team used the latest available version of Excel. However, it emerged that not all government departments have the latest software. In some extreme cases, it emerged that some national and provincial department officials were still using MS-Office 2000. This resulted in respondents having difficulty in opening the files and completing the questionnaire electronically. It was not possible to ascertain if this had an impact on the response rate, but would be an important consideration for future initiatives of a similar nature.

Initially the questionnaire return rate was slow. However, with support from the dpsa project team the consortium was able to follow up with almost all the people listed on the database. Despite the distribution list being an official dpsa one, there was a substantial number of instances where the listed e-mail address was incorrect or the e-mail address was correct but the e-mail was simply not received. In all cases, the questionnaires were re-sent to the relevant people. The resultant delay in the submission of the completed questionnaires meant that questionnaires were submitted as late as Tuesday, 25 April 2006, while the revised final deadline set for the return was 10 April 2006. The problems experienced with e-mail receipts raises some general concerns about the efficiency of the e-mail communication system from the

## INTRODUCTION

dpsa to other departments, especially when timeous responses are required.

In general, it was felt that the focus group meetings and subsequent follow-up meetings elicited honest and open feedback on HRP practices, the challenges experienced in this regard and the way forward. However, it was disconcerting to note that the findings from the focus group meetings were not always supported by the 'formal' responses to the questionnaire.

It is our contention that the research questionnaire may have been completed by the heads of HR units or that departments did not wish to provide responses that could reflect negatively on them. The consultant team believes that the focus group responses genuinely reflect the reality on the ground.

## 2. HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING LANDSCAPE

The South African Constitution, in Section 195, covers the basic principles governing public administration. For purposes of this research report we will only cover the sections pertinent to HR planning. We believe the following sub-clauses<sup>8</sup> from Section 195 should be considered in the context of overall planning and the utilisation of resources in the public service:

- Efficient, economic and effective use of resources must be promoted.
- Services must be provided impartially, fairly, equitably and without bias.
- Good human resource management and career development practices to maximise human potential must be cultivated.

Government has put in place a composite package of policies, legislation, regulations and inter-governmental structures and procedures since 1994 to ensure that the objectives of the Constitution are addressed. The overall objective has been to ensure that there is a national reconstruction and development programme (RDP) and growth, employment and redistribution (Gear) and that the accelerated and shared growth initiative of South Africa (AsgiSA) is realised.

There is an implicit requirement for the public service to ensure that it has the material and human resources as well as the management and operational systems to address the above. In this context, the importance of HR planning within the broader context of strategic planning cannot be over-emphasised.

### 2.1 Definitions

Currently, HR planning is defined in the HR planning guideline as a *'system of systematically reviewing human resource requirements to ensure that the required number of employees, with the required skills, are available when they are needed'*.

This definition can be revised to include a broader view. The Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada defines HR planning as a *'process that identifies current and future human resources needs for an organisation to achieve its goals. Human resources planning should serve as a link between human resources management and the overall strategic plan of an organisation'*<sup>9</sup>.

An alternative, more process-orientated view of HR planning is defined as *'a management process of analysing an organisation's human resource needs under changing conditions and developing the activities necessary to satisfy these needs'*<sup>10</sup>.

It is recommended that the dpsa should consider revising its definition of HR planning. See recommendations on the role of the dpsa (5.2).

### 2.2 Strategic and HR planning

President Mbeki, in the 2006 State of the Nation Address, pointed out that *'for AsgiSA [and other government programmes] to succeed, it is clear that the machinery of state, and especially local government, should function effectively and efficiently'*.

The South African government has adopted a Medium-Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) and Medium-Term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) as an opportunity to act in unison with all spheres of government and to ensure alignment and a coherent approach to integrated governance.

To contextualise HR planning, it is important to understand the current planning parameters adopted by the National Cabinet in the approved multi-year cycle, as shown in Figure 1 on page 10.

The MTSF is derived from a comprehensive integrated planning framework that involves a sequence of activities. The aim of the sequencing exercise is to:

- Enhance medium-term planning that identifies a limited number of medium-term priorities;
- Ensure that the policy decisions taken by Cabinet inform planning exercises throughout the government; and
- Align key elements of the government's annual calendar.

The sequence, which will recur annually, begins every year during September/October and consists of nine major steps. As this is a widely available document, we have merely captured the steps without additional exposition.

The nine steps listed in the planning framework are:

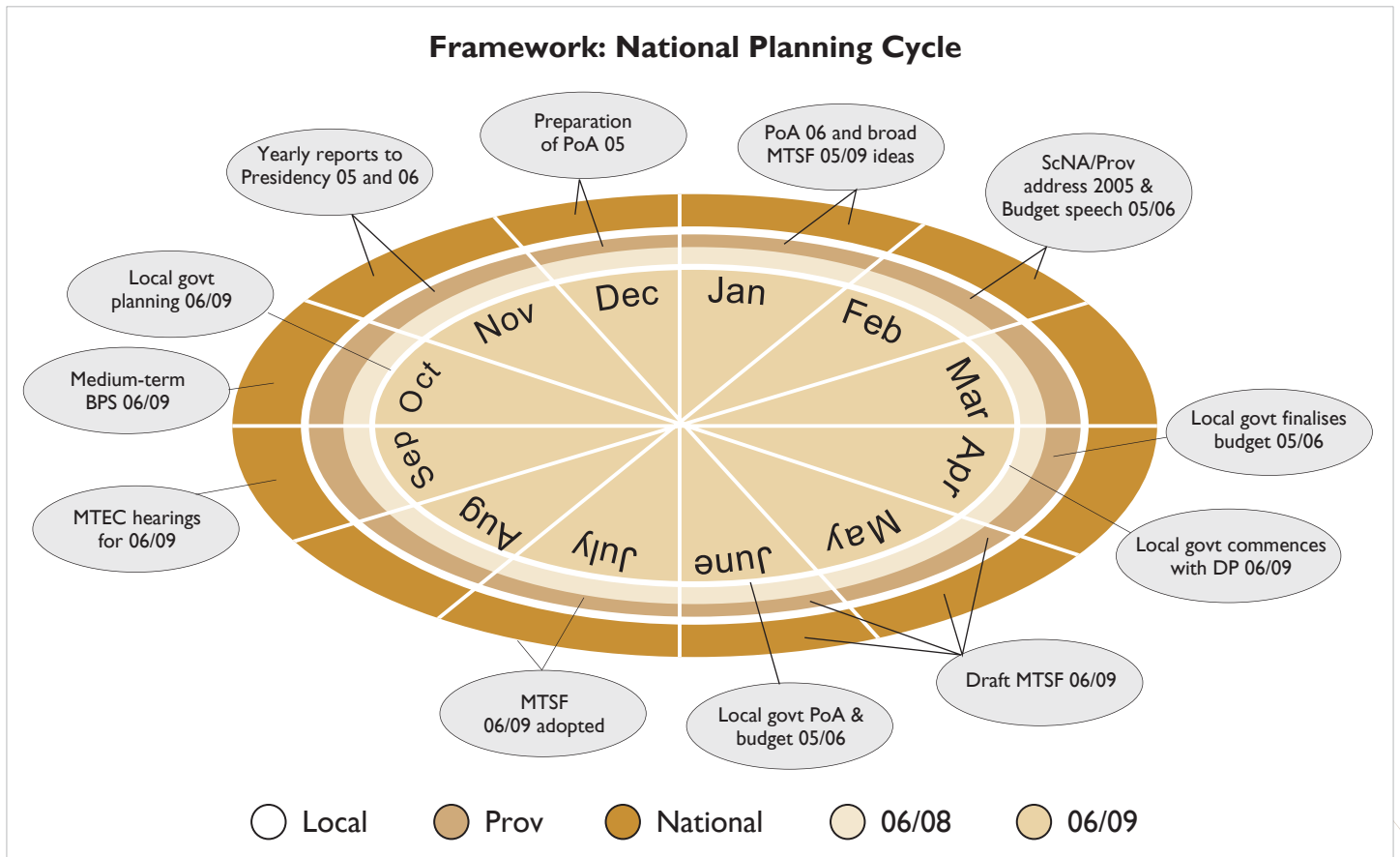
1. Departmental strategic planning with the objective of identifying key priorities;
2. Cluster-level objectives;
3. FOSAD and governance and administration DG cluster to produce draft to the MTSF;
4. Review and finalisation of draft MTSF by national Cabinet Lekgotla;
5. Communication of the medium-term priorities to government as well as the public during the State of the Nation Address;

<sup>8</sup> This does not diminish the importance of the remaining clauses of the Constitution.

<sup>9</sup> [www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca](http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca)

<sup>10</sup> *Reconceptualising human resource planning in response to institutional change* in International Journal of Manpower Vol. 10 No. 5 1998, p343

# HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING LANDSCAPE



**Figure 1: SA Government planning cycle, 2005/06**

6. A communication campaign, informing the public in more detail of the priorities of government, as a follow-up to the State of the Nation Address;
7. Consultation with provincial and local spheres of government;
8. Programme planning; and
9. Monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

**It is our contention that HR planning should be central to and should support all the steps listed above.**

In particular, it should focus on the following steps:

- Departmental strategic planning with the objective of identifying key priorities;
- Cluster-level objectives;
- Programme planning; and
- Monitoring, evaluation and reporting.

At a provincial level, the planning framework requires of provincial government departments to ensure vertical and horizontal alignment to the provincial growth and development strategies. In so doing, HR planning would be integrated from the strategic planning stages to the monitoring, evaluation and reporting stages.

We believe that the dpsa has a specific role to play regarding the monitoring and evaluation of HR planning in addressing the national priorities. The findings could be linked to step 3 above and form the basis for Cabinet decision-making. This is explored further in unpacking the role of the dpsa below.

## 2.2.1 Public Service Act and Regulations

The Public Service Act<sup>11</sup> defines, amongst others, the Executing Authority, the heads of department and the respective roles of each. Human resource planning is not defined in the Act, but is covered extensively in the Public Service Regulations (PSR).

The spirit of the PSR is captured in Part II, that deals with the delegation of authority and states:

‘To enable a head of department to manage her or his department effectively and efficiently, the executing authority *shall* provide the head of department with appropriate powers and authority.’

However, it is our contention that this does not go far enough as, in the next clause, the delegation of power and authority is regarded as discretionary. The PSR states in Regulation B I:

If these regulations confer a power or impose a duty upon an executing authority or a head of department, she or he *may*, subject to the Act-

- (a) delegate the power to an employee or authorise an employee to perform the duty; and
- (b) set conditions for the exercise of the power or performance of the duty.

In terms of Part III of the PSR, Part B focuses on strategic planning. Accountability for the preparation of the strategic plan vests with the executing authority.

## B. STRATEGIC PLANNING

B.1 An executing authority shall prepare a strategic plan for her or his department -

- (a) stating the department’s core objectives, based on constitutional and other legislative mandates, functional mandates and the service delivery improvement programme mentioned in Regulation III C;
- (b) describing the core and support activities necessary to achieve the core objectives, avoiding duplication of functions;
- (c) specifying the functions the department will perform internally and those it will contract out;
- (d) describing the goals or targets to be attained in the medium term;
- (e) setting out a programme for attaining those goals and targets;
- (f) specifying information systems that-
  - (i) enable the executing authority to monitor the progress made towards achieving those goals, targets and core objectives;
  - (ii) support compliance with the reporting requirements in Regulation III J and the national minimum information requirements, referred to in Regulation VII H; and
- (g) complying with the requirements in paragraphs 5.1 and 5.2 of the Treasury Regulations.

<sup>11</sup> Act 103 of 1994, as amended.

# HUMAN RESOURCES PLANNING LANDSCAPE

In terms of Regulation B.2 (d), **based on the strategic plan of the department an executing authority shall engage in human resource planning** in accordance with Regulation III D with a view to meeting the resulting human resource needs.

For ease of reference, we have included the full text of Regulation III D below.

It is important to note that our findings have shown that the

delegations with regard to HR planning are not in place in most provincial departments that were part of the focus groups.

A specific recommendation to address the delegations and in particular the accountability for HR planning is made in this regard. See the recommendation on leadership and accountability in *Section 6*.

## D. HUMAN RESOURCE PLANNING

### D.1 An executing authority shall -

- (a) assess the human resources necessary to perform her or his department's functions, with particular reference to -
  - (i) the number of employees required;
  - (ii) the competencies which those employees must possess; and
  - (iii) the capacities (whether permanent or temporary) in which those employees shall be appointed;
- (b) assess existing human resources by race, gender and disability as well as by occupational category, organisational component and grade with reference to their -
  - (i) competencies;
  - (ii) training needs; and
  - (iii) employment capacities;
- (c) plan within the available budgeted funds, including funds for the remaining period of the relevant medium-term expenditure framework, for the recruitment, retention, deployment and development of human resources according to the department's requirements determined in terms of Regulation III D.1(a), which plan must, as a minimum, include -
  - (i) realistic goals and measurable targets for achieving representativeness, taking into account Regulation III D.2; and
  - (ii) targets for the training of employees per occupational category and of specific employees, with specific plans to meet the training needs of persons historically disadvantaged; and
- (d) address the position of employees affected by the abolition of unnecessary posts, and shall retrench employees only in accordance with the Labour Relations Act and collective agreements as the last resort.

### D.2 An executing authority shall develop and implement an affirmative action programme, which shall contain, as a minimum, the following:

- (a) A policy statement that sets out the department's commitment to affirmative action, and how that policy will be implemented;
- (b) Numeric and time-bound targets for achieving representativeness;
- (c) Annual statistics on the appointment, training and promotion within each grade of each occupational category, of persons historically disadvantaged; and
- (d) A plan for redressing numeric under-representativeness and supporting the advancement of persons historically disadvantaged.

### D.3 An executing authority shall make the outcome of planning referred to in Regulation III D.1 and of the affirmative action programme referred to in Regulation III D.2 known within her or his department.

## 2.2.2 DPSA guidelines on integrated HRP

To give effect to the above regulations and to assist departments in conducting integrated human resource planning, the dpsa published a guideline in July 2002. It is in this guideline that there is a specific reference to the challenge of mitigating the impact of HIV/AIDS on the workplace, through HRP.

The guideline was distributed throughout the public service and was made available on the dpsa's website<sup>12</sup>.

## 2.2.3 Public Finance Management Act and Treasury Regulations

The Public Finance Management Act<sup>13</sup> (PFMA) reiterates the definitions contained in the Public Service Act and expands on the need for transparency in the budget process. It defines, amongst others, the Executing Authority and heads of department and their respective roles.

For departments, in terms of Regulation 5.2.2(j) of the Treasury Regulations, the **strategic plan** must include the requirements of Chapter I, Part III B of the Public Service Regulations, 2001, which, by **implication** of the cross-reference to Regulation III D, includes a summary of the HR plan. This may not have been the original intention of the drafters, as the reporting requirements do not include the detail of the HR plan.

Section 5.2.3 stipulates that the strategic plan must form the basis for the annual reports of accounting officers as required by sections 40(1)(d) and (e) of the PFMA. However, the **annual report** template, issued by the National Treasury, only includes a summary of the overall HR-related issues and not performance against the HR plan.

The above points to a gap in monitoring, evaluation and reporting at a national level.

## 2.3 HR development and planning

In the 2006 State of the Nation Address, the President further stated, 'Everything we have said so far concerning AsgiSA (and other programmes) points to the inescapable conclusion that, to meet our objectives, we will have to pay particular attention to the issue of scarce skills that will negatively affect the capacity of both the public and the private sectors to meet the goals set by AsgiSA'.

The challenge for the public service is to ensure that the HR planning takes cognisance of the skills and capacity required to address the strategic priorities set by government. The PSR, in Part IX (Training and Education), states that 'Employees should have ongoing and equitable access to training geared towards achieving an efficient, non-partisan and representative public service. Training should support work performance and career development. It should become increasingly driven by needs, and link strategically to broader human resource management practices and programmes aimed at enhancing employment equity and representativeness'.

The above clause clearly points to the need for training and development that support improved service delivery (through improved work performance) and the need for linkages to the broader HR management and programmes. The PSR, in Regulation C.1, states that the Minister may issue directives regarding the training of employees or categories of employees in the public service.

Sjekula Mbanga notes, in the Service Delivery Review<sup>14</sup> (p 102), 'one of the crucial problems confronting public service human resource management is the recruitment and retention of scarce skills'. He goes on to caution, 'any strategies that are thought of to address the skills gap in the public sector should be multifaceted'.

The dpsa noted in 2002 on page 6 of the first edition of the Human Resource Development Strategy for the Public Service '...that training and education are not the solution to all organisational problems, but recognises that education and training contribute to a strategy for human resource development. Training and education thus need to be systemically linked to the broader processes of human resource development'.

These findings, amongst others, support our recommendation on *Training and development for HR planners* and the proposed implementation plan (5.2.5).

<sup>12</sup> In the focus group meetings, some respondents indicated that they had difficulty accessing the guideline – see Recommendation on communication.

<sup>13</sup> Act 1 of 1999 (as amended).

<sup>14</sup> SDR, Volume 3 No. 4; Sjekula Mbanga, *Strategies for Addressing the Skills Gap in the South African Public Sector: A People's Development Toolbox*.

## 2.4 International good practice

The internet was used as a source of information on existing and good international practice. North America (Canada and the USA) has made the most significant progress in the revision and development of new human resources planning guidelines. In particular, Canada and its federal provinces have addressed the challenges to HRP in a holistic manner.

The major thrust of the Canadian approach is one of integrated HR and business planning. The holistic and integrated approach adopted by the Canadians is based on the following key principles<sup>15</sup>:

- Planning takes place at all levels.
- Planning is information-driven.
- Planning identifies risks and challenges.
- Planning is transparent, values-based and well communicated.
- Regular reporting on integrated planning takes place.
- Planning efforts are monitored, measured and evaluated.

In both the American and Canadian experiences, a number of positive aspects emerged:

- The HR planning guideline is streamlined to contain only essential information.
- The guideline is issued annually and is supported by graphic templates and checklists.
- There is a strong focus on the monitoring and evaluation of departmental HR plans.
- Support is provided centrally through a national office.
- A web-based portal has been created for additional resources.
- A streamlined report format is used for consistency purposes.

As requested by the project management team, additional time was spent on obtaining specific information on HRP in Brazil and India. These countries were selected due to the existing multi-lateral and South-South relationships being developed.

Both India and Brazil are federal states, and therefore the circumstances at a national level vary significantly. In addition, the language barrier, in the case of Brazil, added to difficulties in accessing information.

## Conclusion

These findings, among others, set the basis for the recommendations on the revised dpsa guideline.

It is imperative that:

- The recommended HR planning model must be suitable for South African conditions without compromising on the objective of professionalising HR planning.
- The dpsa must obtain the necessary political buy-in and support to play the catalyst role expected in the government's programme of action.

<sup>15</sup> [www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca](http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca). These general principles are considered in the development of the revised guideline.

# REPORT ON QUESTIONNAIRES

## 3. REPORT ON QUESTIONNAIRES

### 3.1 Framework for interpreting questionnaire analysis

In all instances where questionnaire data is reported on, the following format will be followed.

- A high-level summary will be provided of statements which respondents were in agreement with<sup>16</sup>.
- A high-level summary will be provided of statements which respondents were not in agreement with<sup>17</sup>.
- A detailed tabular breakdown will be given of all the responses to the questionnaire, including an indication of the total number of responses for each question<sup>18</sup>.
- An indication will be given of the actual number of responses converted into percentages in the adjacent column.
- In all instances, percentages have been rounded off to the nearest whole number.

### 3.2 Background

In total, approximately 130 questionnaires were distributed via e-mail to all HR managers at both national and provincial level. In addition, all attendees at the project focus groups were issued with questionnaires. At the final deadline for the research phase of the project the return rate was 36%, with a total of 46 questionnaires having been received. The breakdown is detailed below:

PROVINCE/NATIONAL	DEPARTMENT	RETURNED
Eastern Cape	Public Works	1
	Agriculture	1
Total returned		2
Free State	Public Safety, Security and Liaison	1
	Public Works, Roads and Transport	1
	Agriculture	1
	Health	1
	Social Development	1
	Provincial Treasury	1
	Local Government and Housing	1
Total returned		7
Gauteng	Gauteng Shared Services Centre	1
	Local Government	1
	Health	1
Total returned		3
KwaZulu-Natal	Transport	1
	Community Safety and Liaison	1
	Arts, Culture and Tourism	1
	Economic Development	1
	Agriculture and Environmental Affairs	1
Total returned		5

<sup>16</sup> Please note that a minimum percentage for agreement was not standardised across the sample; rather, each question was individually assessed and, depending on the range of responses, the highest percentages for agreement were always reflected in the high-level summary. It is always the intention that the reader should interrogate the detailed tables for further information.

<sup>13</sup> As above.

<sup>14</sup> The total number of responses will vary, as not all respondents provided a response to every question in the survey.

# REPORT ON QUESTIONNAIRES

PROVINCE/NATIONAL	DEPARTMENT	RETURNED
Limpopo	Health and Social Development	1
<b>Total returned</b>		<b>1</b>
Mpumalanga	Health and Social Services	1
	Roads and Transport	1
	Safety and Security	1
	Education	1
	Economic Development	2 <sup>19</sup>
	Local Government and Housing	1
	Culture, Sport and Recreation	1
	Public Works	1
	Office of the Premier	1
	Agriculture and Land Administration	1
<b>Total returned</b>		<b>11</b>
National	Agriculture	1
	Minerals and Energy	1
	Palama	1
	Defence	1
	Public Works	1
	DPLG	1
	Independent Complaints Directorate	1
	DPSA	1
<b>Total returned</b>		<b>8</b>
Northern Cape	Economic Affairs	1
	Housing and Local Government	1
	Health	1
	Transport, Roads and Public Works	1
	Office of the Premier	1
<b>Total returned</b>		<b>5</b>
North West	Education	1
<b>Total returned</b>		<b>1</b>
Western Cape	Transport and Public Works	1
	Housing and Local Government	1
	Cultural Affairs and Sport	1
<b>Total returned</b>		<b>3</b>
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>		<b>46</b>

<sup>19</sup> This figure has been verified against the raw data. One questionnaire was received from the HR function and another from a senior manager in another support function within the same department. The project team felt it appropriate to include both responses (a) because both parties had taken the time to complete the questionnaire, and (b) because we were able to capture two different perspectives on HR planning within the same department.

# REPORT ON QUESTIONNAIRES

## 3.3 Key descriptors

Questionnaires were sent to HR managers (respondents) from both national and provincial departments across the public service. Respondents were also given the option to submit confidential feedback, if they chose to do so.

The tables included below represent a summary of the responses. The numeric references in the table heading refer to the exact question as posed in the research questionnaire. These have been

further sorted, inserted into the main body of the text and linked to the findings as appropriate.

### Q1: Size of the approved and funded establishment

Of the total of 45 responses, 18% indicated that the size of the establishment was between 2001 and 5000. The least represented (2%) establishment size was 51 to 100, with establishment sizes 0 to 59 and 10001 to 15000 not being represented at all. Please see the table below for further details.

Q1: Size of approved and funded establishment	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
0 to 50	0	0
51 to 100	1	2
101 to 150	2	4
151 to 200	4	9
201 to 300	3	7
301 to 400	4	9
401 to 500	4	9
501 to 750	2	4
751 to 1 000	3	7
1 001 to 2 000	5	11
2 001 to 5 000	8	18
5 001 to 10 000	2	4
10 001 to 15 000	0	0
15 001 to 20 000	2	4
Greater than 20 001	5	11
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

# REPORT ON QUESTIONNAIRES

## Q2: Current vacancy rate

Of the 45 responses, 27% indicated a vacancy rate of 21% to 25%. The largest vacancy rate, reported by 2% of the respondents, was 66% to 75%. The smallest vacancy rate, reported by 2% of the sample, was 0% to 5%. Please see the table below for further details.

Q2: Current vacancy rate	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
0% to 5%	1	2
6% to 10%	9	20
11% to 20%	7	16
21% to 25%	12	27
26% to 35%	3	7
36% to 45%	6	13
46% to 55%	5	11
56% to 65%	1	2
66% to 75%	1	2
Greater than 75%	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

## Q3: Current turnover rate

Of the 41 responses, 49% indicated a current turnover rate of 0% to 5%. The highest current turnover rate, reported by 2% of the sample, was greater than 76%<sup>20</sup>. Please see the table below for further details.

Q3: Current turnover rate	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
0% to 5%	20	49
6% to 10%	11	27
11% to 20%	6	15
21% to 25%	3	7
26% to 35%	0	0
36% to 45%	0	0
46% to 55%	0	0
56% to 65%	0	0
66% to 75%	0	0
Greater than 75%	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100</b>

We have incorporated the findings from the various sections of the questionnaire into the appropriate sections of the findings.

<sup>20</sup> This figure has not been verified.

# FINDINGS

## 4. FINDINGS: CURRENT HR PLANNING PRACTICES AND ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES

The responses at the focus group workshops and follow-up meetings and an assessment of the returned questionnaires formed the basis for the following sections.

### 4.1 Use of current guidelines

As part of the introductions and as an icebreaker, the consultants sought to establish from workshop participants how much exposure and use the current dpsa HRP guidelines enjoyed. It was disconcerting to note that fewer than 50% of the participants were aware of, or used the existing guidelines. This applied for both national and provincial levels.

Officials had used their own prerogative, resource persons or consultants to develop the HRPs that were submitted during the fieldwork. This accounted for the divergent interpretations of the requirements of HR planning in terms of the existing guidelines.

It was further noted that respondents were neither aware of, nor informed of, the changes to the guidelines. In isolated instances, it emerged that not all HR practitioners had access to the internet to source the dpsa guidelines. See the recommendation on *Improved communication on guidelines (5.2.6)* below.

Of the 44 responses, 77% indicated that the dpsa guidelines for HR planning had been used when completing the plan while 23% indicated that they had not been used. This information is detailed in the table (Q7) below.

### Reasons for NOT using the dpsa guidelines for HR planning

Of the 10 responses to this question, 20% indicated that the dpsa HRP guidelines had not been used firstly because insufficient time was allocated for its use, and secondly because there was little knowledge and understanding of how to use the guidelines. Further information is shown in the table (Q8) below.

In addition, 30% indicated 'other', which includes:

- When the HR plan was developed, the guidelines had not yet been published. However, the guidelines were used when the plan was amended in 2004 as well as for the new plan for 2006-2010.
- The guidelines did not provide clear guidance on the development of the HRP and were not user-friendly.
- There was a lack of resources.
- The HRP was developed by consultants.
- The department only has a draft for the current year.

Q7: Use of dpsa guidelines in completing the HRP	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	34	77
No	10	23
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

Q8: Reasons for not using the guidelines	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Not aware of the existence of dpsa guidelines	2	20
dpsa guidelines not easily accessible	1	10
dpsa guidelines not user-friendly	0	0
Insufficient time allocated to use the dpsa guidelines	2	20
No knowledge and understanding of how to use dpsa guidelines	2	20
Other (give details)	3	30
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>100</b>

# FINDINGS

## 4.2 Use of EE plans/other tools

Almost all departments indicated that they had developed an employment equity plan (EE plan) in line with national legislation and directives. It was further mooted that the EE plans were necessary for the transformation of the departments. However, it was reported that a significant number of decisions on HR-related matters were derived almost exclusively from the EE plans. This was supported by examples and anecdotal evidence<sup>21</sup>. Ultimately, the HRPs are ignored to meet the targets set by race and gender.

It was cited by respondents that the EE plans were in direct fulfilment of the constitutional responsibility for transformation and equity. We wish to point out that only one clause in the Constitution deals specifically with EE and the public service. It is our contention that the EE plans receive greater emphasis than, for example, the constitutional clauses dealing with service delivery and developmental orientation. Indeed, the latter should also influence the recruitment and selection decisions of departments.

At a national level, there was also some concern that there was 'rigid' application of the EE targets for selection, and these were not in line with the other departmental plans on training, internship etc. We would caution that the 'unrefined' application of the EE plans and targets results in chasing numbers rather than addressing the human resource challenges facing departments.

The analysis of the questionnaires shows that varied tools are used within departments. The number of responses for each of the 17 statements ranged from 3 to 30. All the tools listed were used by the departments in general as well as for HR planning, with the obvious exception of the dpsa HR planning guidelines.

There is evidence from the responses that a wide range of tools is used generally within departments, with some specific application for HR planning. The five most commonly used tools within departments for general purposes are:

- Employee morale surveys (85%)
- Annual reports on plans and priorities and departmental performance reports (68%)
- Organisational climate surveys (65%)
- Exit interviews (58%)
- Competency models (57%)

The five most commonly used tools for HR planning only are:

- dpsa HR planning guidelines (37%)
- Labour market forecasts (35%)
- HR white papers, dpsa HRM and HRD documentation (24%)
- Competency models (24%)
- Census data (24%)

Q15.1 Organisational climate surveys	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	11	65
Used specifically for HR planning	2	12
Both	4	24
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>

Q15.2 Employee morale surveys	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	17	85
Used specifically for HR planning	1	5
Both	2	10
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>21</sup> Due to the confidentiality afforded to respondents, we will not include any specific quotes.

## FINDINGS

Q15.3 Employment equity plans	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	14	34
Used specifically for HR planning	5	12
Both	22	54
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100</b>

Q15.4 Skills development plans	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	18	44
Used specifically for HR planning	2	5
Both	21	51
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100</b>

Q15.5 dpsa HR planning guidelines	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	9	26
Used specifically for HR planning	13	37
Both	13	37
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>35</b>	<b>100</b>

Q15.6 Annual reports on plans and priorities and departmental performance reports	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	26	68
Used specifically for HR planning	1	3
Both	11	29
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>

Q15.7 Information from networks and forums	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	12	55
Used specifically for HR planning	3	14
Both	7	32
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

Q15.8 Exit interviews	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	18	58
Used specifically for HR planning	7	23
Both	6	19
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>31</b>	<b>100</b>

Q15.9 Competency models	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	12	57
Used specifically for HR planning	5	24
Both	4	19
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>100</b>

Q15.10 Census data	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	11	44
Used specifically for HR planning	6	24
Both	8	32
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

Q15.11 HR white papers, dpsa HRM and HRD documentation	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	18	47
Used specifically for HR planning	9	24
Both	11	29
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>38</b>	<b>100</b>

Q15.12 Labour market forecasts	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
In use within the department	9	53
Used specifically for HR planning	6	35
Both	2	12
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q15.13 Alternative service delivery initiatives</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
In use within the department	11	55
Used specifically for HR planning	4	20
Both	5	25
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q15.14 Occupational classification systems/CORE</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
In use within the department	19	51
Used specifically for HR planning	7	19
Both	11	30
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q15.15 Integrated business models</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
In use within the department	9	53
Used specifically for HR planning	4	24
Both	4	24
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q15.16 PERSAL</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
In use within the department	14	35
Used specifically for HR planning	7	18
Both	19	48
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

# FINDINGS

## 4.3 Common framework for HRP

As mentioned above, the lack of specific detail on the format of the HR plans has resulted in a myriad of different plans. All these plans are perceived to comply with the existing HRP guidelines.

The submission of actual HR plans clearly pointed to the lack of a common framework for HR planning. In an extreme case, one HRP was 335 pages long and printed in small print. Other plans varied in length and detail. This lack of a standard format has resulted in departments completing the general sections in detail while not focusing on the core HR-related challenges.

This finding is also documented in the Report on the Development of Interventions to improve the HRM Function in the Public Service of April 2005 (HRM report), which states that 'limited and/or no standardisation of core processes in the HR value chain [lead] to sub-standard services and poor quality management and accountability'<sup>22</sup>.

A more significant finding is the absence of the uniform adoption of a truly integrated HR planning framework that combines people management and business imperatives. This has resulted in an ad hoc and unfocused approach to HR planning and consequentially, in varying degrees, has deprived departments of, amongst others:<sup>23</sup>

- A clear alignment between the department's workforce and government priorities as well as the department's mission, strategic plan and budgetary resources;
- Supportive HR strategies that meet the current and future needs of departments;
- The achievement of business excellence through the promotion of initiatives to attract and retain an engaged, sustainable and competent workforce;
- The development of business cases to justify resources identified through both current and future HR needs analyses; and
- Assistance for managers in realigning their workforce.

### 4.3.1 The degree to which current HR plans comply with dpsa guidelines

The results of the survey suggest that, currently, 82% of departments in the sample are able to adequately assess the demand for human resources in the HR planning process, while 77% are able to adequately assess the supply of human resources. In addition, 67% of respondents indicated that a strategic/operational plan is developed to address the identified human resources gap in the department, and 66% indicated that the gap between supply and demand is clearly defined within their department. See the tables below for further details.

Q11.1: The demand for human resources is adequately assessed in the HR planning process in your department	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	36	82
No	8	18
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

Q11.2: The supply of human resources is adequately assessed in the HR planning process in your department	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	33	77
No	10	23
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>22</sup> Report on the Development of Interventions to improve the HRM Function in the Public Service of April 2005, p24

<sup>23</sup> www.hrma-agrh.gc

## FINDINGS

Q11.3: The gap between the supply and demand of human resources is clearly defined in your department	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	29	66
No	15	34
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

Q11.4: A strategic/operational plan is developed to address the identified human resources gap in your department	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	29	67
No	14	33
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

### 4.3.2 The extent to which the dpsa's HR planning guidelines are adhered to

Judging from the respondents' feedback, there is **agreement** that the following elements of the dpsa's HR planning guidelines have been linked to the best practice found. The responses below reflect this linkage where appropriate:

- The department is committed to the continuous development of employees through appropriate capacity - building initiatives (78%).
- The total number of employees trained and the type of developmental programmes provided are easily determined and used to define the gap (73%).
- The department has recruitment and selection procedures that promote the timeous hiring of competent employees onto the team (71%).
- The total number of permanent and temporary staff is easily determined and used to define the gap (70%).
- The skills requirements of the department are well documented in job descriptions and competency statements (69%).
- The total number of employees recruited during the preceding 12 months is easily determined and used to define the gap (67%).
- The total number of employees at different levels and occupational categories is easily determined and used to define the gap (65%).
- The total number of external promotions and external transfers is easily determined and used to define the gap (65%).
- The activities listed in the business plans form the basis for identifying competencies (knowledge, skills and attributes) required by the human resources of the department (63%).
- Departmental business plans clearly describe the activities to be undertaken to achieve set goals (62%).
- The total number of staff losses is determined and used

to define the gap (60%).

- A detailed departmental employee profile is developed in order to assess human resource supply (57%).

**Disagreement** with the following statements was reported:

- The HR plan has a financial component that provides realistic costs for all interventions (40%).
- There is a regular assessment of the capacity of the open labour market to provide the department with the required competencies (37%).
- The HR plan contains targets and timeframes to measure the success of the plan (32%).
- Implementation against the HR plan is regularly monitored (31%).
- Appropriate methods are used to forecast the number of human resources needed (28%).
- Staff mobility rates are calculated and inform the HR plan (27%).
- The department is well equipped to develop a retention strategy that will maximise on its investment in the development of human resources (27%).
- The department has a career model that promotes and supports the development of employees and achieves capacity-building objectives (25%).
- The future skills requirements of the department are well documented and communicated (24%).
- The departmental culture is regularly assessed (23%).
- The HR plan actively addresses ways in which the defined shortages are to be addressed (23%).
- Appropriate links with all learning institutions are made and maintained in order to promote access to skilled human resources (22%).
- A detailed departmental employee profile is developed in order to assess human resource supply (20%).

# FINDINGS

## 4.4 Reliance on consultants

In order to comply with the national requirements set in Resolution 7 of 2002 of the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council, all departments were required to develop HRPs. However, due to the capacity and skills shortages at the time, in some instances the process was out-sourced with the support of the dpsa. It was found that the dpsa had facilitated the appointment of consultants to assist the line departments with the completion of their HRPs.

In many of the provincial examples, the HRP was developed by consultants contracted at national level by the dpsa. This influenced the ability of the provincial officials to hold the consultants accountable for the deliverables from a quality perspective.

In some instances, the provincial departments re-appointed the consultants to assist them with the development of HR plans. This reliance, we believe, has impacted negatively on the ability and commitment of the departments to build internal capacity on HR planning.

This finding is supported by the challenges documented in the Human Resource Development Strategy for the Public Service 2002-2006, namely 'current levels of skills in the public service [that] do not match HR global competition requirements' and a 'fragmented and uncoordinated approach to training and education across the public service, resulting in the absence of resources and accountability for ensuring that public servants are empowered to take on the challenges<sup>24</sup>.

This finding is further supported by the HRM report (ibid) in its identification of a key constraint to the emergence of HR as a strategic partner in taking up the global challenge as being a deficiency in the ability of HR to translate 'departmental strategic

plans to organisational and people management strategies and plans<sup>25</sup>.

In addition, the absence of core HR planning skills regarding the integration of HR planning with operational business plans within departments coupled with an over-reliance on external consultants have resulted in a reduction in the quality of the information available to managers for the development of strategy and the required funding to support it.<sup>26</sup>

The above responses and the findings below point to a deficit in the skills and capabilities of the departments. Respondents were asked to indicate current departmental capability relating to three key areas:

- Ability to identify and address current competency gaps
- Ability to determine and address short- and long-term staffing needs
- Ability to identify and address critical recruitment areas.

Agreement with the related statements ranged from 64% to 75%, with strong agreement ranging from 5% to 18%. Disagreement with the statements ranged from 7% to 16%, whilst strong disagreement of 2% was reported in respect of only one statement – the ability of the department to determine and address short- and long-term staffing needs. The three tables below contain further details.

Q10.1: The department is able to identify and address current competency gaps	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	7	16
Unsure	5	11
Agree	28	64
Strongly agree	4	9
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>24</sup> Human Resource Development Strategy for the Public Service 2002-2006, p15

<sup>25</sup> HRM report, p24

<sup>26</sup> www.hrma-agrh.gc

# FINDINGS

Q10.2: The department is able to determine and address short- and long-term staffing needs	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	5	11
Unsure	3	7
Agree	33	75
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

Q10.3: The department is able to identify and address critical recruitment areas	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	3	7
Unsure	1	2
Agree	32	73
Strongly agree	8	18
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

One respondent indicated that the department is able to identify staffing needs and critical recruitment areas, but it is unable to address them due to scarcity of the required skills in the market.

We believe that the reliance on consultants and the skills deficits could be addressed by a renewed and focused training and development strategy that focuses specifically on HR planning. See *Training and development* [recommendation (5.2.5) below.] We would, however, caution that HR planning cannot be seen as a panacea to all the HR and staffing difficulties experienced in the public service.

- A common template is supplied for HR planning, outlining the components of a strong plan (42%).
- Central reporting requirements are simplified and integrated (42%).
- There are flexible and adaptive reporting formats for HR plans (45%).

## 4.5 Content and templates for HR plans

Linked to the common framework for HR planning and the reliance on consultants is the lack of an accepted reporting format. A specific section in the questionnaire was allocated to reports and templates.

The responses in this section of the questionnaire indicate that content and templates are an area of HR planning that require significant further development and review. Respondents indicated consistent **disagreement** with all four of the statements:

- High-quality, user-friendly, integrated desktop applications (e.g. standardised report formats) are available for all HR planners and line managers (49%).

## FINDINGS

<b>Q16.1: High-quality, user-friendly, integrated desktop applications (e.g. standardised report formats) are available for all HR planners and line managers</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	4	9
Disagree	17	40
Unsure	5	12
Agree	16	37
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q16.2: A common template for HR planning is supplied, outlining the components of a strong plan</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	17	40
Unsure	7	16
Agree	17	40
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q16.3: Central reporting requirements are simplified and integrated</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	18	42
Unsure	9	21
Agree	14	33
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q16.4: There are flexible and adaptive reporting formats for HR plans</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	19	45
Unsure	8	19
Agree	14	33
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

See recommendation on reports and templates (5.1.3).

# FINDINGS

## 4.6 Monitoring and evaluation

Both focus group attendees and questionnaire respondents indicated that the HRP was not reviewed thoroughly on a regular basis. Of even greater concern is indications that the plans were never implemented. This points inter alia to difficulties experienced with the performance management of the HR sections/units of departments, particularly in provinces.

A major reason offered for the monitoring and evaluation problems was the lack of ownership of the HRP. The HRP is seen as a compliance 'burden' that is allocated to the human resources units for completion and not linked to the core business and strategies of the departments.

The importance of HR planning is further negated when seen in the context of the MTSF. It was reported that the dpsa, unlike the National Treasury, does not have standard templates for the annual submission of HR plans. The sections in the annual report dealing with HR do not fully address HR planning, but merely give a high-level summary of the existing HR situation in departments.

The above is supported by the findings below.

### 4.6.1 Existence of current HR plan in the department

Of the 44 responses, 57% answered 'yes' in respect of the existence of a **current** HR plan within the department. The table below contains further detail.

43% of the sample indicated that a current HR plan does not exist, with the following reasons being cited:

- The HRP is in the process of being developed but there is an internal lack of capacity to complete it. An HR consultant will be appointed to further develop the HR plan. We could not obtain help from the dpsa in this regard
- The department is in the process of developing a retention strategy, succession planning and career management.
- The department is currently concentrating on the turnover rate of employees with scarce skills (e.g. engineers).

- We are in a developmental phase as an institution.
- The HR plan is currently in a draft format. The department is in the process of reviewing the organisational structure, and that is impacting on the finalisation of the HRP.
- The department had an old HRP that needed to be reviewed. A final draft plan is in place, but we are awaiting approval by top management and the MEC for implementation in the next financial year.
- The draft HRP needs to be approved.
- The HRP is still in progress. The department is busy with a restructuring process.
- The initial plan was not implemented and we have just begun with the planning process for the current situation.
- We have an HRP which is outdated; we are currently drafting a new HRP.
- A quantitative HRP exists for the approved office-based structure.
- The department has separate plans, namely skills development, HRD, a post filling strategy, EE, recruitment and retention. However, these plans were not consolidated into a single document as we are still awaiting the national health HRP.

There is thus a lack of monitoring and evaluation of HR plans at departmental, provincial and national level.

Q4: Existence of current HR plan within the department	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	25	57
No	19	43
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

# FINDINGS

## 4.7 Formal document approval

Most provincial respondents indicated that they did not have a formally approved HRP. In many cases the lack of a formal structure coupled with changes in the leadership of the department were cited as reasons for the lack of approval. In an extreme case, an HRP submitted to an acting head of department has not been approved six months after submission.

Of the average of 33 responses to each of the seven questions in this section, respondents most frequently indicated that current and approved plans were in existence in their department, with the exception of a talent management strategy, where most respondents indicated that this was not present.

As shown in *Section 2.2.1*, we believe that a major contradiction exists in respect of accountability and responsibility for the development of HR plans. This problem is further compounded by the **lack of formal HR delegations** in many provincial departments. In the absence of clear responsibility and accountability, linked to timely monitoring, evaluation and

reporting, HR planning will continue to be neglected in the public service.

Respondents were asked to indicate which of the other four **current and approved** HR-related plans the department has. The results show that 77% of departments have in place a skills development plan, 64% have an employment equity plan, 52% have an HRD plan and 40% have a recruitment plan. The four tables below contain further details of these responses.

Q9.1: Does the department have a current and approved employment equity plan?	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	29	64
No	5	11
Draft (developed but not approved)	11	24
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

Q9.2: Does the department have a current and approved skills development plan?	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	34	77
No	3	7
Draft (developed but not approved)	7	16
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

Q9.3: Does the department have a current and approved human resources development plan in place?	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	23	52
No	11	25
Draft (developed but not approved)	10	23
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

Q9.4: Does the department have a current and approved recruitment plan in place?	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	18	40
No	17	38
Draft (developed but not approved)	10	22
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents also provided additional insight regarding current related practices, for example:

- Our recruitment and selection manual has been developed and approved.
- Bursaries are afforded for scarce skills.
- Mentoring for scarce skills has been approved.
- Engineers who have the necessary qualifications but who are not yet registered are being appointed.
- The HRP has been replaced by a skills development plan.
- The department has an approved retention strategy, but still has the challenge of retaining scarce categories. Talent management and succession plans are still in draft format.

We believe that, to adequately address compliance challenges, the PSR needs to be amended to make heads of department fully responsible and accountable for the HR plans of their respective departments. To counter any possible tension that may arise between the executing authority and the HOD, there could be a clear separation of powers. See recommendation on *Leadership and accountability (5.1.1)*.

### 4.8 Impact on service delivery/integration

The above findings point to serious deficiencies in the management and performance of the human resource function as a whole in some departments. This is further compounded by the inability of some human resource units to link the HRP to the mandates of departments. It was fully acknowledged that HR planning needed to be based on the strategic plans and mandates of the department.

Most departments, it was reported, do not use the HRP in the recruitment and retention of public servants. This had a direct impact on service delivery, as it was felt that the gaps and challenges in the department were not being adequately addressed.

#### 4.8.1 The extent of human resource units' involvement in the development of the HR plan

Of the 30 respondents to this question, 57% indicated that they were responsible for the development of the plan, while 7% indicated that they were involved in the development of the plan. Table (Q5) provides further details.

Q5: Extent of respondent's involvement in the development of the HR plan	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
No involvement	2	7
Limited involvement	2	7
Provided input for the HR plan	4	13
Completed the HR plan	5	17
Responsible for the HR plan	17	57
Other (give detail)	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

### 4.8.2 The development of an HR plan in the past

Of the 25 responses, most (80%) indicated that although there was no current HR plan in the department, an HR plan had been developed in the past. The table (Q6) contains further details.

questions to determine the impact of these on service delivery and integration. The detailed findings are listed (Q12.1 - 12.4).

<b>Q6: In the absence of a current HR plan, has one ever been developed?</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	20	80
No	5	20
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>100</b>

The questionnaire was also used to assess departmental readiness to address strategic objectives and business and/or operational plans. Generally accepted indicators were developed into

<b>Q12.1: Departmental business plans clearly describe the activities to be undertaken to achieve set goals</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	1	2
Unsure	4	9
Agree	28	62
Strongly agree	12	27
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.2: The activities listed in the business plans form the basis for identifying competencies (knowledge, skills and attributes) required by the human resources of the department</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	3	7
Unsure	8	19
Agree	27	63
Strongly agree	5	12
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

Q12.3: The tools used to identify these required competencies are easy to use	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	11	26
Unsure	14	33
Agree	14	33
Strongly agree	3	7
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

Q12.4 : Appropriate methods are used to forecast the number of human resources needed	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	12	28
Unsure	12	28
Agree	14	33
Strongly agree	5	12
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

As reported by respondents, these methods include:

- Job analysis
- Individual and group interviews
- Attendance of branch and directorate strategic planning sessions
- Organisation and method studies to determine the number of staff needed
- The full-time equivalent (FTE) methodology
- Identification of resources by senior managers according to what they think is needed (no scientific identification of needs)
- Minimum staffing levels, based on the Rodion Krause model (The model was custom-made with FS copyright and was approved in 2002. It is based on workload in combination with FS affordability. Unfortunately, at institutional level, the model is not well accepted, as it does not necessarily consider all issues, e.g. freedom of patients to go to any clinic/hospital and population increase due to resettlement in the surrounding area.)
- Skills gap analysis, using the strategic plan and priorities of the department for that financial year; submissions from sections on critical skills required to perform effectively
- Inputs from operational managers and work study investigations
- Analysis of turnover in critical occupations
- The DoD HR planning model
- The LEGADIMA budget planning tool
- The department's staffing norms
- The provincial population growth of 0.5 per year
- Organisational and development process analysis
- Strategic planning, operational plans, performance plans,

job descriptions, and performance and development system

- Work study principles
- Forecasts, performed through senior management meetings
- PERSAL printouts using the departmental profile
- Competency assessments
- Organisational alignment
- Skills audit questionnaire to assess vacancies to be filled

According to one respondent, "Currently, no specific method is used to identify skills, competencies and needs."

## FINDINGS

<b>Q12.5: A detailed departmental employee profile is developed in order to assess human resource supply</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	9	20
Unsure	6	14
Agree	25	57
Strongly agree	4	9
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.6: Current recruitment and selection practices are attracting and selecting the right competencies and skills to deliver on the department's mandate</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	5	11
Unsure	11	24
Agree	23	50
Strongly agree	7	15
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.7: Competency gaps created by promotions and transfers are identified</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	7	16
Unsure	8	18
Agree	23	51
Strongly agree	7	16
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.8: Staff mobility rates are calculated and inform the HR plan</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	12	27
Unsure	8	18
Agree	19	43
Strongly agree	4	9
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q12.9: The skills requirements of the department are well documented in job descriptions and competency statements</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	3	7
Unsure	1	2
Agree	31	69
Strongly agree	9	20
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.10: The future skills requirements of the department are well documented and communicated</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	11	24
Unsure	10	22
Agree	21	47
Strongly agree	3	7
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.11: A skills audit is conducted in order to determine the current skills gaps in the department</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	5	11
Unsure	7	16
Agree	25	56
Strongly agree	7	16
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.12: The department has a career model that promotes and supports the development of employees and achieves capacity-building objectives</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	11	25
Unsure	8	18
Agree	21	48
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q12.13: Staff turnover rates are regularly determined</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	7	16
Unsure	4	9
Agree	23	53
Strongly agree	8	19
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.14: Occupations experiencing high turnover rates are regularly tracked and highlighted for immediate attention and action</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	4	9
Unsure	7	16
Agree	25	58
Strongly agree	6	14
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

One respondent commented, “The high turnover rate is regularly tracked, but it is difficult to recruit scarce categories due to overseas jobs.”

<b>Q12.15: The departmental culture is regularly assessed</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	7	16
Disagree	10	23
Unsure	11	26
Agree	14	33
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.16: The department operates within the labour legislation framework</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Unsure	1	2
Agree	29	64
Strongly agree	15	33
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q12.17: There is a regular assessment of the capacity of the open labour market to provide the department with the required competencies</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	3	7
Disagree	16	37
Unsure	11	26
Agree	11	26
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

Additional comments from respondents include:

- Communication with professional associations and tertiary institutions takes place on a regular basis.
- Vacant posts are advertised in the press.
- Normally, the department does consult with stakeholders such as chartered accountant associations to provide the department with the required competencies.
- No dedicated unit established to do this.

<b>Q12.19: Appropriate links with all learning institutions are made and maintained in order to promote access to skilled human resources</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	10	22
Unsure	7	15
Agree	25	54
Strongly agree	3	7
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.20: The total number of employees at different levels and occupational categories is easily determined and used to define the gap</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	4	9
Unsure	2	4
Agree	30	65
Strongly agree	10	22
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q12.21: The total number of permanent and temporary staff is easily determined and used to define the gap</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	4
Disagree	3	7
Unsure	1	2
Agree	32	70
Strongly agree	8	17
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.22: The total number of employees recruited during the preceding 12 months is easily determined and used to define the gap</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	2	4
Unsure	3	7
Agree	31	67
Strongly agree	9	20
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.23: The total number of external promotions and external transfers is easily determined and used to define the gap</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	2	4
Unsure	4	9
Agree	30	65
Strongly agree	9	20
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>46</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.24: The total number of employees trained and the type of developmental programmes provided are easily determined and used to define the gap</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	6	13
Unsure	1	2
Agree	33	73
Strongly agree	5	11
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q12.25: The total number of staff losses (turnover) is determined and used to define the gap</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	3	7
Unsure	7	16
Agree	27	60
Strongly agree	8	18
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.26: The department is well equipped to develop a retention strategy that will maximise on its investment in the development of human resources</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	12	27
Unsure	5	11
Agree	22	49
Strongly agree	5	11
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

Respondents commented as follows:

- Financial and other constraints.
- Retention strategy has been developed, but the biggest challenge is the lack of resources.

<b>Q12.27: The department is able to embrace and accommodate diversity in the workplace</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	2	5
Unsure	11	25
Agree	22	50
Strongly agree	9	20
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q12.28: The department has recruitment and selection procedures that promote the timeous hiring of competent employees to the team</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	4	9
Unsure	3	7
Agree	32	71
Strongly agree	6	13
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.29 : The department is committed to the continuous development of employees through appropriate capacity-building initiatives</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	0	0
Unsure	4	9
Agree	35	78
Strongly agree	6	13
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>45</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.30: The HR plan actively addresses ways in which the defined shortages are to be addressed</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	10	23
Unsure	11	26
Agree	18	42
Strongly agree	4	9
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.31: The HR plan contains targets and time frames to measure the success of the plan</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	14	32
Unsure	9	20
Agree	16	36
Strongly agree	5	11
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q12.32: The HR plan has a financial component that provides realistic costs for all interventions</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	17	40
Unsure	11	26
Agree	11	26
Strongly agree	3	7
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q12.33: Implementation against the HR plan is regularly monitored</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	3	7
Disagree	13	31
Unsure	12	29
Agree	11	26
Strongly agree	3	7
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

In addition, respondents made the following comments:

- Monthly reporting at EXCO and MANCO, annual reporting, Budget Committee meetings, branch meetings.
- All recruitment processes include the targets set in the HR plan.
- Quarterly progress reports are presented.
- We have a personnel budget, recruitment cost budget and training and development budget.
- The current HRP is in a draft format, and as a result no monitoring is currently taking place. Some areas indicated above are also not catered for in the current draft plan, such as the financial component.
- Not monitored regularly, hence the late reviews or even lack of review of the plan.
- Quarterly departmental programme and Budget Evaluating Committees.
- Annual report.
- There is no regular assessment of the capacity of the open labour market to provide the department with the required competencies.
- The department has quarterly reviews where the recruitment, selection, retention and staff loss profile is evaluated against the set targets and plans.

# FINDINGS

## 4.9 Organisational challenges

The gaps and needs analysis section of the questionnaire covered key areas, based on the research done for the project. These included:

- Restructuring and re-organisation
- Leadership, accountability and management
- Role definition in the HR function
- Process and design of the HR plan
- Information management/sources
- Training and development.

### 4.9.1 Restructuring and re-organisation

Both national and provincial respondents raised serious concerns regarding the approved structure. National departments saw affordability and ability as the major obstacles in filling critical posts. At provincial level, again, changes in the members of the Executive Council (MEC) and heads of department were seen as the most significant extraneous factor<sup>27</sup> affecting the HRP. It was reported that these changes have resulted in departments being in a **constant state of ‘restructuring and re-organising’**. This lack of stability in some provincial departments affects the service delivery and internal operations of those departments.

Another concern raised was the lack of finality in some departments on the decentralisation of functions. This too, made planning for human resources impossible.

In some cases, it was reported that the new structures were not linked to the strategic direction of the department. In a particular provincial example, it was alleged that ‘political pressure’ was brought to bear on the human resource function, with little or no

linkage to the ‘real’ human resource needs of the department. In an extreme case, appointments were made by the MEC without the appropriate processes having been gone through. In this instance, the department officials had to ‘facilitate’ the process without even performing job evaluations of the posts, which was only done after appointments.

### 4.9.2 Leadership, accountability and management

In many cases, the respondents indicated that they (the HR component) were not included in the departmental strategic planning processes<sup>28</sup>. This resulted in a lack of appreciation by the other line managers of the role of the HR function in supporting the core business of the department.

This lack of buy-in and support from the senior management of departments had the result that the HRP was not approved and key human resource functions were not supported.

Specific questions were asked of respondents on leadership and accountability relating to the development and approval of the HR plans. The findings are tabulated below.

Q13.1: Heads of department/DGs are accountable for the delivery of the HR plan in the department	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	5	11
Unsure	6	14
Agree	24	55
Strongly agree	9	20
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>27</sup> It is ironic to note that, in the course of the fieldwork, two MECs were ‘replaced’ in the Eastern Cape. At the same time, an HoD was ‘suspended’ by one of the MECs. Additionally, there was a ‘cabinet re-shuffle’, and a few Directors-General posts were advertised. The impact of these changes was not evaluated, but the events support the view regarding the lack of stability in some departments.

<sup>28</sup> The lack of involvement may be attributed to the level of the HR officials, as most strategic planning sessions include officials from director level and upward.

## FINDINGS

<b>Q13.2: Linkages are made to all relevant long-term strategies impacting on the department (e.g. MDGs, governmental programmes of action, PGDs etc.)</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	5	12
Unsure	7	16
Agree	26	60
Strongly agree	5	12
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q13.3: A senior manager is appointed as HR planning champion to lead and facilitate the process in the department</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	7	16
Unsure	4	9
Agree	23	53
Strongly agree	8	19
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q13.4: Departmental leaders support and communicate the importance of proactive strategic and operational HR planning</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	9	21
Unsure	9	20
Agree	23	52
Strongly agree	3	7
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

This finding is also documented in the report (Ibid), which states that 'the relationship between HR units and line managers is weak and based on the delivery of mundane transactions and not a strategic contribution by HR'<sup>29</sup>.

Respondents indicated agreement with the following statements:

- Linkages are made to all relevant long-term strategies impacting on the department (e.g. MDGs, governmental programmes of action, PGDs etc.) (60%).
- Heads of department/DGs are accountable for the delivery of the HR plan in the department (55%).

<sup>29</sup> HRM report, p24.

## FINDINGS

- A senior manager is appointed as HR planning champion to lead and facilitate the process in the department (53%).
- Departmental leaders support and communicate the importance of proactive strategic and operational HR planning (52.3%).
- Management development initiatives include a component on HR planning (50%).

Respondents indicated disagreement with the following statements:

- Managers, with support from HR professionals, actively take ownership for HR planning as part of ongoing management responsibilities (49%).
- Rigorous monitoring, reporting, follow-up and necessary adjustments are made to the HR plans within the department (49%).
- Excellence in HR planning is promoted and rewarded (48%).
- Clear, defined, relevant, reliable and valid performance measures are developed for HR planning (41%).

- The department allocates sufficient resources to develop strong HR planning skills, not only among HR planners, but also among operational managers and HR generalists (37%).
- HR planning is a key component of all management performance contracts (37%).
- Employees at all levels are confident that HR is taken seriously and that HR planning results in action (36%).
- The department allocates adequate resources to the HR planning function (36%).
- HR planning systems are responsive to the changing needs of the department (30%).
- The department allocates adequate resources to the HR strategic and business planning function (27%).
- Management development initiatives include a component on HR planning (24%).
- Departmental leaders support and communicate the importance of proactive strategic and operational HR planning (20.5%).

<b>Q13.9: Managers, with support from HR professionals, actively take ownership for HR planning as part of ongoing management responsibilities</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	21	49
Unsure	6	14
Agree	14	33
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q13.10: HR planning is a key component of all management performance contracts</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	16	37
Unsure	9	21
Agree	12	28
Strongly agree	4	9
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

See recommendation on *Responsibilities of line managers* (5.1.2).

## FINDINGS

### 4.9.3 Role definition in the human resource function

Respondents experienced varying degrees of difficulty with the recruitment and selection processes in the respective departments.

This was compounded by the lack of skills (due to deficient organisational development and job evaluation) within the broader pool of human resource candidates. It was reported that there was limited linkage to the skills audits conducted by some departments. It must be pointed out that the feedback from the focus group meetings there appeared to be that there was a shortage of human resource planning skills in the country.

In an isolated instance, the HR component was used for the placement of officials who could not be absorbed because of restructuring within the department. Thus, support for HR was seen as being ad hoc.

Some respondents also pointed to the existence of silos within human resource components and the plans created to manage the sub-components. Therefore, each of the sub-units had to 'compete' for resources and attention within the broader framework of departmental dynamics.

This view is also supported in the report (ibid), which states, 'fragmentation of HR processes due to inherent functional silos in the way in which HR organisations are designed, particularly in big departments, leads to inefficiencies and long turnaround times for HR service delivery'<sup>30</sup>.

In general, the respondents felt disempowered and isolated from the core business of the departments. Additionally, it was found that the human resource function (in all its aspects) is not taken seriously enough by line departments. It is not seen as a strategic function, but rather as a 'pliable' support function.

The average number of respondents to each of the statements in this section of the questionnaire was 31. Of the 10 statements, only two elicited a most frequent response of agreement (4), namely:

- A multi-disciplinary approach is adopted to HR planning.
- HR planning is recognised and supported as a unique and core discipline in our department.

The most frequent response of unsure (3) was obtained for the following statements:

- HR planners are accredited across the public service.
- Competency profiles for HR planners are widely used and understood.

The most frequent response of disagreement (2) was obtained for all of the other six statements. These results indicate the need for a greater focus on developing the HR planning capacity within the dpsa. This was supported by the information obtained from our focus group sessions.

<b>Q13.5: The department allocates adequate resources to the HR strategic and business planning function</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	12	27
Unsure	8	18
Agree	20	45
Strongly agree	3	7
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<sup>30</sup> HRM Report, p24.

## FINDINGS

<b>Q13.6: The department allocates adequate resources to the HR planning function</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	16	36
Unsure	5	11
Agree	19	43
Strongly agree	4	9
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q13.7: The department allocates sufficient resources to develop strong HR planning skills, not only among HR planners, but also among operational managers and HR generalists</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	7
Disagree	16	37
Unsure	8	19
Agree	17	40
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q13.8: Management development initiatives include a component on HR planning</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	10	24
Unsure	10	24
Agree	21	50
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q13.11: Excellence in HR planning is promoted and rewarded</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	20	48
Unsure	12	29
Agree	7	17
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q13.12: Clear, defined, relevant, reliable and valid performance measures are developed for HR planning</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	18	41
Unsure	9	20
Agree	15	34
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q13.13: Employees at all levels are confident that HR is taken seriously and that HR planning results in action</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	3	7
Disagree	16	36
Unsure	15	34
Agree	8	18
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q13.14: HR planning systems are responsive to the changing needs of the department</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	13	30
Unsure	9	21
Agree	17	40
Strongly agree	4	9
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q13.15: Rigorous monitoring, reporting, follow-up and necessary adjustments are made to the HR plans within the department</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	21	49
Unsure	4	9
Agree	16	37
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

#### 4.9.4 Process and design of the HR plan

Respondents indicated agreement with the following statements:

- HR planning is integrated with departmental business and financial plans (55%).
- Linkages between the Public Service Act/Regulations and HR planning are communicated within the department (52%).
- HR planning processes, roles, responsibilities and benefits are communicated to all stakeholders (managers, supervisors, HR specialists, business planners, employees and unions) (52%).
- There is a common framework for HR planning (51%).

Respondents indicated disagreement with the following statements:

- There is a central support centre that provides timely advice on HR planning (49%).
- There is a central support centre that collects and shares HR planning best practices across the public service (43%).
- Responsive and flexible tools are developed and shared (43%).
- There is a central support centre that provides regularly updated information to support those involved in HR planning (40%).
- HR planners provide strategic advice and policy input to management as full partners in business and HR planning (39%).
- The dpsa provides adequate and appropriate HR planning consulting support to departments (39%).
- Stakeholders are engaged and HR plans shared, and stakeholders are kept informed throughout the HR planning life cycle (36%).
- There is an understanding and recognition of the qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of HR planning and its impact on business/unit outcomes (34%).
- HR planners consult with stakeholders throughout the planning cycle as required (33%).

- There is a consistent, transparent approach to HR planning across the department (30%).
- HR planning processes, roles, responsibilities and benefits are communicated to all stakeholders (managers, supervisors, HR specialists, business planners, employees and unions) (30%).
- HR planning is a well-designed, integrated and institutionalised process based on good management, values and principles (27%).

## FINDINGS

<b>Q14.1: HR planning is a well designed, integrated and institutionalised process based on good management, values and principles</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	12	27
Unsure	9	20
Agree	21	48
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.2: HR planning is integrated with departmental business and financial plans</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	9	20
Unsure	8	18
Agree	24	55
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.3: There is a consistent, transparent approach to HR planning across the department</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	13	30
Unsure	7	16
Agree	20	47
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.4: HR planners provide strategic advice and policy input to management as full partners in business and HR planning</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	17	39
Unsure	7	16
Agree	18	41
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q14.5: HR planners consult with stakeholders throughout the planning cycle as required</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	14	33
Unsure	7	16
Agree	20	47
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.6: Linkages between the Public Service Act Regulations and HR planning are communicated within the department</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	10	23
Unsure	7	16
Agree	23	52
Strongly agree	3	7
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.7: HR planning processes, roles, responsibilities and benefits are communicated to all stakeholders (managers, supervisors, HR specialists, business planners, employees and unions)</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	13	30
Unsure	7	16
Agree	23	52
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q14.8: There is an understanding and recognition of the qualitative as well as quantitative aspects of HR planning and its impact on business/unit outcomes</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	15	34
Unsure	10	23
Agree	17	39
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.9: Stakeholders are engaged and HR plans shared, and stakeholders are kept informed throughout the HR planning life cycle</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	16	36
Unsure	7	16
Agree	19	43
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.10: There is a central support centre that collects and shares HR planning best practices across the public service</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	19	43
Unsure	12	27
Agree	10	23
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.11: There is a common framework for HR planning</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	9	21
Unsure	11	26
Agree	22	51
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q14.12: There is a central support centre that provides regularly updated information to support those involved in HR planning</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	17	40
Unsure	11	26
Agree	13	30
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.13: There is a central support centre that provides timely advice on HR planning</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	21	49
Unsure	11	26
Agree	9	21
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.14: The dpsa provides adequate and appropriate HR planning consulting support to departments</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	17	39
Unsure	7	16
Agree	18	41
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q14.15: Responsive and flexible tools are developed and shared</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	18	43
Unsure	11	26
Agree	10	24
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

# FINDINGS

## 4.9.5 Information management/sources

Respondents also alluded to difficulties with the verification of data for departments. Concerns were raised relating to the verification of data from, and between, the PERSAL, BAS and Vulindlela systems.

The respondents indicated **agreement** with the following statements:

- Financial and HR systems are integrated (71%).
- HR information systems are in place to support HR planning (62%).
- The data produced by the information systems is regarded as credible and reliable for use in HR planning (62%).
- Departmental HR information systems are compatible across the public service (55%).

The respondents indicated **disagreement** with the following statements:

- HR plans are shared between departments (53%).
- Information from other departments relevant to HR planning is easily accessible (45%).
- Good forecasting capacity is available (42%).
- The department continuously improves HR planning-related information systems and processes (34%).
- Departmental access to Vulindlela provides adequate HR planning data/information (33%).

Q17.1: HR information systems are in place to support HR planning	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	9	21
Unsure	3	7
Agree	26	62
Strongly agree	4	10
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

Q17.2: The data produced by the information systems is regarded as credible and reliable for use in HR planning	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	7	17
Unsure	6	14
Agree	26	62
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q17.3: Departmental HR information systems are compatible across the public service</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	4	10
Disagree	9	21
Unsure	5	12
Agree	23	55
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q17.4: Financial and HR systems are integrated</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	7	17
Unsure	3	7
Agree	30	71
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q17.5: Good forecasting capacity is available</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	2	5
Disagree	18	42
Unsure	9	21
Agree	14	33
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q17.6: Departmental access to Vulindlela provides adequate HR planning data/information</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	5	12
Disagree	14	33
Unsure	7	16
Agree	17	40
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q17.7: Information from other departments relevant to HR planning is easily accessible</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	3
Disagree	18	45
Unsure	14	35
Agree	7	18
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q17.8: The department continuously improves HR planning-related information systems and processes</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	14	34
Unsure	7	17
Agree	18	44
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q17.9: HR plans are shared between departments</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	3	7
Disagree	23	53
Unsure	8	19
Agree	8	19
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q17.10: Other department-specific systems are used for HR planning. Please specify</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	0	0
Disagree	12	46
Unsure	8	31
Agree	5	19
Strongly agree	1	4
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>26</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

It was positively noted that the Department of Education in Mpumalanga appears to have addressed this problem and can apparently verify changes to the organisation on a monthly basis to the lowest possible level, i.e. school level. This experience warrants further in-depth investigation for possible replication within the public service. See recommendation on *Information system and demographics (5.1.5)* below.

### 4.9.6 Training and development

The findings from the questionnaire supported the hypothesis that there is an urgent need for a major review and evaluation of current training and development approaches, in particular as they relate to HR planning.

Respondents indicated some **agreement** with the following statement:

- HR planning is recognised and supported as a unique and core discipline in your department (42%).

Respondents indicated **disagreement** with the following statements:

- There is an annual HR planning conference and there are mechanisms in place to ensure provincial participation (43%).
- All HR professionals, not just HR planners, understand and can apply HR planning concepts and practices to their work (42%).

- Competency profiles for HR planners are widely used and understood (40%).
- A multi-disciplinary approach is adopted towards HR planning (37%).
- HR specialists are consulted on the creation of new data input in HR and other systems (37%).
- Training in HR planning is readily available (36%).
- Departments have knowledgeable and dedicated HR professionals to produce, manage and analyse HR data/information, using standardised terminology and methodology (35%).
- HR planners are accredited across the public service (33%).
- There is a process for following up on and researching HR planning practices within the public service (33%).

Q18.1: HR planning is recognised and supported as a unique and core discipline in your department	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Strongly disagree	1	2
Disagree	16	37
Unsure	8	19
Agree	18	42
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q18.2: All HR professionals, not just HR planners, understand and can apply HR planning concepts and practices to their work</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	3	7
Disagree	18	42
Unsure	11	26
Agree	9	21
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q18.3: HR planners are accredited across the public service</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	5	12
Disagree	14	33
Unsure	20	48
Agree	2	5
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q18.4: Competency profiles for HR planners are widely used and understood</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	4	10
Disagree	17	40
Unsure	16	38
Agree	5	12
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q18.5: Training in HR planning is readily available</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	5	12
Disagree	15	36
Unsure	10	24
Agree	12	29
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q18.6: There is an annual HR planning conference and there are mechanisms in place to ensure provincial participation</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	5	12
Disagree	18	43
Unsure	13	31
Agree	6	14
Strongly agree	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q18.7: A multi-disciplinary approach is adopted towards HR planning</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	3	7
Disagree	15	37
Unsure	7	17
Agree	15	37
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>41</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q18.8: There is a process for following up on and researching HR planning practices within the public service</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	4	10
Disagree	14	33
Unsure	12	29
Agree	10	24
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q18.9: Departments have knowledgeable and dedicated HR professionals to produce, manage and analyse HR data/information, using standardised terminology and methodology</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Strongly disagree	3	7
Disagree	15	35
Unsure	12	28
Agree	11	26
Strongly agree	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

Q18.10: HR specialists are consulted on the creation of new data input in HR and other systems	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Strongly disagree	3	7
Disagree	16	37
Unsure	9	21
Agree	14	33
Strongly agree	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

### 4.10 Role of the dpsa

When asked whether or not the dpsa should have a role to play in HR planning for departments, 95% of the respondents indicated 'yes'. More specifically, this role should include, as indicated by 'yes' responses:

- Develop an HR planning portal on the dpsa's website (100%).
- Develop new competencies for the HR planning function (100%).
- Provide HR planning training courses and workshops (100%).
- Determine and communicate minimum requirements for reporting (97%).
- Provide expert advice (98%).
- Provide mentorship opportunities (98%).
- Provide a framework for the accreditation of HR planners (98%).
- Develop public service-wide communication plans that demonstrate the benefits of HR planning (96%).
- Developing HR planning tools/templates (95%).
- Communicate the importance of HR planning to senior managers (95%).
- Develop HR planning guidelines (94%).
- Provide support on financial aspects of HR planning (91%).

In addition, respondents made the following comments:

- Share completed plans/best practice.
- The dpsa is not responsive enough to the changing needs of HR managers in the public service. Some departments do not trust their own expertise/skills

levels and refer to other government departments for assistance.

- Organisation and change support capabilities.
- Evaluate and monitor compliance.

Respondents also made additional suggestions regarding the future role of the dpsa in HR planning:

- Strengthen the HRP component and capacitate it to concentrate on all the functions it was designed for.
- The dpsa is to come up with a reporting mechanism by departments on a quarterly basis to show the seriousness of HRP.
- The dpsa should develop an HR plan and planning IT system that assist departments with the provision of user-friendly, reliable and on-line access to information.
- The dpsa should be visible in strategic and supportive roles rather than punitive ones. It should also understand and accommodate the uniqueness of certain departments.
- The dpsa could provide training and progress monitoring as part of support. Training should be provided for HR planners as well as management.
- More guidelines and templates from the dpsa would assist in the development of HR plans.
- The dpsa should assist in clearly defining ways in which departments could monitor and enforce implementation.

The above findings form the basis for the recommendations on the *Role of dpsa (5.2)*.

Q19.1: Should the dpsa play a role in HR planning for departments?	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	41	95
No	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>43</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

Q19.3: Develop HR planning tools (templates)	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	42	95
No	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>100</b>

Q19.4: Provide expert advice (models, best practices, benchmarks, easy access to demographic information, measures and indicators)	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	41	98
No	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

Q19.5: Develop an HR planning portal on the DPSA's website	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	42	100
No	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

Q19.6: Provide mentorship opportunities	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	39	98
No	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Q19.7: Develop new competencies for HR planning functions	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	40	100
No	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

Q19.8: Provide a framework for the accreditation of HR planners	NO. OF RESPONSES	%
Yes	41	98
No	1	2
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>42</b>	<b>100</b>

## FINDINGS

<b>Q19.9: Provide HR planning training courses and workshops</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	40	100
No	0	0
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q19.10: Develop HR planning guidelines</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	34	94
No	2	6
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>36</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q19.11: Determine and communicate minimum requirements for reporting</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	38	97
No	1	3
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>39</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q19.12: Provide support on financial aspects of HR planning</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	30	91
No	3	9
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>33</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q19.13: Communicate the importance of HR planning to senior managers</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	38	95
No	2	5
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>100</b>

<b>Q19.14: Develop public service-wide communication plans that demonstrate the benefits of HR planning</b>	<b>NO. OF RESPONSES</b>	<b>%</b>
Yes	26	96
No	1	4
<b>TOTAL RESPONSES</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>100</b>

## 4.11 Conclusions

The results of the research process underline the need for a thorough review of the position and role of HR planning within the public service. In many ways the word 'planning' is a misnomer, as it underplays the flexibility and responsiveness required to effectively predict and meet current and future human resource requirements. In addition, the word's administrative connotations exclude the strategic view required for a successful HRP intervention. The predominant focus on mere compliance within most departments has deprived the public service of the benefits derived from organising responsibilities around the two key principles that should drive all HR planning activities within departments, namely:

- HR planning provides a frequently updated framework of information for decision-making.
- HR planning has a fundamental role to play in the attainment of departmental objectives through the effective utilisation of human resources<sup>31</sup>.

The following **general comments** were made by respondents at the end of the questionnaire. These are general comments from the returned questionnaires, and not meant to support or refute any specific statements.

- The strategic issues are neglected in favour of administrative actions due to capacity constraints.
- HR planning must be introduced as a course and the planners must be accredited.
- The dpsa should follow the example of the National Treasury, that stipulates the number of people and levels in the HRM section. Most HR employees in HRM sections are in lower-level posts with no strategic capabilities to deal with the demands of HR planning.
- HRM does not have a platform like the JE Indaba or HRD conference where these issues can be discussed, best practice can be shared and problems can be put forward.
- As much as a department needs to plan for HR, its management and political figures require HR to be more flexible, and it is a challenge to all HR managers to plan for flexibility.
- The occupational categories in PERSAL reflect total numbers in a category. That is fine for EE reporting to the DoL, but when HR has to inform line managers which posts/occupations/job titles are included in these specific occupational categories, the information is not accessible. E.g. occupational category: Technicians - which occupations are included? When managers want to detail HR planning, this information is required. We need to know whether all the specific occupations in government are included in each category or PERSAL.

- The challenge then is not to define the gap but to address it in a large department with diverse occupations. It would really help if the information about specific occupations per occupational category can be forwarded to departments.
- HRP is currently not aligned to the strategic planning processes of the department. Senior managers are not knowledgeable on what HRP is and what role it can and should play in the management of their units.
- Senior managers should be trained and informed in respect of this important issue.
- It should be considered that HRP be made compulsory for inclusion in some form of performance agreement, and a monitoring/reporting mechanism should be developed.
- HoDs should also be assessed on their success in this regard.
- HRP is seen as an HR role only, and advice from HR is not even followed properly.
- palama should provide training on HRP in consultation with the dpsa.
- The department received new leadership at the end of 2004. The department is busy with a total change and HRP is still in process. It was touched on and set out in the strategic plan of the department, but has not been finalised yet due to several reasons.
- The dpsa must provide physical support in the development of prioritised HR plans.
- Operational HR policies should be developed to guide and ensure good HR practices and the implementation of the HRP.
- An analysis should be performed of the sources of HR supply, with reference to the province which does not have a university attached to it (MPU).

In conclusion, it can be stated that the project timing is appropriate for the development and delivery of a revised human resource planning guideline.

<sup>31</sup> *Reconceptualising human resource planning in response to institutional change* in International Journal of Manpower Vol. 19 No. 5 1998, p345

## 5. RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the initial provincial focus groups, the analysis of questionnaire data, and the verification sessions, the following salient issues are highlighted:

- Need for extensive business and HR planning integration
- Defined accountability for HR plans within departments
- Extensive stakeholder involvement in the HRP process
- Emergence and acknowledgement of HR as a key driver of departmental success
- Focused HRP development
- Standardised HRP templates
- Development of professional HR planning expertise within the dpsa
- Development of a central HRP support function to provide technical HRP advice to all departments
- Development of an HRP portal on the dpsa website
- Focus on regular HRP information-sharing between departments.

These salient issues form the basis of our HRP proposals going forward.

### 5.1 Proposals for broad human resources planning framework

#### 5.1.1 Leadership and accountability

As shown above, there is a lack of leadership and accountability on HRP in most departments. The Regulations currently make the executing authority responsible for the development of the HRP. It is further assumed that delegations are in place that enable the HoD to comply with the Regulations. Since there are no 'visible' mechanisms to monitor the performance of executing authorities, it is not possible to assess whether there is compliance with the Regulations. **It is therefore recommended that accountability for the development and implementation of the HRP be formally placed at head-of-department level.**

This is supported by the findings in the questionnaire as well as the dpsa HR repositioning document, which refers to 'weak accountability mechanisms for process outcomes and results due to a combination of hierarchical bureaucracies and weaknesses in the implementation of performance management in many departments'<sup>32</sup>.

It is further recommended in the report that one of the delineated HR organisational roles and responsibilities should include that of *strategic leadership, guidance, alignment, monitoring*

*and reporting*. One of its key functions would be to 'oversee the implementation of the departmental HR strategies and plans and assess performance on progress, results and impact of the management and implementation of these'<sup>33</sup>.

**However, we need to caution that the adoption of the above would require an amendment to the Public Service Regulations and would require a consultative process that may even require Cabinet approval.**

#### 5.1.2 Responsibilities of line managers

Within the public service, there is a well-defined need for departments to adopt a fundamentally different and integrated approach to HR planning. The integration needs to occur in both a vertical and a horizontal direction. Firstly, HR planning cannot be divorced from broader strategic planning within the department. Secondly, there has to be effective overall co-ordination of the implementation of the HR plan through the acquisition, development, utilisation and retention efforts required to effectively manage human resources.

Specific HR planning issues that need to be addressed within the public service include the inculcation of **a joint responsibility for planning between line managers and planners in all departments**. A key competency in this regard is the ability to form assumptions about the future, based on both operational experience and some knowledge of key drivers in the environment. This type of responsibility should vest solely in planners and is in essence an important part of daily management decision-making. Line managers should be significantly involved in HR planning activities, although ultimate responsibility for the development of the HRP should lie with HR officials (at a level to be determined). This approach is supported in the Report (*ibid*). The repositioning views contained in the Report espouse the view that 'human resource management is not the sole domain and responsibility of human resource experts and units. Instead, there is evidence to suggest that organisations that mainstream people management by assigning appropriate human resource management responsibilities to line managers are more likely to succeed in achieving better results than those that confine people management responsibilities to central HR units and practitioners'.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> HRM report, p24

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid*, p38

# RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition, a proactive approach to the inclusion of key stakeholders throughout the planning process is urgently required to get a holistic sense of strategic direction and significantly lift HR planning out of an exclusively HR activity, as well as to show the role HR has to play in creating a successful department. This links to current investigations around the repositioning of HR within the public service, whereby HR will have a significant strategic role to play in the functioning of the department overall.

HR planning is a dynamic process that should involve regular feedback to all stakeholders, especially top management, on the success and impact of the plan. Actual versus desired data must be constantly reported on and not left for an annual review. The feedback process should support decision-making within the department. This will go a long way towards reducing the seemingly isolationist and silo-like decision-making that is characteristic of many departments within the public service. In addition, 'high-quality information is certainly a prerequisite for reshaping the workforce within the new ethos of managerialism in public service organisations'<sup>35</sup>.

The crux of this recommendation lies in the **strengthening of the working relationship between HR and line management** in all areas of people management within the public service. This view is further supported by the 'Proposed repositioning of HR' document, which states that '[h]uman resources must be a shared responsibility between HR units and line managers in line with the HR decentralisation policy of government'<sup>36</sup>.

### 5.1.3 Process and design of the HR plan

The findings in this section of the questionnaire point to the varying emphasis placed on the process and design of the HRP within the public service. The major focus of disagreement with the best practice statements includes:

- There is a central support centre that collects and shares HR planning best practices across the public service.
- There is a central support centre that provides regularly updated information to support those involved in HR planning.
- There is a central support centre that provides timely advice on HR planning.
- The dpsa's HRM provides HR planning consulting support to departments.

- Responsive and flexible tools are developed and shared.

These findings suggest opportunities to improve the overall way in which HR planning is managed through the possible use of a central support centre. **It is recommended that the dpsa consider establishing a central support centre to provide an advisory function on HR planning issues.** The exact nature and level of service would ultimately depend on the available financial resources to fund relevant posts. However, at a high level, the central support centre should be responsible for the following actions:

- Develop<sup>37</sup> and distribute a regular (we suggest quarterly) HR planning newsletter or information flyer to all HR planners and relevant line managers on key HR planning issues within the public service.
- Develop relevant case studies that capture HR planning best practice and challenges across the public service, based on actual and documented departmental experience<sup>38</sup>.
- Co-ordinate and host quarterly HR planning forums.
- Liaise with palama in addressing key challenges in the development of both HR planners and line managers with regard to HR planning competencies.
- Update HR planning competencies as required.
- Scan the international market for relevant HR planning conferences.
- Work with palama to identify and invite international HR planning experts to South Africa to host HR planning workshop sessions with HR planners.
- Facilitate an international HR planning exchange programme whereby South African HR planners work with and learn from international counterparts in the foreign country and vice versa.
- Implement an HR planning internship/learnership within the public service.
- Provide direct advice on specific HR planning-related queries from departments.
- Collate all relevant HR planning documents for the HRP portal on the dpsa website.
- Manage the HRP resource centre, making available hard copies of articles, books etc.
- Ensure that all HRP-related information on the HRP portal is current.

<sup>34</sup> HRM Report, p16

<sup>35</sup> *Reconceptualising human resource planning in response to institutional change* in International Journal of Manpower Vol. 19 No. 5 1998, p353

<sup>36</sup> HRM Report, p40

<sup>37</sup> With input from HR planners across departments.

<sup>38</sup> In the interim, this may be outsourced to external providers whilst the central support centre is established.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

- Build the capacity of inexperienced HR planners through the co-facilitation of integrated HR planning sessions.
- Update the HR planning guidelines.
- Update HR planning templates as required.
- Track the annual submission of HR plans by all departments.
- Generate an HRP submission report.
- Follow up with all relevant departments on the submission of HR plans.
- Evaluate the quality of HR plan submissions and provide feedback on corrective actions that departments must implement to improve the quality of HRP.
- Evaluate and monitor the efficiency of the HRP services offered by the centre through regular feedback mechanisms.

As an interim measure and in the absence of sufficient skills within the public service, this function may be outsourced, subject to strict management by the dpsa through a service level agreement. This may also be linked to the recommendation on *Training and development* (5.2.5).

## 5.1.4 Content and templates for HR plans

Based on our findings and the disparate HRPs that were evaluated, there was full support for the development of a guideline to assist departments in undertaking proper HR planning. Respondents welcomed the idea that standard templates and report formats be provided. In some instances, participants at the validation workshop felt that the dpsa needed to be much more prescriptive on content and templates for HR planning.

It is therefore recommended that the dpsa continue with the processes linked to the development of a **revised human resource planning guide**<sup>39</sup>. Clear linkages are needed to all other plans with standard reports and templates.

There was extensive support for the issuance of an **HR guide on an annual basis** that is linked directly to the MTSF and MTEF planning and budgeting cycles of government.

We propose a fully integrated HRP approach that defines and operationalises the link between business and HR planning, through extensive stakeholder involvement in the initial development and discussion around the HRP, including a solid working relationship between HRM and HRD on all HRP-related issues.

The revised HRP guidelines will include the following:

- Standardised HR plan template with defined headings.
- The HRP should be no more than 20 pages in length, and the main focus should be on the action plan emanating from the initial environmental scan and workforce analysis.
- A series of checklists in the appendices. These are working papers for HR planners to record information and identify key areas for inclusion in the action plan.
- A self-assessment that assists the HR planner with the evaluation of his/her own submission.

To ensure consistency across government departments, it is recommended that the plans be presented in the following format:

### Cover page

- With department's contact details

### Inside cover

- Sign-off from the HoD and executing authority (include template)

### Introduction to department

- Overview of the department – not to exceed 1 page
- Vision
- Mission
- Summary of strategic objectives/strategic priorities as aligned to national and/or provincial priorities

<sup>39</sup> This will be covered as deliverable two of this project.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

## Environmental scan

- Summary of key HR issues and trends in relation to the strategic objectives

## Workforce analysis

- Information on the current establishment and future plans

## Gap analysis

- Information on the demand and supply challenges
- List top five HR priorities

## Macro HR strategies

- Linkages to national initiatives
- List strategies for addressing top five priorities (and sub-strategies)

## Implementation plan

- Provide action-oriented template that is linked to time frames, resources, funding etc. to address all the gaps

## Monitoring, evaluation and reporting

- Set clear time frames and formats

We further recommend that the **format of the report be standardised so that it cannot be changed** without the prior approval of the Director-General – dpsa.

### 5.1.5 Information system and demographics

Respondents also alluded to difficulties in verifying data from, and between, the PERSAL, BAS and Vulindlela systems.

While it is acknowledged that the responsibility for maintaining the data on PERSAL lies with the line departments, it is recommended that the **information management system requirements for successful HR planning be further investigated and documented in the form of a case study**. The systems utilised by the Mpumalanga Department of Education, the Department of Defence and the South African Police Services could serve as a basis for the first case study.

Information management needs to also integrate the findings from other sources such as the skills audit, morbidity and mortality rates and absenteeism reports and tie these into the demographic trends of a specified geographic area or province.

## 5.2 Role of the dpsa

When asked whether or not the dpsa should have a role to play in HR planning for departments, 95% of the respondents indicated 'yes'. More specifically, this role should include the following actions, as indicated by 'yes' responses:

- Develop an HR planning portal on the dpsa website (100%).
- Develop new competencies for the HR planning function (100%).
- Provide HR planning training courses and workshops (100%).
- Determine and communicate minimum requirements for reporting (97%).
- Provide expert advice (98%).
- Provide mentorship opportunities (98%).
- Provide a framework for the accreditation of HR planners (98%).
- Develop public service-wide communication plans that demonstrate the benefits of HR planning (96%).
- Develop HR planning tools/templates (95%).
- Communicate the importance of HR planning to senior managers (95%).
- Develop HR planning guidelines (94%).
- Provide support on financial aspects of HR planning (91%).

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the above responses, the following two key recommendations can be made:

A) Develop an HR planning portal on the dpsa's website. The content on this portal should be managed by the central support centre. Ensure that any overlap with the proposed HR portal<sup>40</sup> is kept to a minimum.

HRP information on the dpsa portal should include:

- All relevant HRP research reports collected from all relevant research bodies nationwide
- All relevant contact numbers for HR planners in all other departments
- Electronic copy of the HR planning guidelines
- Electronic copies of the HR planning checklists
- Electronic submission of HR plan once complete
- Electronic copies of case studies
- List of all universities with a cooperative working relationship with the dpsa
- List of suitable HRP references, including internet sites and book titles
- List of all international HRP conferences
- List of upcoming HRP events
- Site for HR planners to chat with other HR planners or simply record issues online
- Regular update on the status of the submission of HR plans (e.g. an online, real-time 'barometer' of how many departments have submitted HR plans to date).

B) Develop revised and focused HR planning competencies, which may include:

- The ability to translate business strategies and plans into human resource strategies and plans
- The ability to align operational requirements to strategic direction
- The ability to identify the people requirements for service delivery drivers
- The ability to network extensively with other HR planners and key stakeholders.

The above, together with the responses from the fieldwork, were used to develop the following recommendations for the dpsa.

## 5.2.1 Definition of HR planning

As pointed out in the section dealing with the HR planning landscape, there are a number of varying definitions of human resource planning. The various options were presented at the validation workshops. It was unanimously agreed that there was a need for the dpsa to change its current definition of HR planning.

There was strong support for the definition used by the Canadian government that defines HR planning as a '*process that identifies current and future human resources needs for an organisation to achieve its goals. Human resources planning should serve as a link between human resources management and the overall strategic plan of an organisation*'.

It is therefore recommended that the dpsa should **revise the existing definition of HR planning** in line with the above definition.

## 5.2.2 Profile and structure of the HR function

The challenges around HR planning within departments, documented in both the focus group sessions and the results of the survey, are symptomatic of broader systemic issues that are beyond the scope of this project. However, the findings from this research are consistent with many of the findings and recommendations contained in the HRM report of 2005<sup>41</sup>.

The focus group research revealed that the HR function is not seen as core to the implementation of the strategic plan and central to the long-term planning taking place in departments, leading to frustration and, in many cases, non-delivery or the ineffective provision of HR services. The key to addressing this issue lies in the repositioning of the HR function to emerge as a business partner for departments. The business partner model, as defined in the HRM report of 2005, depicts four broad and equally important roles for HR, namely:

- Strategic partner,
- Change agent,
- Employee champion, and
- Administrative expert.

In the context of the current repositioning discussion, HR planning is seen as a key strategic HR process within the defined strategic partner role<sup>42</sup>. However, effective and quality-driven HR planning cannot take place unless the process is fully integrated into the overall strategic and business planning of each department. For the HR function to be integrated within the department at this strategic level, key HR positions must be filled by HR experts who possess the relevant HR competencies and who are able to make an active and visible people contribution to the overall functioning of the department. HR experts with strategic responsibility should, of course, have commensurate authority and decision-making abilities to effectively carry out their roles and responsibilities.

<sup>40</sup> HRM Report, p36, HR Information and Knowledge Generator.

<sup>41</sup> HRM Report.

<sup>42</sup> Ibid, p3

# RECOMMENDATIONS

As defined in the HRM report, 'processes such as strategic HR planning, strategy translation and organisational development should now become the core functions of the new HR in the public service. This is so as these functions leverage service delivery by developing strategic visions for human resources in departments and knowing and understanding the supply-demand dynamics in the labour market and linking these to the personnel projections of the department in the medium to long term, thus developing recruitment strategies that will deliver best talent on time, within the right budget and in the right place'<sup>43</sup>.

It must be emphasised that the current move away from an exclusive focus on the administrative expert role has to be supported by the relevant levels of core HR competencies within each department. Increased levels of expertise will allow for the effective assumption of multiple roles, including 'creating, delivering and sustaining a value proposition for the organisation's strategic goals and plans'<sup>44</sup>.

Within the repositioning context, we recommend the creation of an HR planning unit that is positioned at the appropriate strategic level within the department. The core functions of this unit should include the following:

- Monitor the submission of HR plans.
- Review all HR plans from departments as well as provinces.
- Recommend adjustments to departmental and provincial HR plans.
- Oversee the central support centre and all its activities as recommended in this report.
- Develop strong working relationships with all HRM departments and line managers in respect of HR planning issues.
- Liaise closely with palama on the development of HR planners within the public service.
- Monitor and evaluate the quality of HR plans throughout the public service.

It is recommended that the dpsa should consider establishing a **standard minimum structure for the HR function**. The structure needs to be 'scalable' to cover the varying sizes of the departments. A precedence has been set by the National Treasury in relation to the supply chain management and Chief Financial Officer functions. The exact nature and forms of these could be determined internally by the dpsa, using existing internal resources.

## 5.2.3 Monitoring and evaluation

Linked to the recommendation on the revised guideline was a recommendation that the guidelines be issued on an annual basis. Should the above recommendations be accepted, it would result in the dpsa having to evaluate all the reports submitted by all departments annually.

The annual submissions could be consolidated to guide the strategic direction of HR planning in the country. This would mean, however, that the **dpsa will be required to increase its role in the monitoring and evaluation of the HR planning process**. This will include monitoring compliance with the Regulations and evaluating the **implementation** of the HR plans.

The consulting team noted positively that the dpsa advertised for the post of Chief Director: HR planning in the course of the project. This 'new' Chief Directorate could play a major role in the development of a monitoring and evaluation system for HR planning that does not impact on the constitutional mandate of the PSC to 'investigate, monitor and evaluate the organisation and administration, and the personnel practices of the public service'.<sup>45</sup>

## 5.2.4 HR forum/learning network

The findings point to the absence of a network of HR managers. It is **recommended that the dpsa should formalise an HR forum/learning network** that would facilitate open discussion and sharing across the national and provincial departments, especially on HR planning.

The objectives for such a learning network would include that the following be done:

- Create a physical network based on the proposals of the portal listed above.
- Create a forum for sharing experience and good practice.
- Develop centres of excellence.
- Develop a policy framework, incorporating training and professional development policies.
- Develop and implement an HR communication/change management plan.
- Review appropriate HR tools and techniques.
- Establish partnerships across the spheres of government.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid, p14

<sup>44</sup> Ibid, p16

<sup>45</sup> Section 196(4); The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa; Act 108 of 1996 (as amended).

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- Showcase other government departments to inspire future collaboration.
- Satisfy several training and professional development requirements.

This network could also form the basis for the presentation of the case study referred to above and reports similar to this one.

### 5.2.5 Training and development for HR planners

It is markedly clear from both our desktop research as well as our fieldwork that there is a driving need for HR planners to be given exposure to targeted and appropriate developmental interventions. These interventions should develop both planning skills as well as the ability to scan and analyse the external environment and make appropriate departmental links. The training method should be a combination of **HR planning theory as well as the extensive use of case studies**. Institutionally, the dpsa has a responsibility to ensure that the learning capabilities of both itself and the public service in general are increased through developing and managing the significant body of knowledge around HR planning that exists within departments.

On a broad level, the building of institutional capacity is also documented in the HRM report (ibid), which states, 'The institutional capacity of the public service to provide human resource training and development, particularly in view of the proposed repositioning, must be consolidated and upgraded to meet the requirements of the changing HR role and responsibilities'<sup>46</sup>.

Key to this would be the re-definition of the HR planning competencies required for success in a certain position within the department. Using this as a base, the incumbents most likely to benefit from further development would be selected. An ad hoc approach to this development, based on inherited roles and responsibilities, would be futile and is not likely to yield any substantial HR planning benefits for the department. More importantly, appropriate HR planning training should be available on a **needs basis rather than a cost-recovery basis**.

The role of palama in this regard remains open for discussion. However, it is crucial that other ways of offering this development to public servants are explored. This may involve forming working **alliances with reputable public management schools**<sup>47</sup>. A strong and co-operative working relationship with selected institutions is likely to lead to the optimisation of the balance between academic input and practical experiences. Both perspectives will play an important role in offering incumbents

holistic HR planning development and will significantly contribute to raising the HR planning profile. The PSR in Part IX B.2 stipulates, 'training may be provided internally or externally'.

The above could be implemented in terms of PSR Part IX B1, which states, '**The Minister may oversee or ensure the participation of the public service in any institution aimed at promoting training** in the public service subject to the South African Qualifications Authority Act'. The Minister may, using this chapter of the PSR, also **prescribe minimum and/or compulsory training** and development for both management and the human resource units dealing with HR planning.

Caution should be exercised when adopting a possible SAQA/SETA-driven approach to this development. Given the inherent tensions within the public service around the efficacy of many of these bodies and given the magnitude of HR planning deficiencies and the urgency to address the gaps, this route is probably not the most viable option in the short term.

### 5.2.6 Improved communication on guidelines

The finding on the lack of access to the current guidelines is disconcerting.

It is strongly recommended that communication on the revised guideline be improved. It is recommended that the dpsa should develop a communication strategy that will ensure that all HR managers and practitioners have **access to the guidelines on an on-going basis**. This would need to go beyond the initial high-level and public launches to regular road shows and updating sessions.

Additionally, the guidelines could be **printed in booklet format and/or copied onto compact disks** for extensive distribution throughout the public service to line managers. This will have the added advantage of increasing the profile and relevance of human resource planning in general.

The above should be considered with reference to, and **linked to, the recommendation on training and development** in respect of HR planning made above.

<sup>46</sup> HRM Report, p46

<sup>47</sup> Refer to comments on the Brazilian Experience.

# WAY FORWARD AND CONCLUSION

## 6. WAY FORWARD

The results of this project and the related interest it has stimulated in HR planning should result in the following three fundamental components going forward – components that are likely to ensure that the HRP is accepted and that there is commitment to implement it within departments:

- The correct orientation to HRP
- Ensuring that the right tools are available to develop the HRP
- Creating an appropriate climate within the department for effective HR planning to take place<sup>48</sup>.

### IMPLEMENTATION PLAN AND POSSIBLE WAY FORWARD

The findings have been partially verified through the validation meeting referred to above. However, the recommendations and strategies or mechanisms in this report need to be thoroughly workshopped for action. The next critical step is the prioritisation of the recommendations and the development of an overarching action plan. It is recommended that implementation be managed by using project management as a tool and appointing project leaders.

In order to meet the overall objectives of the transformation of the HR planning practices in government, the dpsa would need to adopt an implementation plan. Key actions could include the following:

- Finalise and present the research report and HR planning proposals to the dpsa leadership.
- Present the findings and proposals to the governance and administration cluster.
- Consider recommendations in terms of short-, medium- and long-term objectives as prioritised.
- On approval of the final recommendations, appoint a project team to take the process forward.
- Decide on an approach towards the development of HR planning case studies (e.g. in-house or external).
- Consult with stakeholders as appropriate (e.g. palama).
- Work with palama to revise existing leadership and management development programmes to include information on HR planning and the important role it plays in service delivery.
- Research an appropriate HR planning curriculum, both nationally and locally.
- Research relevant HR planning training providers for new working relationships.
- Review and revise service level agreements with existing HR planning training providers to ensure currency of development approach and course content.

- Communicate strategic direction.
- Manage the regulatory and legislative processes, where necessary.
- Liaise with the Presidency and National Treasury on linkages to the MTSF and MTEF cycles.
- Monitor and evaluate the implementation plan.

In order to ensure success, the dpsa would have to simultaneously enhance the strategic capacity within the dpsa to drive the project outcomes and source funding for possible projects. Some of the proposed activities would run in parallel, therefore the decisions on the way forward would need to be managed and monitored against an appropriate action plan.

Action plans arising from this report need to be SMARTER, that is:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Acceptable
- Realistic
- Time frame-based
- Extended
- Rewarding.

The deliverables, if possible, need to be included in the personal performance agreements of all staff involved in any subsequent projects.

## CONCLUSION

It is concluded that timely and appropriate responses to the current HR situation would be welcomed by all respondents. The commitments made in the government's programme of action also offer an opportunity for the repositioning of the HR function and role within the public service.

We are confident that the recommendations proposed above are practical and can be implemented by the dpsa and would ultimately contribute to the improvement of service delivery.

<sup>48</sup> Ibid

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