

1. INTRODUCTION



1.1 INTRODUCTION

- Background** Affirmative Action commenced in the Public Service in 1994, under special provisions contained in the Public Service Staff Code. This was intended as an interim measure until the introduction of the White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service in May 1998. The White Paper is intended to speed up the process and to address the deficiencies identified with the interim provisions. It provides a comprehensive framework within which each department and provincial administration will develop their own affirmative action programmes and will be held accountable for achieving results.
- Mandate of Public Service Commission** One of the powers and functions of the Public Service Commission is to promote the principle contained in section 195(1)(i) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 that public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past. The mandate of the Commission transcends the extent to which transformation in relation to employment and personnel practices and the level of empowerment has been achieved.
- Targets** The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service supported by the White Paper on Affirmative Action in the Public Service provides guidelines to departments in terms of race, gender and disability for achievement by the end of 1999. The requirements for the attainment of representativeness in the Public Service is that within four years from 1995 all departments establishments must endeavour to be at least 50% black at management level. During the same period at least 30% of new recruits to the middle and senior management echelons should be women. Within ten years, people with disabilities should comprise at least 2% of public service personnel. In light of the targets set in the White Papers and as a first step in monitoring the transformation of the Public Service, the Commission deemed it expedient to initiate a project with regard to the evaluation of affirmative action targets to be achieved by the end of 1999. The release of a separate report in this regard early in the year 2000 will facilitate the review and re-set of targets by the Department of Public Service and Administration which in terms of the White Paper on Affirmative Action should be completed before the end of year 2000.
- Follow-up Evaluation** Once the report on the state of representativeness has been finalised, an immediate follow-up evaluation will be necessary that will address, *inter alia*, the extent to which transformation in relation to employment and personnel practices and the level of empowerment has been achieved in national departments and provincial administrations. The monitoring of numeric targets on the part of the Commission is only one facet of a process that complements the entire transformation process. The evaluation of the extent of transformation in relation to employment and personnel practices and the level of empowerment that has been achieved will be a further step in the process of establishing the overall state of transformation in the Public Service.

1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION

- Purpose** The purpose of this project was to:
- Monitor the progress made by departments and provincial administrations towards the achievement of representativeness in the Public Service.
 - Undertake a statistical analysis of the information obtained from the Personnel and Salary System (PERSAL) with regard to the composition of the staff establishment of national departments and provincial administrations.

- Establish reasons, where applicable, from heads of departments of national departments and provincial administrations as to why representativeness has not been achieved in their respective institutions.
- Compile a report that reflects the extent to which representativeness has been achieved in the Public Service at the expiry of the laid down period.
- Advise all relevant stakeholders as contained in the Strategy Paper of the Commission of the progress made in the Public Service regarding transformation in the Public Service with regard to the attainment of representativeness/affirmative action.
- Advise the policy making institution, namely, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) of the composition of the Public Service with the view to assisting DPSA review the targets and set new targets if deemed necessary.
- Evaluate at a later phase the extent of transformation in relation to employment and personnel practices and the level of empowerment that has been achieved.

Scope

Information with regard to representativeness in terms of the target groups, namely, race, gender and disability in respect of all national departments and provincial administrations within the Public Service was obtained from PERSAL. The employee organisations admitted to the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council (PSCBC) were informed of the monitoring being done and were invited to submit inputs with regard to representativeness in the Public Service.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

Involvement of Role-Players

As part of the developmental work on the project, the other role players involved in some way in employment equity in terms of the three target groups, race, gender and disability were informed per letter of the monitoring being done by the Commission. The institutions concerned were the DPSA, the Department of Labour, Office on the Status of Women (OSW) and the Office on the Status of Disabled Persons (OSDP). These institutions were invited to furnish any information that they deem useful and would like the Commission to consider. This approach is intended to strengthen co-ordination between the various role players in the monitoring process. The Minister for Public Service and Administration was also informed of the project being undertaken.

Letters to Employee Organisations

Employee organisations admitted to the Public Service Co-ordinating Bargaining Council were informed per letter of the monitoring being done and invited to submit anything useful that they would like the Commission to consider with regard to representativeness in the Public Service, especially regarding the perception of the organisations/ unions in any process that hinders/constrains the achievement of representativeness.

Departments

All national departments and provincial administrations were also advised by means of correspondence of the monitoring being done by the Commission. This process was necessary to create awareness and spring no surprises when the report on the state of representativeness in the Public Service is released or when the interviews have to be done.

Information Via PERSAL

In order to facilitate matters, it was considered prudent that the required information be obtained from the PERSAL System. The information would then be analysed with the view to determining those national departments and provincial administrations that had not achieved representativeness in terms of any of the three target groups. Interviews would then be arranged with the heads of national departments/ provincial administrations concerned to determine:

- Why the targets had not been met?
- The measures, including the time frames, that have been put in place to ensure that the targets laid down in the White Papers would be achieved.
- The constraints experienced by departments/provincial administrations in achieving the targets and how these constraints could be addressed to expedite the achievement of representativeness.

Nature of Information

The project intended to monitor the extent to which departments had achieved the targets contained in the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service and the White Paper on Affirmative Action. In the circumstances only the composition of the Public Service in terms of race, gender and disability according to the various salary levels, namely, lower skilled workers, skilled workers, highly skilled production, highly skilled supervision, Management and Senior Management was ascertained.

Limitations

Whilst the evaluation highlighted the overall state of representativeness in the Public Service, the following limitations emerged:

- Information regarding the total distribution of personnel per salary levels in the departments as maintained by PERSAL is not available. The PERSAL system needs to be continuously updated in this regard by all institutions whose information is maintained by PERSAL so that accurate information is available at all times. The issue is covered later in the report.
- The information which has been extracted from PERSAL as at mid-December 1999 has been accepted per se. National departments and the provincial administrations were not requested to analyse the information for authenticity.
- The salary levels of a total of 31 319 officials are not available on the PERSAL system. Refer to table 5 on page 21 in this regard.
- The report, however, is considered to be an important first step in the evaluation process despite the absence of verification which is a critical aspect. The verification issue can be addressed when the Public Service Commission embarks upon the next stage in the evaluation process, namely, informing all departments of the Commission's reporting requirements with regard to their affirmative action programmes and employment equity plans. This issue is addressed further in Chapter 3.

2. FINDINGS

