



public works & roads

Department:
Public Works and Roads
North West Provincial Government
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

TOWARDS A MORE PROFESSIONAL AND CAPABLE PUBLIC SERVICE

Date: Monday, October 31, 2022

Fellow South Africans,

One of the bitter lessons we take from the state capture era is how fragile our public sector can be and how we need to strengthen it.

The report of the State Capture Commission lays bare how organs of state were systematically weakened by undue political and corporate interference. It further details instances where individuals without the necessary competence and experience were appointed to strategic positions so that they could be manipulated by private interests.

As we recover from state capture, we must ensure there are consequences for the perpetrators of state capture. We also need to make sure that public institutions can never be weakened in this way again.

This means we need to build a public service that is professional, ethical and driven by merit.

Building such a public service is one of the main aims of the National Framework towards Professionalisation of the Public Sector, which was made public last week. The finalisation of the Framework, which will be applied across all spheres of the public sector, fulfils a commitment I made in the State of the Nation Address in February this year as part of the work to build a more capable state.

The Framework lays down, among other things, clear requirements for recruitment and selection processes, mandatory induction for new public servants and performance management. It prioritises continuous learning so that the skills and capabilities of public servants are always improving.

This is to ensure that only qualified and competent individuals are appointed to the ranks of the public service. Those people who are unfit or unwilling to serve the public should make way for those who are dedicated and capable.

We will be introducing competency assessments as part of new requirements for entry into the public service. Those seeking appointment or promotion will need to complete compulsory courses with the National School of Government (NSG); those who are newly appointed will not be allowed to assume duty until they have successfully completed induction programmes. Long-serving public servants will also have to undergo regular refresher training.

The Framework will help to reduce the undue pressure placed on Directors-General and CEOs of public entities to carry out unlawful instructions, break public procurement rules or favour certain private sector interests, as happened during the state capture era. The Framework will also contribute to greater stability in the senior leadership of the public service.



For example, new contracts of Directors-General and Provincial Heads of Departments will immediately be guaranteed for five years, subject to meeting the requirements for the position and regular performance reviews. Legislative and regulatory amendments are planned to increase their tenure to 10 years to stabilise administration.

Under the new Framework, staff appointed into political offices, including ministerial advisers, must complete a pre-entry course for middle and senior management with the NSG, as well as competency and integrity assessments within 90 days of their appointment.

The implementation of the Framework will further strengthen the management of state-owned entities, prioritising merit in the appointment of board members. We have accepted several of the recommendations of the State Capture Commission in this regard, including that independent panels with appropriate technical expertise be constituted to recommend suitable candidates for boards.

Included in the recommendations of the Framework is that newly appointed board members must receive specialised NSG-run induction training for boards of SOEs, and for further professional development and registration through relevant statutory councils.

The National Framework towards Professionalisation of the Public Sector is one of the most significant developments in public service reform since the advent of democracy.

We know that just as the capacity of the public sector has deteriorated over many years, correcting the situation will also take time. This is the first critical step.

It gives renewed momentum to the drive that commenced with the start of this administration to build a public sector that is ethical, professional and efficient.

This Framework should be welcomed by the country's public servants as an important tool for their progression as they work on the frontline to deliver on the promise of a better life for every South African.

With best regards,

