

**POLICY TITLE : RETENTION OF SCARCE OCCUPATIONS AND  
CRITICAL SKILLS POLICY**

**DEPARTMENT : PUBLIC WORKS, ROADS AND TRANSPORT**

## **1. PREAMBLE**

- 1.1.** The Management of the Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (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 characterise the Department to retain employees with critical scarce skills through different strategies, which will be aligned to Human Resource Principles and the legislative framework.

## **2. OBJECTIVES**

To ensure a conducive and harmonious working environment that is equitable for all employees throughout the Department:

- 2.1** To attract and retain competent staff.
- 2.2** To retain key staff members whose skills are regarded as critical to achieve Department's mission.
- 2.3** To identify individual's potential for assuming a higher degree of responsibility.
- 2.4** To help develop a skills base for succession planning.
- 2.5** To provide internship and learnerships to occupations that are critical to the department's strategic objectives.

## **3. MANDATES**

### **3.1 Internal Mandates**

- 3.1.1 DPWRT strategic plan
- 3.1.2 Recruitment and Selection Policy - Department of Public Works, Roads and Transport (DPWRT).
- 3.1.3 Affirmative Action and Employment Equity Policy
- 3.1.4 Integrated Training and Development Policy
- 3.1.5 Provincial Job Evaluation Policy

### **3.2 External Mandates**

- 3.2.1 Public Service Regulations, 2001.
- 3.2.2 Employment Equity Act 55, 1995.
- 3.2.3 Skills Development Act, 1998.
- 3.2.4 Public Service Act, 1994.
- 3.2.5 Labour Relations Act, 1995.
- 3.2.6 Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997
- 3.2.7 North West Provincial Performance Management and Development Policy
- 3.2.8 Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, 2000

## **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 salary level, for employees whose services are considered critical for the accomplishment of the departmental core business in terms of the provisions of the Public Service Act, 1994 as amended and Public Service Regulations 2001 as amended and after Job evaluation has been performed.
- 4.3** The culture of continually developing staff shall be maintained in line with the Skills Development Act and Performance Management and Development System.
- 4.4** The culture of creating and sustaining a pleasant and humane working environment where employees are given a chance to thrive shall be emphasized and managed.

- 4.5 The potential and reason for leaving the Department shall be determined by conducting exit interviews, but especially staff morale assessment surveys before staff indicates their intention to leave.
- 4.6 The career development plan (consistent with PMDS) should by no means be misconstrued to be creating expectations for either promotion or monetary rewards.
- 4.7 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. TOOLS

- 5.1 Workplan
- 5.2 Personal Development Plan
- 5.3 Career development
- 5.4 Staff morale assessment/surveys form
- 5.5 Exit interview Questionnaire

## 6. RESPONSIBILITY

- 6.1 The Chief Director: Corporate Services and the Director: HRM will be responsible to drive the Career Development and Retention Strategy for all the employees.
- 6.2 All information obtained in the completed staff morale assessment forms and exit interview questionnaires shall be kept confidential.

## 7. RETENTION STRATEGY THROUGH RECRUITMENT PROCESS

The recruitment and selection policy of the department will serve as guideline to the retention strategy of the scarce occupations and critical skills that the Department is in need of to fulfill its strategic objectives.

### 7.1 Internal /external advertising of posts

- 7.1.1 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 reasonable expectation 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
- 7.1.2 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. Should a candidate, who doesn't meet all the job requirements for shortlist be identified as the potential successful one, full motivation for relaxation of requirements shall be submitted to the Head of Department/Executing Authority for approval.



**7.1.3** 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.

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

**7.1.5** In line with Public Service Regulations, 2001 as amended, all Senior Management Services (SMS) Posts shall be advertised nationwide externally.

## **8. BROADENING THE SCOPE AND FOCUS OF THE INTERVIEWING PANEL:**

**8.1** 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.

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

### **9.1 Performance Management and Development**

- 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.
- 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.
- The performance agreement shall also indicate "enablers" i.e., the tools, skills, resources that the employee requires to enable him/her to deliver on the expected outputs.
- It is therefore expected that the performance management will feed into discussions and career path since the two are not mutually exclusive.

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

**10.1** In line with Chapter 1, Part VIII F and G of the Public Service Regulations 2001 as amended, measures should be applied to enhance a positive attitude in recognition of improved employee productivity through implementation of financial incentive scheme and non-monetary reward in recognition of an employee's excellent performance and best suggestions, improvements and innovations.

## **11. FINANCIAL INCENTIVE SCHEME**

- 11.1 To establish a departmental financial incentive scheme, the PSR provides that the Head of Department shall:
- (a) in writing determine the nature, rules and control measures of the scheme in advance;
  - (b) communicate the nature and rules of the scheme equitably to all employees; and
  - (c) 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.

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

- 12.1** Chapter 1, Part VIII G provides that, if an employee makes a suggestion, improvement or invention of exceptional value 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-
    - (i) any non-monetary reward;
    - (ii) 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
    - (iii) such a non-monetary reward as well as such a cash award.
- 12.2** 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.
- 12.3** 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 EA or her/his delegate.
- 12.4** 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.
- 12.5** These awards shall be regarded as **prestigious awards and** should therefore be awarded under special circumstances.

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

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

**12.7** 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.

**12.8** 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.

### **13. Job rotation/enlargement with the aim of multi-skilling**

- Job rotation 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.
- 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.
- 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.

## **14. EMPLOYEE WELLNESS**

### **14.1 Qualitative work-life**

Offering work-life balance options:

- Recognising family responsibilities/obligations
- Offering controlled flexi-time
- Excessive performance of overtime
- Effective employee health and safety and, wellness programmes.
- 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.

- Effective use of referral system through EAP on managing work-life training.
- Improved relations include doing away with the practices of continually discrediting subordinates instead of giving them support.

## **15. EXIT INTERVIEWS**

**Exit interviews should be well structured and well organized:**

- 15.1 Exit interview is to be understood as a management tool aimed at interviewing employees that leave the Department, of Public Works, Roads and Transport 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.
- 15.2 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.
- 15.3** 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.
- 15.4** All employees that have tendered resignations shall be interviewed before leaving the Department.
- 15.5 The completed questionnaire must be forwarded to Human Resource Management for analysis, recommendation and safe keeping. Corrective steps will be implemented where necessary.

## **16. SCARCE OCCUPATIONS AND CRITICAL SKILLS:**

### **16.1 Identification of scarce occupations 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.

### **16.2 Identification of key posts for evaluation**

- Scarce occupations and posts that require critical/specialized skills must be clearly defined by the Chief Directorate: Corporate Services within the context of the service deliver obligations in the Department.
- Posts in which skills are difficult to obtain should be put **forward by** supervisors with some motivation for classification under this category and should be subjected to job evaluation process to determine the appropriate levels of the jobs.
- Some employees in the critical skills categories may not be retained due to average performance.

### **16.3 ATTRACTING EMPLOYEES WITHIN SCARCE OCCUPATIONS AND CRITICAL SKILLS CATEGORIES**

#### **16.3.1 Head-hunting**

- 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.
- 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.
- **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.
- 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. A different interview panel may be used, with the approval of the Executing Authority or her/his delegate.
- Where evidence proving the difficulty of recruiting and retaining the relevant employees exists, raising the remuneration may be considered by invoking the powers vested in the Executing Authority in terms of Part V, A1(a) and A2(e) of the Public Service Regulations, 2001 as amended.

#### **16.3.2 Counter offer**

##### **(a) General**

- The offer obtained by the employee should be analysed whether it represents a **salary notch** or a **salary package** (inclusive of all benefits). This will assist in conducting an appropriate comparison.



**(b) Retention of employees within Scarce occupations**

- For retention of employees where evidence proving the difficulty of recruiting and retaining exists, the employer will match (equal to) the offer obtained by the employee.
- 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.
- Where possible and/or applicable, a higher vacant and funded post must be available against which an employee may be retained.

**(c) Retention of non scarce but critical/speciliased skills.**

- This refers to positions that require specialised skills that their loss or the turnaround time in finding a replacement may result in an interruption that causes a remarkable negative impact in service delivery programmes or delay in completing special projects. It also include employees who occupy key positions in the Department.
- For retention of such employees the employer will match (equal to) the offer obtained by the employee.
- The motivation must indicate the availability of higher vacant funded post (where applicable) against which a counter offer is to be considered.

**d) Recording of all reasons for counter-offers**

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

**e) 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.

**f) 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.

**g) Confirmation**

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

**h) 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.

#### **16.4 Induction Programme**

##### **New employees**

- **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. The induction checklist must be filled in by the supervisor and the new employee and be placed in the Employee Personal file.
- **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 him/her.
- Over and above the one-on-one induction with the supervisor, the new employee will attend a generic induction (orientation) within 3 months, where broad issues i.e. policies, procedures, organization structure, vision, mission and values are presented and an opportunity to interact with other new employees in the organization. Copies of orientation reports will be kept by HRM to link with the Performance Management.
- The induction checklist must be completed and signed by both parties. A copy should be forwarded to HRM for the employee's file and for monitoring purposes.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION MONITORING AND REPORTING**

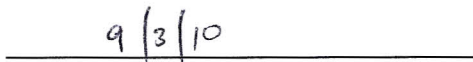
The Head of Department or his/her delegate shall monitor the implementation process and ensure adherence to these policy provisions .He/she shall report on specific cases when required to do so.

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

#### **APPROVED**



**MS M. R. NTSHABELE**  
**ACTING HEAD OF DEPARTMENT**

  
**DATE**