



**the dpsa**

Department:  
Public Service and Administration  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

---

# **INSTITUTIONALISING THE PRACTICE OF EXIT INTERVIEWS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

*presentation to*

*EPCM STEERING COMMITTEE – 4 OCTOBER 2007*

*Ms S Naidoo (DPSA)*

---

# BACKGROUND AND SCOPE



- Capacity assessments July - December 2006, Vulindlela analyses of the Departments of Minerals and Energy, Agriculture and provincial economic departments- highlighted issues relating to terminations, recruitment and retention.
- The G&A Cluster consequently requested the DPSA to
  - investigate the reasons for terminations in the public service and
  - review amongst others the practice of exit interviews.

# METHODOLOGY

- Reasons for terminations in the public service investigated for a period of one year from 1 April 2006 to 31 March 2007
- Source of data
  - Vulindlela database
  - Supplemented by information gathered from departments through a research questionnaire. Completed forms
    - Posted, faxed and emailed
    - Completed electronically on website

# FINDINGS ON THE REASONS FOR TERMINATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE



- Vulindlela Information
  - different categories of employer and employee terminations
  - employees' profiles in terms of race, gender, disability, salary level and occupational category
  
- In terms of the Vulindlela data
  - 62% of terminations due to expiry of fixed term contracts
  - 20% of all terminations due to resignations
  - 11% of all terminations due to death and retirement
  - Transfers within the public service not reflected
  - Employees reasons for resignation not available
  
- Research Questionnaire sample:
  - 85 departments –
    - 59% of the total number of national and provincial departments and provincial administrations
    - employing more than 43% of the total number of employees in the public service.

# FINDINGS ON THE REASONS FOR TERMINATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE cont

- In terms of data extracted through the research questionnaire:
  - at least 2% of the total number of employees employed transferred within the public service
    - 64% promotions to higher posts
    - 30% laterally transferred either at the request of the employee or in the public interest.
  - Information on the employee's reasons only available from completed questionnaires
    - Nearly 44% of employees leave for better remuneration or service benefits
    - Opportunities for achieving personal growth and career development contribute to at least 20% of the employees' reasons for termination.
    - In at least 21% of the departments who indicated that reasons for terminations were available, financial considerations were not the main reasons for employee terminations.

# FINDINGS ON THE REASONS FOR TERMINATIONS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE cont

EMPLOYEE REASONS FOR TERMINATION	TOTAL	% OF TOTAL
Financial considerations/Promotion	1 975	43.8%
Reason/s not given	1 271	28.2%
Personal aspirations	474	10.5%
Career development	431	9.6%
Relocation	155	3.5%
Leadership and management style of senior management	120	2.7%
Working environment	81	1.8%
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>4507</b>	<b>100%</b>

# FINDINGS ON THE PRACTICE OF EXIT INTERVIEWS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE



- Management of terminations and exit interviews decentralised - largely prerogative of departments.
- Although, Regulation VII G.2 of the PSR requires EAs to record the reasons for resignation, no information capturing the reasons or outcomes of exit interviews is available.
- According to the research sample
  - Only 68% of departments currently conduct exit interviews
  - However, departments unanimously support the practice of exit interviews
    - 87% of departments surveyed - exit interviews must be conducted for all terminations and categories of employees
    - 12% believed that interviews limited to certain categories of terminations and occupational categories.
- Benefits for organisation emphasised – receiving objective feedback for development of retention strategies, HR planning, as well as ensuring knowledge transfer.
- No uniformity in the content of exit interviews, save for Gauteng. Templates vary based on departmental specific information needs

# FINDINGS ON THE PRACTICE OF EXIT INTERVIEWS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

## cont



- Manner in which exit interviews carried out has direct impact on quality of information received.
  - Interviewer should be independent, objective and suitably trained
  - Confidentiality must be maintained
  - Importance of carefully planned exit interviews, employees must submit voluntarily to process **NB** about 28% of employees interviewed did not give any reasons for leaving
- Standardised template not recommended. Template must integrate all aspects including human resource planning and retention strategies of a department.
- Capacity must be developed to institutionalise exit interview procedures.

# CABINET DECISION

## JULY 2007

---

- That the practice of exit interviews be reinstated by departments

# PROPOSAL FOR INSTITUTIONALIZING THE PRACTICE OF EXIT INTERVIEWS



- Regulation VII G.2 of Chapter 1 of the PSR, 2001 - EA shall prescribe the manner in which an employee shall submit her or his resignation and shall record the reasons given by the employee for her or his resignation
- The legislative framework already makes provision for the relevant executing authority to record the employees' reasons for termination, BUT only 65% of departments sampled reported that such information was available
- the Minister for Public Service and Administration must therefore
  - issue a directive in terms of section 3(3)(e) of the Public Service Act, 1994 to elucidate the reporting requirements under Regulation VII G.2 of Chapter 1 of the Public Service Regulations, 2001 or
  - amend the PSR as follows by the substitution for regulation G. 2.2 of Part VII of Chapter 1 thereof, of the following regulation:  
"An executing authority shall prior to the employee's exit conduct an interview with the employee and record as a minimum the reasons given by the employee for her or his resignation."

# PROPOSAL FOR INSTITUTIONALISING THE PRACTICE OF EXIT INTERVIEWS

- Note that to be held PRIOR to exit, as difficult to secure former employee's attendance
- Departments to align with other HR planning, recruitment and retention strategies/initiatives-
  - assess and develop working environment, organisational culture, leadership and management approach, as well as work processes and systems
  - identify opportunities for employee development and
  - knowledge transfer
- The template for exit interviews deliberately not prescribed as it will fail to address the unique human resource planning and retention strategies of a department. Exit interviews must integrate all these aspects to ensure an efficient and holistic process.
- Nature of exit interviews directly impacts on quality of information obtained-
  - Interviewer should be independent, objective and suitably trained
  - Confidentiality must be maintained
- Departments must develop the capacity to institutionalise these exit interview procedures.

# STEERING COMMITTEE COMMENTS ON AMENDMENT OR DIRECTIVE

---



COMMENTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS?

**Siyabonga/Ri a livhuwa/  
Re a leboga/Dankie/Thank you**