

# CRITICAL SCARCE SKILLS RETENTION POLICY 2024/2026



## **public works & roads**

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

## **1. PREAMBLE**

- 1.1. The Management of the Department of Public Works and Roads (North West Province) has observed with concern the rate at which staff members are exiting this organization. This trend has a negative potential to weaken the efforts of the Department towards the achievement of its mandate as outlined in the vision, mission and goals in the strategic plan;
- 1.2. An interesting observation is however that much as to a greater extent, employers recruit from employers, this Department has turned to be a pool of supply to its Provincial and National sister Departments and the Private Sector in terms of critical skills;
- 1.3. The Department needs to ensure that the above situation is addressed. The only way that can best address this situation is to turn this Department to be and remain the employer of choice which aligns itself with the employment equity to current employees and new recruits.
- 1.4. This policy document seeks to address the aspects that could enable the Department's ability to retain employees with critical scarce skills through different strategies, which will be aligned to Human Resource Principles and the legislative framework.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

- 2.1. To ensure a conducive and harmonious working environment that is equitable for all employees throughout the Department;
- 2.2. To attract and retain right people from the designated groups, including women, youth and people with disabilities;
- 2.3. To retain key staff members whose skills are regarded as critical to achieve Department's mission;
- 2.4. To prevent staff turnover and implement the retention strategies;
- 2.5. To identify individual's potential for assuming a higher degree of responsibility through retention and counter offer;
- 2.6. To help develop a skills base for succession planning in line with the recruitment policy where adverts can be internally placed; and
- 2.7. To retain employees after successful completion of internship and learnership programs subject to the availability of a budget and funded posts in occupations that are critical to the department's strategic objectives.



### **3. LEGISLATIVE FRAMEWORKS**

#### **3.1. Internal Mandates**

- a) DPW&R Strategic Plan;
- b) Recruitment and Selection Policy - Department of Public Works and Roads (DPW&R);
- c) Affirmative Action and Employment Equity Policy;
- d) Integrated Training and Development Policy;
- e) Provincial Job Evaluation Policy.

#### **3.2. External Mandates**

- a) Public Service Regulations, 2016;
- b) Employment Equity Act 55, 1995;
- c) Skills Development Act, 1998;
- d) Public Service Act, 1994;
- e) Labour Relations Act, 1995;
- f) Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997;
- g) North West Provincial Performance Management and Development Policy.

### **4. PRINCIPLES**

- 4.1. Posts/occupations whose functions are critical to achieve the departmental core business and therefore require specialized skills shall be identified;
- 4.2. The executing authority or his/her delegate shall utilise his/her discretion to determine the appropriate offer of improved conditions of employment, for employees whose services are considered critical for the accomplishment of the departmental core business;
- 4.3. Continually developing staff shall be maintained in line with the Skills Development Act and Performance Management and Development System; The culture of creating and sustaining a pleasant and humane working environment where employees are given a chance to thrive shall be emphasised and managed;
- 4.4. The potential and reason for leaving the Department shall be determined by conducting exit interviews;
- 4.5. The career development plan (consistent with PMDS) should by no means be misconstrued to be creating expectations for either promotion or monetary rewards;
- 4.6. The employee should be reasonably informed about their performance status in the organisation and can generally, not specifically be informed about their career prospects within the organisation.



## **5. THE IMPACT OF STAFF TURNOVER**

- 5.1. There are direct financial implications when the Department has to replace its employees;
- 5.2. There is loss of crucial skills, knowledge and experience which could have assisted the Department requires to achieve its mandate;
- 5.3. Continuous recruitment and development of new employees leading to service delivery failure.

## **6. RETENTION TOOLS**

- 6.1. Work plan;
- 6.2. Personal Development Plan;
- 6.3. Career development;
- 6.4. Staff morale assessment/survey forms;
- 6.5. Exit Interview Questionnaire.

## **7. REASONS FOR STAFF TURNOVER**

- 7.1. Retirement;
- 7.2. Career development;
- 7.3. Financial considerations;
- 7.4. Ineffective Leadership and Management style;
- 7.5. Non- alignment between instructions and job descriptions;
- 7.6. Lack of working tools;
- 7.7. Shortage of funds for training;
- 7.8. Unfavourable work conditions.

## **8. RESPONSIBILITY**

- 8.1. The Department is responsible for:-
  - a) the retention of all employees;
  - b) Safekeeping and confidentiality of all information obtained in the completed staff morale assessment forms and exit interview questionnaires;
  - c) Improvement of employment conditions.

## **9. RETENTION STRATEGY THROUGH RECRUITMENT PROCESS**

The Recruitment and Selection Policy of the Department will serve as a guideline to the Retention Strategy of the scarce occupations and critical skills that the Department is in need of, to fulfill its strategic objectives.

- 9.1. Internal /external advertising of posts
  - 9.1.1. Posts below the Senior Management Service (SL 12 and below) that become vacant and available for advertising and filling must first be advertised internally, depending on the inherent requirements of the



post and/or provided there is a confirmation that a pool of internal candidates with potential exists, else it must be done concurrently, internally and externally, in line with the relevant clause of the Recruitment and Selection Policy;

9.1.2. The Selection Panel, in shortlisting for posts within the scarce skills category must take into consideration the candidates' ability and potential to meet the inherent requirements of the post;

9.1.3. The Interviewing panel shall recommend development areas of a candidate that demonstrates the potential to perform the functions of the post. The supervisor shall in the performance agreement include a personal development plan of the new incumbent that will address the identified gaps;

9.1.4. Notwithstanding the above, the interview panel shall not be obliged to make a recommendation if there is no suitable candidate;

9.1.5. In line with Public Service Regulations, 2016 as amended, all Senior Management Services (SMS) Posts shall be advertised nationwide externally.

## **10. INTAKE OF INTERNS AND BURSARY HOLDERS WHO HOLD CRITICAL AND SCARCE SKILLS QUALIFICATIONS**

10.1. Persons who shall have been recruited and placed into the internship programme with proved potential, may with the recommendation of the Head of the Unit and approval by the Head of Department be appointed on contract not exceeding twelve months, additional to the fixed establishment at the expiry of the internship period (refer to the Internship Policy);

10.2. Persons who shall have been recruited and placed into a candidacy programme, shall serve the same number of years on contract obligation (refer to the Candidacy Policy);

10.3. This initiative will serve to implement an important aspect of the human resource plan to supply the needed critical skills that poses a serious challenge to the Department as it is identified in the strategic plan;

10.4. To further prepare newly appointed entrants, incubation shall be provided through coaching, mentoring, job rotation and other forms of professional development programmes.





## **11. EMPLOYMENT EQUITY**

- 11.1. The Employment Equity Act requires every employer to ensure that it employs equal representation in terms of race, gender and disability as per the set targets;
- 11.2. The Department will have to strive to retain People with Disabilities by creating conducive working environment and reasonable accommodation e.g. assistive devices;
- 11.3. The Department shall allow women at SMS level to unleash their potential by creating a platform towards maximizing performance.

## **12. BROADENING THE SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE INTERVIEWING PANEL**

The main focus of the interviewing panel shall not only be on assessing and determining the relative suitability of candidates in terms of their competencies and potential but attention shall also be paid to addressing other critical factors that can lead to premature departure of newly appointed staff. The panel shall provide full motivation of the envisaged strengths and weaknesses of the on-the-job performance of each candidate.

## **13. ENHANCING THE CULTURE OF RECOGNIZING POSITIVE EFFORT AND STAFF ACHIEVEMENT**

### **13.1. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT**

- 13.1.1. Each and every employee must have a performance agreement, which is cascaded from the work plan and is valid for a period of 12 months;
- 13.1.2. The performance agreement must indicate clearly, SMART outputs to be achieved, though performance must be assessed two times per financial year as per the revised PMDS policy, continuous monitoring of performance is necessary for identifying developmental needs and giving support;
- 13.1.3. The performance agreement shall also indicate 'enablers' i.e., the tools, skills, resources that the employee requires to enable them to deliver on the expected outputs;
- 13.1.4. It is therefore expected that the performance management will feed into discussions and career path since the two are not mutually exclusive.



### **13.2. INCENTIVES / REWARDS FOR GOOD PERFORMANCE**

In line with Chapter 4, Part 5 (73)1, 2 and 3 of the Public Service 2016 as amended, each executing authority shall establish a performance incentive scheme to reward employees or any category of employees within the limited percentage of a department's remuneration budget that shall not be exceeded for the purpose of granting performance rewards determined from time to time by the Minister.

### **13.3. FINANCIAL INCENTIVE SCHEME**

To establish a departmental financial incentive scheme, the PSR provides that the Accounting Officer: in writing determine the nature, rules and control measures of the scheme in advance; communicate the nature and rules of the scheme equitably to all employees; and ensure that employees who implement the quality and quantity control measures of the scheme are not entrusted with the implementation of that scheme in relation to themselves.

### **13.4. SUGGESTIONS, IMPROVEMENTS AND INNOVATIONS**

13.4.1. Chapter 4, Part 3 (50) provides that, if an employee makes a suggestion, improvement or invention of exceptional value to the department or the public service as a whole or has exceptional ability a special qualification or has rendered meritorious service, other than the service recognized in terms of the Department's performance incentive scheme to the department or the public service as a whole:-

- a) the State shall have the right of use of any such suggestion and improvement or invention; and
- b) the Executing Authority may reward the employee through:-
  - any non-monetary reward
  - a non-pensionable cash award not exceeding 20 per cent of the employee's pensionable annual salary or, with the Minister's approval, a non-pensionable cash award in excess of 20 per cent of the employee's annual salary; or such a non-monetary reward as well as such a cash award;

13.4.2. In order to encourage excellent suggestions, best improvements, creativity and innovation, an environment that allow bounded / guided



/ managed discretion, judgment and intellectualism should be nurtured;

13.4.3. These shall be carried out through the presentation of awards such as, "Inspector of the year awards, Secretary of the year" awards, among others, to be presented by the Executing Authority or their delegates;

13.4.4. These awards shall be recognised by the awarding of certificates of achievement, which shall clearly state the area of achievement and reasons for such an award. A special slot shall also be made available in the staff communiqué with pictures and names of 'Achievers of the month or year'. A picture of the employee shall be posted in the foyer where such an employee works;

13.4.5. These awards shall be regarded as prestigious awards and should therefore be awarded under special circumstances;

13.4.6. Clear criteria shall be worked out to indicate under what circumstances can such awards be given, such as the following:-

- a) Achievement of service delivery targets as per the PMDS policy.
- b) Continuously meeting or exceeding service delivery standards.
- c) Coming up with a good and practical idea.
- d) Recommendation from internal colleagues and or external clients.
- e) Motivation from Supervisor.

13.4.7. Work reorganization for development:-

Managers should reorganize work so that when an employee moves up a salary level her/his job should increase in complexity or responsibility;

13.4.8. The work plan will be guiding tool for career development to retain the existing staff with critical skills as it will be the one which will address the performance need/gap of the employee. Regular discussions should be held to identify the employee's needs/gaps for either development or correct placement.

#### **14. JOB ROTATION/ENLARGEMENT WITH THE AIM OF MULTI-SKILLING**

14.1. Job rotation within the areas of competency may be used as an important approach for achieving job satisfaction, making the job more challenging,





enhancing skills and broadening knowledge and ultimately assisting in employee retention;

14.2. Management may rotate employees within their respective Directorates or business units. Job rotation must be implemented at the beginning of the performance cycle. Consultation with employees must be effected before embarking on job rotation so as to ensure interest in the envisaged development. Based on agreement the workplan must be adjusted accordingly;

14.3. Employees should be continually trained with relevant development programmes that puts them on par with their peers in the job market and thereafter be supplied with the necessary modernized work-tools and be allowed space to practice the skills they have acquired.

## **15. EMPLOYEE WELLNESS**

### **15.1. Qualitative work-life**

#### **15.1.1. Offering work-life balance options:-**

- a) Recognising family responsibilities/obligations
- b) Offering controlled flexi-time
- c) Excessive performance of overtime
- d) Effective employee health and safety and, wellness programmes.
- e) Improving manager/employee relationship with regard to improved communication channels to enable employees to express their concerns, complaints, views and suggestions openly and freely as well as to, ease access to information (e.g. provision of well-managed suggestion boxes; employee meetings).
- f) Effective use of referral system through EAP on managing work-life training.
- g) Improved relations include doing away with the practices of continually discrediting subordinates instead of giving them support.

## **16. EXIT INTERVIEWS**

16.1. Exit interviews should be well structured and well organized:-



- 16.1.1. Exit interview is to be understood as a management tool aimed at interviewing employees that leave the Department, of Public Works and Roads so as to extract constructive and valuable positive or negative information that can be used to improve the situation and morale of the remaining staff. This is done with an ultimate objective of improving the situation that lead to the resignation of the employees and also as a method of reducing staff turnover;
- 16.1.2. Such interviews shall be structured using the questionnaire designed as to allow the exiting employee to state the reason(s) of leaving the department. The questionnaire of the exit interviews will be designed by the Directorate Human Resource Management;
- 16.1.3. Exit interviews change organisational threats into opportunities for improvement. The relevant Director will delegate the appropriate officer to conduct the exit interview other than the direct Supervisor (where necessary). For exit interviews to be successful, it is therefore essential that the interviewee be given an unambiguous guarantee in writing that no information emanating from the exit interview shall be used against him/her. The information shall only be used for enhancing efforts towards attraction and retention of staff;
- 16.1.4. All employees that have tendered resignations shall be interviewed before leaving the Department;
- 16.1.5. The completed questionnaire must be forwarded to Human Resource Management for analysis, recommendation and safe keeping. Corrective steps will be implemented where necessary.

## **17. SCARCE SKILLS AND CRITICAL SKILLS**

### **17.1. Identification of scarce and critical skills**

Through the outcomes of the skills audit process, there has to be identification and classification of the current skills needs and the future needs of the Department;

### **17.2. Identification of key posts for job evaluation;**

### **17.3. Scarce occupations and posts that require critical / specialized skills must be clearly defined by the Chief Directorate: Corporate Services / in**



collaborations with the user Chief Directorates within the context of the service delivery obligations in the Department;

- 17.4. Posts in which skills are difficult to obtain should be put forward by the Chief Directors to the Chief Directorate: Corporate Services with motivation for classification under this category and should be subjected to the job evaluation process to determine the appropriate levels of the job.

## **18. ATTRACTING EMPLOYEES WITHIN SCARCE SKILLS AND CRITICAL SKILLS CATEGORIES**

### **18.1. Head-hunting**

**18.1.1.** Recruitment shall also be done through head hunting over and above what the policy states. The Graduate Recruitment Programme may also be considered. The latter can be achieved by engaging specific institutions of higher learning in this regard for recruitment;

**18.1.2.** This individual based method of recruitment can be used to seek and identify suitably qualified candidates for positions where difficulty is experienced to recruit suitably qualified candidates as well as candidates from historically disadvantaged groups;

**18.1.3.** This method shall be used only in conjunction with the normal advertising of vacancies, i.e, an identified suitable candidate shall be requested to apply for the advertised position, where after the normal processes will apply;

**18.1.4.** In cases where no suitable candidates are identified during the final interviews, further headhunting shall be undertaken. At least two candidates shall be identified and interviewed by the same panel and against the same criteria used during the initial interviews.

### **18.2. Counter Offer**

#### **18.2.1 General**

In terms of the Public Service Regulation of 2016 the setting of a higher monthly salary following the date of approval if the following are verified:-

- a) The employee has received an employment offer from any other body or organ of state.



- b)** The Department has verified the validity and content of the external offer
- c)** The counter offer made is limited to the salary notch closest to the external offer and;
- d)** The counter offer shall not exceed the salary level of the post.

**18.2.2** In terms of the Public Service Regulation of 2016 the setting of a higher salary notch to recruit an employee shall only take place on the first month following the date of approval if the following are verified:-

- a)** The executive authority has complied with the process contemplated in regulation 64;
- b)** The employee occupied an equal graded post immediately before the date of appointment;
- c)** The higher salary shall not exceed that of the employee immediately prior to appointment;
- d)** The higher salary shall not exceed the salary level of the post unless such employee has been awarded a higher salary attached to the grade of the post in terms any other provision of the Act;
- e)** A full motivation should be submitted regarding the scarcity of the skill(s)/competencies that the said employee possesses as well as their need at the time.

**18.2.3** Recording of all reasons for counter-offers;

**18.2.4** The approved motivation for retention purpose must be filed in the employment files of such employees. (A requirement of the Public Service Regulations);

**18.2.5** Exploring alternatives

Evidence proving the difficulty of other possibilities such as recruiting and retaining the relevant employees, considering the working environment, career pathing and outsourcing must exist.

**18.2.6** Demonstration of fairness

Demonstrate that the decision will not create an anomaly or disparity compared to other employees. The Department will have to be able



to justify the awarding of higher salaries to same employees with similar competencies and skills and not to others;

#### 18.2.7 Confirmation

The authenticity and legitimacy of the offer obtained must be confirmed;

#### 18.2.8 Ability to ensure sustainability

The Department must be able to demonstrate that it has sufficient budgeted funds available for the MTEF, to sustain the increase.

### 19. INDUCTION PROGRAMME

#### 19.1. New employees

##### 19.1.1 Day one

Supervisors must have a one-on-one orientation discussion with their new employees. The aim is to ensure that new employees are well received and all logistical arrangements are in place so as to ensure that they settle quickly into the new environment. Also ensure that the new employee is properly introduced to staff and is assigned a peer who will provide the necessary support.

##### 19.1.2 Day two

Employee's responsibilities, expectations and objectives shall be discussed. This will ensure that the new employee fully understands at the outset what is expected from them.

Over and above the one-on-one Orientation session with the supervisor, the new employee will be scheduled to attend the Compulsory Induction Programme (CIP) (offered by NSG) where broad issues i.e. Public Service Legislations, policies, procedures and values are presented and an opportunity to interact with other new employees in the organization. Copies of orientation and CIP reports will be kept by HRM to link with the Performance Management.

### 20. TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

20.1. The Department will train and capacitate employees emphasizing areas within the core functions of the Department;





20.2. Line managers and supervisors must ensure that adequate opportunities for relevant training and development are made available in line with the Personal Development Plans and the Workplace Skills Plan;

20.3. On the job training, mentoring, coaching and leadership must be encouraged in all units, directorates and chief directorates.

## **21. SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONAL REGISTRATION**

21.1. The Department must provide short courses and programs required for professional registration;

21.2. Structural training, deployment and rotation, secondment to other departments, municipalities and private sectors leading towards professional registration should be encouraged;

21.3. The Department must continue to engage relevant professional bodies/councils to address challenges affecting employees during the registration process.

## **22. IMPLEMENTATION, MONITORING AND REPORTING**

22.1. The Accounting Officer or their delegate shall monitor the implementation process and ensure adherence to this policy provisions. They shall report on specific cases when required to do so;

22.2. As and when any provision of this policy is amended, the amended provision will supersede the previous one.

## **23. POLICY REVIEW**

This Policy shall be reviewed every two years where and/or when a need arises.

**RECOMMENDED**



**MS NE KGANG**

**CHAIRPERSON POLICY REVIEW COMMITTEE**

20/05/2024

**DATE**

**APPROVED**  


**MR MI KGANTSI**

**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

22/05/24

**DATE**

