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**TO ALL HEADS OF NATIONAL/PROVINCIAL DEPARTMENTS AND
PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS**

**IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL VETTING STRATEGY IN THE
PUBLIC SERVICE**

1. The purpose of this circular is to inform departments of-
 - 1.1 the National Vetting Strategy approved by Cabinet;
 - 1.2 matters concerning the implementation of the Strategy; and
 - 1.3 a directive issued by the Minister for the Public Service and Administration in respect of the verification of an applicant's personal details, educational qualifications, etc for purposes of employment in the Public Service.

NATIONAL VETTING STRATEGY APPROVED BY CABINET

2. Public Service employees are continuously at risk of being targeted for acts of espionage, sabotage, subversion, corruption and a range of other criminal and unconstitutional activities. It is consequently imperative that adequate processes concerning the screening and security vetting of candidates and employees be put in place.
3. The National Strategic Intelligence Act (Act 39 of 1994) mandates the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) to undertake the security vetting of all applicants, employees and service providers to Organs of State that will have access to classified information. The NIA is in terms of the existing framework also involved in the screening of individuals for purposes other than determining the security competency of an individual, namely the verification of an applicant's personal details, educational qualifications, etc for purposes of determining the suitability of a person for employment in the Public Service.

4. Following a study undertaken by the NIA, a National Vetting Strategy was formulated that inter alia addresses the needs of the State to determine the suitability of persons for employment as well as their security competency. The relevant Strategy was approved by Cabinet during December 2006 and it entails, besides a range of other interventions which will be attended to by the NIA, the following human resource management-related interventions:
 - 4.1 The implementation of personnel suitability checks (PSCs) in respect of all candidates selected for appointment or deployment to a post.
 - 4.2 The establishment of vetting fieldwork units (VFUs) in selected departments. A total of 13 departments have been earmarked for the establishment of VFUs during the 2007-2011 MTEF period.
5. Detail about the interventions and their implementation appear below.

PERSONNEL SUITABILITY CHECKS (PSCs)

6. In line with the approved Strategy, the Minister for the Public Service and Administration has in terms of section 3(3)(e) of the Public Service Act, 1994 issued the directive at Annexure A to supplement the Public Service Regulations 2001, Chapter 1, part VII D.8(a) that deals with the verification of a candidate's information prior to appointment or the filling of a post. The directive takes effect on 1 January 2008.
7. The NIA will assist departments to conduct criminal record checks and citizenship verifications, as well as to establish their own databases regarding financial/asset record checks and qualification/study verifications. Departments should also note the following in this regard:
 - 7.1 The South African Qualifications Authority can be approached to evaluate foreign qualifications.
 - 7.2 The Department of Public Service and Administration will explore the feasibility of establishing a database of approved service providers that can be approached to undertake financial/asset record checks as well as qualification/study record and previous employment verifications.
8. Depending on a department's existing verification process, the implementation of the aforementioned directive may have a cost implication. In such an instance, departments are required to cover any cost implications through the reprioritization of their baseline budgets for the MTEF cycle.
9. For purposes of properly developing capacity within departments to undertake the required verifications, the NIA will provide training to

departments. A workshop will as soon as possible be scheduled for this purpose and further detail in this regard will in due course be made available.

ESTABLISHMENT OF VETTING FIELDWORK UNITS (VFUs)

10. The approved Strategy calls for the establishment of VFUs in selected departments. Vetting officers trained by the NIA will staff the VFUs. The latter will be responsible for the collection of fieldwork information, whilst the evaluation of the collected information as well as the issuing/denial of security clearances, will be done by the NIA.
11. The establishment of VFUs within departments will take place on a selective basis and will under the auspices of the NIA, be phased in on the following basis:
 - 11.1 2007/08 financial year:
 - Department of Home Affairs
 - Department of Minerals and Energy
 - Department of Trade and Industry
 - Department of Correctional Services
 - 11.2 Rest of the MTEF period:
 - Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
 - Department of Foreign Affairs
 - Department of Justice and Constitutional Development
 - Department of Water Affairs and Forestry
 - National Department of Agriculture
 - National Department of Health
 - National Department of Land Affairs
 - National Department of Public Works
 - National Treasury
12. The Department of Public Service and Administration has conducted an investigation in respect of appropriate job descriptions, post levels and a structure for the VFUs and will assist departments in the establishment of the VFUs. A separate letter will be addressed to those departments that have been earmarked for the establishment of VFUs.
13. As regards the staffing of the VFUs, the relevant departments should approach the NIA to assist with the advertising of the posts and the short-listing of candidates. This should be done in time to allow the NIA to finalize the vetting and the training of the selected candidates in time.

Wm Pretorius
 DIRECTOR-GENERAL

DATE: 23/11/07

ANNEXURE A



**DIRECTIVE TO DETERMINE WHICH AREAS MUST BE COVERED
WHEN DOING VERIFICATIONS ON APPOINTMENT IN THE
PUBLIC SERVICE**

**ISSUED BY THE MINISTER FOR THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND
ADMINISTRATION**

1. AUTHORISATION

This directive is issued in terms of section 3(3)(e) of the Public Service Act, 1994, as amended, by the Minister for the Public Service and Administration.

2. VERIFICATION ON APPOINTMENT

The verification prescribed under Part VII D.8(a) of Chapter 1 of the Public Service Regulations, 2001 as amended, shall with effect from 1 January 2008 cover at least the following:

- (a) Criminal record checks;
- (b) Citizenship verification;
- (c) Financial/asset record checks;
- (d) Qualification/Study verification; and
- (e) Previous employment verification (Reference checks).