



the dpsa

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TO HEADS OF NATIONAL DEPARTMENTS AND GOVERNMENT COMPONENTS

STRATEGY TO REDUCE THE RECRUITMENT PERIOD AND THE VACANCY RATE IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PURPOSE

1. The purpose of this circular is to-
 - 1.1 apprise departments of the above-mentioned Strategy that the Minister for the Public Service and Administration has approved; and
 - 1.2 inform departments of their roles and responsibilities in regard to the execution of the Strategy.

BACKGROUND

2. As you are aware, Government adopted 12 outcomes as a key focus of work between 2010 and 2014. Each outcome has specific measurable outputs with targets. The outputs are linked to a set of activities that will assist to achieve the targets and the realisation of the outcome. Each of the 12 outcomes has a Delivery Agreement which, in most cases, involves all three spheres of government and a range of partners outside government. Combined, these agreements reflect government's delivery and implementation plans for its foremost priorities.
3. The Minister for the Public Service and Administration is the custodian of the Delivery Agreement for outcome 12 (An efficient, effective and development oriented public service and an empowered, fair and inclusive citizenship) that focuses on the entire Public Service across the spheres of government. Outcome 12 consists of four outputs and of these, Output 2 (Human resource management and development) deals with matters related to human resource management and development; in particular with the aim to improve areas that currently contributes to inadequate service delivery. Output 2 comprises the following sub-outputs:

Staatsdiens en Administrasie . Ditirelo tsa Puso le Tsamaiso . Ditshebeltso tsa Mmuso le Tsamaiso . uMnyango wemiSebenzi kaHulumeni nokuPhata

Muhasho wa Tshumelo ya Muvuso na Vhulanguli . Kgoro ya Ditirelo tsa Mmušo . Ndzawulo ya Vutirela-Mfumo na Valawuri

LiTiko le Tebasebenti baHulumende nekuPhatsa . ISebe leNkonzo kaRhulumente noLawulo . UmNyango wemiSebenzi kaRhumende nokuPhata

- 3.1 Performance development, performance agreements and assessment
- 3.2 Recruitment, retention and career pathing
- 3.3 Discipline
- 3.4 Human resource planning, skills development and cadre development

4. In respect of the sub-output referred to in paragraph 3.2 above (Recruitment, retention and career pathing); the Minister for the Public Service and Administration has approved a Strategy that provides for high level interventions to enable departments (including the national departments responsible for the "sector" domains of education, defence, correctional services and police) and government components to improve their staffing levels by-

4.1 reducing by 31 March 2014, the period it takes to fill vacant posts to at least 6 months (4 months after being advertised) through-

- (a) improvements in their departmental processes and timelines for recruitment, selection and appointment;
- (b) special recruitment measures which the Minister for the Public Service and Administration will, where proved necessary, institute for identified categories of staff or occupations; and

4.2 reducing by 31 March 2014, their vacancy rates to at least 10% through-

- (a) implementing special recruitment measures (as instituted by the MPSA) for identified categories of staff or occupations;
- (b) improving the practice of career management to assist departmental HR practitioners and line managers to integrate other relevant and enabling human resource management practices to enhance staff development and retention; and
- (c) amendments instituted by the Minister for the Public Service and Administration to the current prescripts on recruitment to enhance staff recruitment.

ROLL-OUT OF THE STRATEGY

5. The Strategy serves in essence as a key driver to set a number of processes in motion to achieve the aforementioned targets. These processes are linked to the following five interventions provided for in the Strategy:

5.1 **Intervention 1: Review the current regulatory framework on recruitment and the filling of vacant posts**

- (a) This intervention will, flowing from previous research findings and the challenges experienced currently by departments, initiate various reviews of the regulatory framework on recruitment and selection in order to either streamline/shorten the recruitment time or to improve the outcomes (in terms of the quality, suitability and competence of selected candidates) of the selection process.

- (b) The following reviews will be undertaken under this intervention:
- (i) Improve the information to be provided in advertisements on required functional competencies.
 - (ii) Expand the criteria according to which selection panels are to assess candidates for appointments at salary level 9 and higher to include certain behavioural elements:
 - (iii) Improve decision-making on the potential and suitability of probationers for continued employment by means of certain criteria.
 - (iv) Improve the management of people with disabilities.
 - (v) Review the prescripts and methodologies pertaining to the recruitment of heads of departments to improve and streamline the process.
 - (vi) Provide that "talent pools" can be created and used for the filling of vacant posts for a predetermined period without advertising such vacancies as and when they arise.
 - (vii) Review the current restriction on the re-employment of former employees who left employment by means of severance packages.
- (c) The aforementioned work will be undertaken by the DPSA and will commence during the 2012/13 financial year. The DPSA will, where appropriate, consult departments and government components on the envisaged reviews.

5.2 **Intervention 2: Establish and maintain credible information on vacancy rates and time to fill vacancies in the Public Service**

- (a) The availability of reliable data on vacancy trends and recruitment times are key to ensure proper oversight, monitoring and assessment of the progress made towards the targets set out in paragraph 4 above. In this respect, the DPSA's project that seeks to enhance the accuracy of PERSAL data, is of paramount importance.
- (b) The DPSA will at regular intervals extract and analyse data from PERSAL to track the progress made by departments in relation to the targets set in the Strategy.

5.3 **Intervention 3: Introduce flexible recruitment methodologies for identified categories of staff and occupations**

- (a) The information acquired via intervention 2 will be used to identify categories of staff and occupations where the challenges experienced in the filling of vacancies call for special recruitment initiatives such as a deviation from or a limitation of the current advertising approach.
- (b) Apart from such forms of redress, attention will also be given to the branding of the Public Service as an employer of choice; the aim being to create an environment conducive to recruiting, especially for scarce occupations.
- (c) As this intervention deals in the main with matters at a policy level, its roll-out will be undertaken by the DPSA.

5.4 Intervention 4: Enhancing the practice of career management in the Public Service

- (a) The proper execution of career management within organisations has a strong “carry-through” effect in the area of staff retention and thus turnover rates, vacancy rates as well as the availability of suitable staff for upward mobility.
- (b) Currently, much needs to be done to improve career management in the Public Service and to this end; the DPSA will in due course issue a Guide on the practice of career management. The Guide is intended to assist departments to implement sound career management practices and strengthen the ability to retain staff, thereby stabilizing if not improving vacancy trends.
- (c) The DPSA will, where necessary, render support to departments on the implementation of the Guide.

5.5 Intervention 5: Enhance recruitment skills through training provided by PALAMA

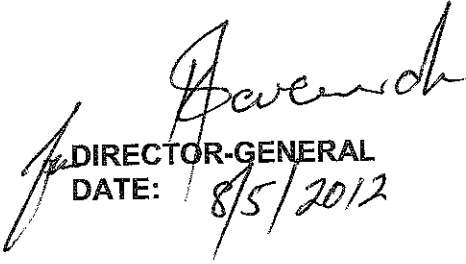
- (a) The PALAMA will prioritise training in the following areas:
 - (i) Orientation on HRM strategic frameworks
 - (ii) Recruitment and Selection in the Public Service
 - (iii) Strategic HR planning for the achievement of organisational results
 - (iv) Disability Management in the Public Service
 - (v) Vetting of staff before appointment
 - (vi) HR Policy Development
- (b) Training programmes in respect of the first four areas are already available and training on vetting is earmarked to commence in the 2013/14 financial year.
- (c) Since human resource development is a departmental competence, departments are expected to assess the developmental needs of their human resource practitioners and line managers and where necessary, enrol such employees for the aforementioned training programmes.
- (d) The DPSA will monitor the level of departments’ participation in the training.

6. It is of paramount importance that departments, in particular their management cadres and human resource components; institutionalize the targets set by the Strategy through their planning processes. This should, as a minimum, entail the following:

- 6.1 Regular assessments of current vacancy levels and turnaround times to fill posts in the Department.
- 6.2 Institution of departmental interventions to address shortfalls as benchmarked with the targets set by the Strategy.
- 6.3 Locating an oversight responsibility within the Department to monitor and report on the implementation and efficacy of the departmental interventions.

7. The DPSA will in due course engage departments on the aforementioned interventions. For this purpose and further liaison with your Department in future, kindly provide the contact particulars of the official in your Department that will be responsible for the oversight responsibility suggested in paragraph 6.3, to Mr Pelser whose contact details appear above within 14 days from the date of this letter.

8. Your co-operation in the implementation and further roll-out of the various interventions will be highly appreciated.


DIRECTOR-GENERAL
DATE: 8/5/2012