



the dpsa

Department:
Public Service and Administration
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

**REPORT SUBMITTED TO PARTICIPATING
DEPARTMENTS ON PHASE ONE OF HR CONNECT**

20 FEBRUARY 2008

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1 PURPOSE

To provide a detailed report to participating departments on the implementation of the Skills Database (HR CONNECT Phase 1) in terms of the following:

- a) Background
- b) The roll-out (implementation of Phase 1) of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) Human Resources Management Information System (HRMIS) to 20 selected departments,
- c) Challenges experienced
- d) Way forward.

2. INTRODUCTION

The skills database has its origins in two different yet convergent streams:

- ❖ In January 2005, the Cabinet Lekgotla required of FOSAD (the Forum for Directors-General) to prepare a document reporting on the capacity of the organs of state to deliver on the policies already developed. The **dplg** was tasked to investigate the ability of the developmental local government to deliver on the developed policies while the Department of Public Service and Administration were to determine the capacity in the remainder of government.
- ❖ At the same time the re-certificated PSETA required an Integrated Management Information System (MIS) that would assist it in accurate decision making, and thereby allow it to effectively facilitate skills development in the public sector.

The PSETA in partnership with the DPSA developed a Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS), which incorporates functionality essential for conducting a skills audit and reporting on the skills capacity of each government department as well as the broader public service.

The implementation of the database in terms of targeted deployment into the public service was approved in November 2006 and commenced in March 2007.

This approach was unique in that the system was developed based on the information required, rather than the traditional method of first collecting data and then either building a system to hold it, or force fitting information into a predefined system.

HR CONNECT was different from other skills audits and databases in that it was:

- **The first time Government departments have worked together on a cross-government skills agenda;**
- **A significant move towards a Government demand-led approach;**
- **Strong framework for delivery in which the Government and its agencies needed to work together ;**

- **Supported by determination underpinned by political and legal mandates to deliver on a demanding change agenda.**

3. BACKGROUND

The Director General approved the customization and pilot of the PSETA MIS, which was to ensure that the PSETA met its legislative requirements in terms of the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) Act and the Skills Development Act of the Department of Labour (DoL), as well as to ensure that the DPSA Human Resource and Development) HRD component would be able to report on the skills base in each department with a view to understanding the skill levels, in relation to the required posts, occupations and job profiles. A skills database was seen as the mechanism necessary to facilitate human resources reporting and to allow for ongoing updates of public sector skills at a national and provincial level.

The database was seen as the first step towards ensuring that there was accurate and consistent information, derived through skills audits, from which departments could analyse, evaluate, report, forecast, model and plan in advance for skills needs within their own areas and for government in general.

During the process of awarding the tender, the Department of Labour had made substantial progress with the Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO), which was seen as a critical element in terms of arriving at a common frame of reference for occupations. This approach would ensure that the information on the skills supply and shortages in the private and public service could be meaningfully aggregated and disaggregated for data mining purposes.

Informed by the above and the need to accelerate the audit process and also taking cognisance of lessons learned during the pilots in 2005 and 2006; necessitated the reconceptualisation of entire Skills Database Project, under guidance of the DDG: HRM&D. The result was that HR CONNECT was to be rolled out in a phased approach over the next two to three years, an accelerated plan, a revised project charter and phased approach as part of the change management and re-branding for successful project execution. A phased approach was seen as instrumental in gradually acclimatising employees to the process whilst not interrupting operations. In addition, such an approach ensured that implementation was able to deal with ongoing changes in employee information in a sustainable manner over time, rather than taking a “snapshot” of the employees in an organisation and then providing a report, which would in effect be outdated since the organisation has moved on.

The other advantage of the phased approach was the substantial shift away from large, voluminous forms, employee frustration and irritation, survey and audit fatigue since some departments had already done Human Resources audits before, prior to HR Connect.

This approach though not without its challenges, has proved successful. In terms of the project plan all aspects have thus far been completed.

The following table depicts the phased rollout of the complete project, with associated deliverables:

Phase	Competence Profile		Comments
	Individual	Job/Post	
One	Bio data Confirmed Formal Qualifications Experience.	Job mapped to OFO 5 th Level. Qualification Professional Registration Experience.	The information will be generated by means of Survey forms for individuals and Workgroups for Job profiles.
Two	Details regarding qualifications obtained Professional Registrations.	Skills and knowledge bases associated with a job, defined in relation to Performance Levels Details regarding qualifications.	This phase falls outside the scope of this Charter.
Three	Assessment of Individuals to determine proficiency levels for specific skills and knowledge bases.	Determine proficiency levels for skills associated with specific posts.	This phase is aimed at consolidating the competence profile of employees and posts to ensure effective management of Human Capital.

3.1 PHASE ONE OVERVIEW

HR CONNECT was established to manage the level of congruence between the competence profile of an employee and that of the post the individual occupies. Assisting individuals to state their qualifications and experience was the first step in this direction. The second step was defining job and ultimately post profiles.

• OBJECTIVES

The overall objectives of the project were to:

- centralise the management of Human Capital by means of a web-based HRIS that could manage and report on the development of Human Capital in the Public Service;
- enable participating Government Departments to manage their employees' training plans on a centralised HRIS and generate Department specific reports such a Workplace Skills Plans and Training Reports;
- generate basic Personal Development Plans, based on individually sourced qualification and experience data, for each employee in the identified departments;

- compile job profiles for all posts in the respective Departments, linked to specific Department organogrammes.

• PARTICIPATING DEPARTMENTS

The twenty one participating Departments were identified by the dpsa. The Companies and Intellectual Properties Registration Office (CIPRO) indicated that it wished to join and would self-fund its participation and was subsequently included. This was a good spread of national and provincial departments and a public entity.

• DELIVERABLES

Deliverables in terms of the data of employees and employers respectively were;

- Confirmation of Bio data extracted from PERSAL,
- Collection of Formal Qualification information in terms National Qualification Framework(NQF) Levels and NQF Learning Fields,
- Collection of employee Experience in terms of the eight occupational categories in the OFO,
- Collection and mapping of the Organogramme of the organisation
- Mapping each Job in an organisation to 5th Level of the OFO,
- Identifying and the Qualification requirements for the jobs,
- Identifying the Professional Registration necessary for certain jobs,
- Identifying the Experience required for the job

• TIME FRAMES

Phase One was initiated in May 2007, and targeted for completion by September 2007. Departments were required to distribute and collect all employee information via a survey form by the 20th of June 2007.

• METHODOLOGY

Effective communication and co-ordination was pivotal for a project of this magnitude, especially if the three-month time frame had to be met. HR CONNECT – “All we can be” & “together Connecting Skills” has been established by DPSA as the communication vehicle to ensure buy-in from the various Departments.

HR CONNECT participation was introduced and augmented by means of the following processes:

- Branding through the HR Connect Banners, Posters, Slides and dedicated email address: hrconnect@dpsa.gov.za
- Formal Letters of introduction from DPSA to each of the participating Departments clearly delineating:
 - the mandated parameters of HR CONNECT and IT Aware’s role in establishing HR CONNECT; and

- the responsibilities of each Department as active participants, which included mandating representatives to participate in the HR CONNECT rollout process.
- Piloting the survey forms with 20 respondents within dpsa, comprising four employees at each of the following levels :
 - Senior Managers
 - Middle Managers
 - Support Personnel
 - Specialists
 - Elementary Workers
- An Introductory Workshop, where all mandated representatives (at least four per Department) were introduced to the project, to clarify responsibilities and initiate the individual data collection process for each Department.
- Workshops (consisting of the Department representatives) to define the Job profiles of the participating Departments.

● THE SURVEY FORMS

- Informed by lessons of the pilot wherein, electronic survey forms were poorly received, had a dismal (less than 10%) return rate and reflected an initial overestimation of the IT capability and understanding of Public Service employees of the electronic survey form.
- A HR CONNECT Individual Profile Form was developed; this was commensurate with similar large scale surveys and information requests undertaken by STATSSA and SARS.
- A two page survey form was designed and compiled to generate the following data per individual per organisation:
 - Confirmation of PERSAL number, Name and Surname.
 - Qualifications the individual has obtained, including Driving Licences, Technical Training and highest school qualification.
 - Work experience, expressed in terms of the sub-major level of the OFO. Set timeframes will be used to indicate the total period of experience.
- A User Guide and accompanying Power Point Presentation, containing
 - definitions of each category of experience; and
 - qualification examples, linked to study fields were distributed with the Survey form to help individuals identify their relevant field of experience and qualifications.
- The HR CONNECT Individual Survey Form was introduced to all Departments at the Introductory Workshop. Department representatives were responsible for distributing the Individual Survey Forms to all employees and were required to also manage the collection and verification of the forms. IT Aware would capture the data contained in the forms on the HRIS

database. Regular feedback on submission rates would be made available to departments

- **Job Competence Profile**

The job profiles of the participating Departments were generated by means of three scheduled workshops, comprising of representatives from DPSA and each of the identified Departments. Representatives were divided in four task teams, each responsible for a collection of jobs, in their departments that were to be profiled. IT Aware facilitated the workshops and captured all generated information onto the HRIS database. Representatives from the various Departments were guided to achieve the following objectives:

- Allocate (Introductory Workshop) an equal amount of jobs to each task team;
- Map identified jobs to the Organising Framework for Occupations;
- Define (Task Teams) the generic Job Competence Profiles (job profile for every occupation identified) in terms of the following:
 - Definition of the Job related to the Occupation
 - Possible Hazardous Conditions associated with the Job
 - Equipment required performing the Job
 - Physical Demands associated with the Job
 - Security Classification
 - Tasks relating to Job (the tasks could inform Key Performance Areas of a post)
 - Qualifications
 - Experience
 - Physical Requirements
 - Professional Registration Requirements

IT Aware collated and updated all inputs on a central database, preventing duplication of any reference data that was generated. It was envisaged that this would enable Task Teams to use the defined skills and knowledge reference data to define their allocated occupations' competence profile by electing the skill/knowledge and the minimum proficiency level.

- **SKILLS TRANSFER**

Interaction in the Task Teams and workshops was focused on building an understanding of the dynamic elements required to manage Human Capital. The ultimate aim was to ensure the participants were able to maintain the data generated during this process, well after the project has closed.

Central to this approach was the commitment by departments to allocate the necessary resources and expertise to the project.

Since the use of the Organising Framework of Occupations (OFO) to define Posts and People profiles is new to the South African context a short period of “hand-holding” was necessary, before participants could function independently.

3.2 PRELIMINARY HR CONNECT EXPERIENCES

During the project initiation aspect of Phase One, through the engagement with departments, it soon became apparent that:

- **In nearly every instance skills audits are:**
 - Outsourced due to little or no local institutional capacity.
 - Reliant on service provider dependency models for implementation, which are invariably unsustainable without the service provider.
 - Driven by service provider “tried and tested” methodologies, with departments seldom having the knowledge or control of their own requirements.
 - Based on diverse and inconsistent criteria and parameters
 - Static and rarely have real-time relevance.
 - Configured in terms of pre-designed Commercial of the Shelf (COTS) system/database design and functionality.
 - Based on insular and silo assumptions of posts, job profiles, qualifications, experience and competencies with almost no thought to the Macro perspective of the State or inter provincial, inter departmental and inter spherical movement of human capital.

In addition, the following were observed:

- **Multiple HR Models:** In the majority of cases there is no common approach to HR service delivery across or within the locations in departments. The level of decentralization increases cost, complexity, and risk.
- **Data Management:** Data definitions are not consistent across departments, and data entry/management is diffused, with almost no quality assurance measures leading to errors and a lack of integrity
- **Compliance/Reporting:** Process and data issues limit compliance and reporting for key policies and procedures. It is difficult from both a business and technology perspective to obtain accurate reports across the system.
- **Service Quality:** Service quality is inconsistent, redundant, costly, complex and inversely proportional to the investments made over time.
- **Scalability:** Some locations are better prepared for adopting standard services than others.

Thus as a whole, differentiated audit methodologies and systems present the following problems:

- **Silo functioning, functional duplication and technological proliferation that impacts negatively on the cost-effective spending of public funds**
- **Difficulties in the implementation of uniform norms and standards across specification criteria, methodologies, systems and operations**
- **Poor inherent methodological and systems interoperability and data non-aggregatability seriously compromises operational integrity and the generation of management and decision support information**
- **Diverse multiple systems each on its independent evolutionary path with capabilities ranging from inadequate to functional.**

This foregrounds a point made by the futurist Alvin Toffler:

“Bureaucratic institutions in the private and public sector break up knowledge and its components, storing and processing them in separate compartments or ‘stovepipes’. Over time, these stovepipes multiply, as ever-more narrow specialization increases the number of uncrossable boundaries. This makes it extremely difficult to cope with fast changing new problems requiring knowledge that falls beyond artificial departmental borders.

To complicate matters, guarding each stovepipe is an executive whose power is enhanced by control over data, information and knowledge, and who has little incentive to share it.

Yet as industrial-age boundaries break down, it is only by sharing that important problems can be solved. ” (Alvin Toffler: Rothman Management Magazine 08/2007)

In an era of globalisation, microwave and other rapidly developing technologies his analogy of “stovepipes” starkly accentuates the archaic yet pervasive modalities in the public service.

4. PROGRESS REPORT HR CONNECT PHASE ONE

The success around high return rates of survey forms and critical engagement about job and occupational profiles could have only been achieved through the commitment and dedication of the representatives of the participating departments. Contrary to the common perception that most public servants are lazy and uncommitted, most of the teams working in the HR Connect project displayed a high level of commitment and support to the project, and each other. This was evident through the meeting of strict deadlines, high quality of work and submission of information sometimes at 10 pm or later on a week nights and over the week ends.

4.1 Introductory HR Connect Workshops

A workshop to introduce HR CONNECT to the participating Departments was held on the 2nd of May 2007. Four of the five departments that were unable to attend the first workshop were accommodated in a second workshop held on 9 May 2007 and the last department on the 11 May 2007. All media used during the Workshop was made available to the representatives on CDs. The HR CONNECT posters were distributed after the workshop. During the workshop various strategies to assist departments to manage the process were discussed and shared. These were:

- The identification of an Internal HR Connect Champion.
- The establishment of internal working groups, consisting of Organisational Development, HRM&D, PERSAL Administration and Skills development structures within the departments.
- Capacitation of field teams to distribute, communicate and collect information for HR Connect.
- A departmental communication strategy around HR Connect.

At all times it was clearly communicated to departments that the target was a 100% return rate.

4.2 HR Connect Communication:

In an effort to promote successful implementation of the project in addition to the numerous additional one-on-one meetings and workshops held with departments in terms of capacity development, presentations were made to HR Components, and management structures, of the following:

- DoJ&CD (DDG's and SMS)
- DTI (DG)
- The Presidency (HR Component)
- KZN: OTP (HRD Forum)
- WC: OTP (HR Forum)
- DPE (HR Component)
- Dept. of Home Affairs (HR Component)
- SAMDI (DG)
- Education (persal)
- DFA (HR)
- STATSSA (Skills Development Practitioners)
- PSETA (Board)

Circulating draft reports for input into the reporting cycle of the Programme of Action (POA) ensured transparency and effectively communicated the importance of the project.

4.3 THE HR CONNECT PERSONAL SURVEY FORM

The Personal Survey Forms and supporting Information Brochures' content and use were confirmed and demonstrated at the workshops, with a mandate

to proceed with the printing and distribution of the documentation. A monthly report on activities and progress is presented below:

May 2007

Forty Thousand (40 000) Personal Survey Forms and Information Brochures were printed. Departments were given a choice as to whether they wanted to have unique Personal Survey Forms, with employees' PERSAL number, surname and initials printed or blank forms, both of which were numbered sequentially and uniquely per department for tracking and verification purposes.

The documentation was prepared and delivered to all the Departments, except the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development (DoJ&CD). At the meeting of the 11th May 2007, Justice indicated that due to the size and geographical spread of the department, they would prefer to distribute the survey form electronically through their electronic in house communication system. This required a separate electronic process to be established to accommodate DoJ&CD. An electronic format was developed. A further meeting with Justice was held on 21 May 2007 to finalise the process for implementation, at which electronic copies of the documentation in support of their request was made available. However, upon implementation it was ascertained that their IT capacity did not reach all employees, at certain nodal points forms had to be reprinted and delivered by hand.

The Department of Labour initially requested personalized forms and then due to logistical reasons requested blank forms. Additional forms were printed for the DoL. The roll out in the DoL was further complicated by the pending separation of the Unemployment Insurance Fund (UIF) form DoL.

June 2007

Based on the volume of emails received at the HR Connect email address and telephone inquiries received by the CD: HRP, it was evident that some departments had not followed through on their obligations in terms of a localised communication strategy. Forms were handed out to staff without the necessary communication and assistance in understanding what information was required. In certain cases the point of the exercise was completely missed as distribution and completion of forms was seen as the key outcome – let alone the quality of the information. This is also confirmed by the large volume of reprinted forms (approximately **10 000**).

In an effort to improve the quality of information whilst simultaneously ascertaining the level of progress within departments, departments were requested to report on survey form distribution and collection. In this manner departments got to commit to the actions and targets they reported on. By the 25th of June 2007, we had received only 82% of the Status Reports, which increased to 95% by 9 July 2007. Only one department that did not submit a status report.

Furthermore, The DFA only commenced the project on 1 June 2007, this delayed implementation, in the DFA, was due to their own the investigations on how best to leverage the information already obtained through their skills audit process conducted in 2005 and their Skills Bank system as well as their concern that they had just emerged from an audit and may experience audit and survey fatigue. After an internal investigation, they decided to commence HR Connect – Although this was a month later than other participating departments, they had been participating in the job profiling exercise prior to this decision.

July 2007

Although the due date for the submission of survey forms was the 20th of June 2007, most departments were unable to meet it in terms of either time or a 100% return. In terms of the scale of the audit it was important to remain true to the outcome of the audit process, which was the collection of reliable and valid data, rather than to stringently adhere to the outputs and deadlines. Subsequently, the date for submission was extended to 19th July 2007 and 20th July 2007 for DFA (on request due to the number of staff at foreign missions).

During this period DOJ&CD indicated that the judges, magistrates and prosecutors must be excluded from the process as they viewed themselves as autonomous and outside of the public service. It was agreed that DOJ&CD would deal with the matter internally.

During this time 16 departments had returned approximately 79% of all distributed forms. The Department of Home Affairs did not return any forms yet. On the 26th of July 2007 a composite report on returned surveys was presented to the participating departments. Additional survey forms were received and an extension to 3rd August 2007 was granted by request. The dpsa sent out fortnightly reminders to departments to continue collecting forms.

The public service strike action impacted negatively on return rates of questionnaires, the job profiling workshops as well as quality of data being received.

The continued extension of the submission date also meant that those departments with a high return rate had to wait for others slower departments. Valuable energy and momentum was lost.

September 2007

Ongoing receipt and data loading of submissions continued. By the 3rd August 2007 the returns for all participating departments was that 22 departments had returned approximately 79% of all distributed forms. Departments continued to request for additional blank forms. The requests for additional forms clearly reflected inadequate internal management of the distributed forms within departments and the management of PERSAL data. During this

period STATSSA requested that their original PERSAL count which included many contract workers that were part of the Community Census Survey, be revised to exclude these workers.

November 2007

By late November 2007, as a collective all the departments had returned approximately 79% of all distributed forms. The dpsa had received and captured 27 300 forms out of the revised target (excluding Judiciary) of approximately 34 800 distributed forms.

January 2008

It was decided that the last date for the submission of forms was the 31 January 2008, and that any forms submitted after this date would be captured as part of Phase 2 implementation. By the 29th of January, 27779 forms had been captured and processed. This figure excludes DOJ&CD and KZN information which will increase to about 28 100 bringing the return rate to approximately 82% by the end of February 2008. All of the information has been captured on the HRMIS. The latest Status report is attached.

4.4 JOB PROFILING:

Twelve (12) Task Group Meetings, totalling almost 300 person training days (PTD's), were facilitated between May and June 2007. The focus of the meetings were to clarify and train departments on the process of mapping unique Code of Remuneration (CORE) and Job Titles as they pertain to posts to the Organising Framework for Occupations (OFO). A PowerPoint presentation with animated depiction of the mapping process was provided to representatives to further clarify the process and assist them to independently conduct the mapping exercise as part of the skills transfer process.

Departments were provided with electronic tools to map the CORE and Job Titles to Occupations. Submissions had to be returned within the two weeks prior to the next meeting. Some Departments fell behind on this deadline, which had an adverse affect on interaction in the workgroups and the reliance and use of submitted data to normalise inputs as part of the bench marking and validation exercise with all participating departments.

The process of mapping Job Titles and PERSAL CORE titles to Occupations on the Organising Framework of Occupations was much more difficult than what was initially foreseen. The indiscriminate proliferation of combinations of Job Titles and PERSAL CORE titles was and remains an area for concern. There seems to be no consistency in the use and application, of especially CORE titles in Departments. This inconsistent use of the CORE, Job and Occupation Titles adversely affected the compilation and benchmarking group agreement of "generic" Job Profiles for the Public Service.

Sixteen (16) of the Departments submitted these profiles. Unfortunately only 75% of the profiles submitted were completed. The experience, learning fields and professional registration information was vital for Phase One of this project. Data received in these categories was used to normalise and complete the available data. This resulted in 92% (compared to the mentioned 75%) of profiles being populated. The normalised profiles were returned to Departments for validation. Only five Departments responded and a further four Departments of the six that have not submitted initial profiles used the normalised data to populate their profiles. The data received to date has been used to populate all related profiles. An update the compiled profiles will have to be done by Departments once the Management Information System has been activated with SITA

This activity has enabled HR Connect to map and rationalize almost 2879 combinations of Occupation Titles, PERSAL CORE Tiles and Job Titles, to 170 occupations on the Organising Framework of Occupations. *Furthermore, it has alerted and exposed participants to the consequences of incorrect and abusive practices of the CORE and PERSAL.*

4.5 ORGANOGRAMMES

Requirements regarding the submission of Department Organogrammes were also discussed with representatives, as the HRIS maps electronic organogrammes to people, posts, jobs and occupations. Additional separate meetings were held with 8 of the Departments to further clarify the process. A CD containing all relevant reference material and reporting documentation was given to each Department. Departments were requested to submit their approved organogrammes and mapped OFO-Core for job profiling on the 24th of May 2007.

By the 24th May 2007, only 50% of the departments had submitted either the mapping or the organogramme on time, with only 5 departments having submitted both. Some departments were unwilling to release their organogrammes. Although, all departments submitted their organogrammes by the end of June 2007, it was quickly evident that the required formats had not been followed and that very little could be used as schematics rather than “parent – child relationships” in terms of reporting lines were submitted. The key areas of concern were that:

- The majority of Departments found it fairly difficult to define their structure.
- The structure that was identified is that the organogram did not relate to PERSAL data.

On-site meetings and workshops were held with almost all the Departments to render support. These meetings whilst having added value to the process enhanced insight of participants in the Human Capital Development process, was unable to yield the requisite information and of the requisite quality. Preliminary analysis reflected that departments were in the majority of cases only able to submit the top 3 tiers of information in diagrammatic format, some displayed “floating or hanging structures” i.e. not linked to the reporting

structure, other had circular relationships and others could not do the mapping at all.

The extent of this problem was so severe that it forced the project team to reconsider the alignment of organogram with PERSAL be made a deliverable in Phase 2 of the HR CONNECT process.

The Job Profiling and Organogramme reflected the polarized, silo approach to HRM&D in some departments in that, in certain instances, the HR Connect representatives were unable to explain the PERSAL data, job titles, CORE Titles, Organisational Structures, etc.

4.6 WEB ENABLEMENT

The web enabled HRMIS was demonstrated to participating departments 26 July 2007.

The final web enablement of the system was completed in September 2007. Based on the interaction with departments including the job profiling and organogramme information additional customization was initiated and completed.

Procurement processes were initiated with SITA for the purchasing of Hardware and the Housing of the HR Connect HRMIS. This matter has subsequently been escalated to the OGCIO for fast tracking. It is envisaged that the system will be live by the end of this financial year.

The HRMIS, once populated with the requisite skills audit information, has the functionality to track and monitor all skills, knowledge, qualifications and experience in the public sector, and would be able to report on skills gaps between individuals and their posts and intervention training needed.

4.7 ADDITIONAL SUCCESSES:

In addition to meeting the deliverables the project has ensured:

- High return rate of survey forms (82%).
- High levels of interest and commitment by most participating departments.
- Other departments that are not part of the pilot have expressed an interest in being involved in full scale roll out.
- The circular issued by DPSA on the Cabinet Lekgotla decision of January 2007 is having the required effect and departments are now consulting with DPSA in terms of their skills audits and HR information system requirements.
- 6 new occupational titles were created and mapped for DoJ&CD, DTI, and DME, during the job profiling exercise.
- Based on the HR Connect data and PERSAL information, the DPSA was able to provide a Report on the ICT Capacity of the Public Service as input into the January 2008 Lekgotla.

- A formal relationship has been established with PERSAL, whereby any lessons learned in terms of data integrity from HR Connect will be shared.

5. CHALLENGES:

Key challenges experienced during the roll-out of Phase One are stated below.

5.1 Level of Representation

Whilst some departments sent a full team ranging from Senior Managers to operational and technical staff -others sent representatives that had very little or no background in defining the job or ultimately post profiles but were expected to participate in the task groups for the Department. Though the project is focused on building capacity a minimum level of expertise was assumed to ensure meaningful interaction. The inability to interrogate the required information had an impact on the quality of the final job profiles and ultimately affected timelines and benchmarking.

5.2 Management of Survey Profile Forms

The representatives were unable able to manage the efficient distribution and collation of Personal Survey Forms. In some instances it seems as if the forms are distributed without briefing the employees on the background and way to complete the forms. This had a detrimental effect on the return rate and quality of feedback as was evidenced by the errors on forms during capturing.

5.3 Management Buy-In and Support of the Process

There were constant requests by participants for the project team to engage with senior management to share information and convince them to secure buy-in to successfully implement the project. Buy-in from senior management in Departments seemed to be a major stumbling block in ensuring the success of HR CONNECT – representatives were often faced with senior managers who had not completed their forms

5.4 Other Skills Audits Processes

A few of the participating Departments were in the process of, or had already embarked on a similar skills audit process. The project team had to assist in seeking alignment with these processes to leverage gains for the project and the department. Meetings were convened with the HR Department of the Presidency to assist regarding the SAMDI appointment of a consultant to assist with Job Profiling against the CORE. The DTI had also, already commissioned a similar process with consultants.

On 18 June 2007, a DPSA Circular was issued to all Heads of Departments alerting them to the Cabinet Lekgotla Decision of 23 -25 January 2007 pertaining to skills audits and information. Whilst this was able to achieve the

desired effect of slowing down independent departmental skills audits, it had the unintended consequence of activating those departments that had not planned for audit, to suddenly decide to engage in skills audit processes. Nevertheless it provided a valuable opportunity to discuss key issues and capacitate departments.

5.5 Time Lines:

The tight time lines for the implementation of Phase One, though daunting were impacted on by the Public Service Strike. Participating departments rose to the challenge and often came up with innovative strategies to counter the time lost. The inability of departments to adhere to deadlines was a grave concern. The resulting extension of deadlines – had the negative impact of a loss of momentum and energy.

5.6 Non-Compliant Departments

Where departments proved to be a challenge in terms of participation, correspondence was issued to their DG's. If this failed to achieve the desired response a subsequent Ministerial intervention was initiated. The HR CONNECT project was not focused on providing a pre-defined Human Capital solution, but was meant to build on capacity already within Departments. Providing the departments with externally normalised job profiling data would thus serve no purpose.

6. WAY FORWARD

6.1 Time Frames

The Minister MPSA has indicated that Phases 2 and 3 must be completed by July 2008, before the Cabinet Lekgotla.

6.2 Communication

An HR Connect Project Steering Committee has been convened with the participating departments, on 20 February 2008, to close off Phase One, provide them with organisational profiles and to discuss the way forward.

7. CONCLUSION

The success of the project can only be attributed to the hard work and diligence of departmental representatives. Although, they/we may have not always got it right, their willingness to engage in an “audacious” and “business Unusual” approach, give true meaning to “All we can be”.