



**the dpsa**

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## **CIRCULAR NO. 34 of 2026**

**TO: ALL HEADS OF DEPARTMENT, PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATIONS AND GOVERNMENT COMPONENTS**

### **IMPLEMENTATION OF COMPETENCY-BASED ASSESSMENTS, TRAINING, AND DEVELOPMENT FOR MEMBERS OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT SERVICE (SMS) IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE**

#### **1. PURPOSE**

1.1 This circular deals with the implementation of competency-based assessment, training, and development for members of the Senior Management Service (SMS) in the Public Service, and the Explanatory Guidelines for ease of reference and procedural clarity.

#### **2. BACKGROUND**

2.1 Over the years, competency assessment practice has been institutionalised as part of the recruitment and developmental process for senior managers. This assessment practice is based on the generic managerial competencies that are outlined in Chapter 5 of the Senior Management Service (SMS) Handbook. Further to the current SMS competency assessment battery used to assess the competencies of SMS members before appointment, Cabinet has recommended that Emotional Intelligence and Integrity be included in the assessment of senior managers' competencies.

2.2 The National Framework for the Professionalisation of the Public Sector lays the groundwork for hiring and choosing people who are fully qualified to carry out their public function responsibly, with a strong sense of service and an ethical disposition toward the social and economic security of the country. To be more explicit, according to the National Framework for

the Professionalization of the Public Sector, among other selection criteria, ‘integrity tests must be introduced across all levels and sectors’.

2.3 Along with the National Framework towards the Professionalisation of the Public Sector, the Senior Management Services (SMS) Competency Framework refers to several significant competencies that are seen as essential for successful performance at a senior management level within the public service. Senior managers in the public service are currently being assessed through simulations, role-plays, the Occupational Personality Profile (OPP), and the Cognitive Processing Profile (CPP).

2.4 During the February 2023 State of the Nation Address, the State President announced that “***In response to the State Capture Commission and in line with the framework for the professionalisation of the public sector, integrity assessments will become a mandatory requirement for selection in the public service.***”

2.5 To respond to the call made by the President during the 2023 State of the Nation Address, the DPSA investigated the assessment tools that will assess the integrity and emotional intelligence of members of SMS in the public service. The identified tools underwent pilot testing and, on 9 September 2024, received approval from the Minister for the Public Service and Administration for inclusion in the current SMS competency assessment. Establishing a new Public Service Assessment Centre will be part of the selection and development process. This Assessment Centre is formally incorporated into the current process to enhance the effectiveness of appointment, training, and development initiatives for SMS members. The Directive has been approved and shall be implemented by all national departments, provincial administrations, and government components with immediate effect.

### **3. SCOPE OF APPLICATION**

3.1 The Directive applies to:

- a) All National, Provincial departments and Government Components; and
- b) All SMS members as defined in the Public Service Regulations, 2016.

#### **4. COMMENCEMENT**

This Directive is effective from the date of approval by the Minister for Public Service and Administration.

#### **5. PANEL OF SERVICE PROVIDERS AND PRICE STRUCTURE FOR ASSESSMENTS**

- 5.1 Departments utilise the approved panel of service providers and the prescribed pricing structure for SMS assessment as outlined in Circular No. 24 of 2026.
- 5.2 Circular No. 30 of 2026 on an interim arrangement for competency assessment services for Senior Management Service in the Public Service is hereby withdrawn and cancelled with immediate effect. All new recruitment, selection, and training of SMS members to follow the provisions of the approved Directive.
- 5.3 Any enquiries regarding the Directive may be directed to Ms. Hlamalani Mavasa at [Hlamalani.Mavasa@dpsa.gov.za](mailto:Hlamalani.Mavasa@dpsa.gov.za) or 084 385 4807.

Kind Regards



**Mr. Willie Vukela**  
**ACTING DIRECTOR-GENERAL**

**DATE:** 10/06/26