ASSESSING THE EFFECTIVENESS OF TRAINING PROVIDED BY PALAMA IN IMPROVING SKILLS AND COMPETENCIES OF PUBLIC SERVICE LEADERSHIP WITH A VIEW TO INFORM CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT BY THE NATIONAL SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT

SEPTEMBER 2014
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List of Acronyms

MINCOM  Minister’s Committee
NSDS    National Skills Development Strategy
NSG     National School of Government
PALAMA  Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy
PSC     Public Service Commission
SDA     Skill Development Act, 1998, as amended
SMS     Senior Management Service
Foreword

Organisations are faced with a challenge of ensuring that they have the necessary capacity to achieve their strategic objectives as mandated by their principals. The public service is no exception. There are specific government priorities that the Public Service must deliver on and employees play an important role in their implementation. Whilst employees need to be managed to ensure continuous motivation and work gratification, it is also important that they are provided with the required skills and competencies to achieve their individual and organisational objectives. This is the role of senior managers in the Public Service.

It is therefore important that within the ranks Senior Management Service (SMS), there is a capable, qualified and experienced core of managers that are able to manage human and other resources for effective and efficient performance.

However, there appears to be a deficit of management skills and competencies required at the SMS level. A need was therefore identified to constantly capacitate this level to be able to deal with present and future governance, developmental and implementation challenges facing the Public Service.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) is aware of the efforts of the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) to address the deficit of management skills. Thus, the PSC decided to conduct an assessment into the effectiveness of training that has been provided by PALAMA in improving public service leadership skills. This report, therefore, highlights the achievements in this regard, as well as identifies areas for further development. With the National School of Government (NSG) established, it is hoped that the findings will inform the training and development programmes for senior managers in the public service.

It gives the PSC great pleasure to present its findings in this report, and trust that the report will contribute towards the development of a capable and professional public service.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
Executive Summary

The public service requires competent employees in order to deliver services in an effective and efficient manner. Government departments are faced with the challenge of making sure that they employ people with appropriate skills and knowledge to perform at the expected standards. To do this end, a competency assessment framework for the senior management service (SMS) was introduced. The aim of the framework is to ensure that management competencies and developmental gaps to be addressed are assessed and determined at the point of recruitment and throughout the career path of a senior manager in public service. According to the framework, skills gaps identified through competency assessments should serve as the basis to develop training and development programmes to address both personal and organisational needs.

In the public service, the Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) has always been at the forefront of efforts to constantly address skills gaps particularly at the SMS level. Many senior managers have attended training at PALAMA. However, service delivery challenges continue to bedevil the public service. In light of this, the PSC deemed it important to conduct a study on the effectiveness of training provided by PALAMA in improving the skills and competencies of senior managers in the public service.

The study assessed whether there is any visible improvement after training and further identified additional training needs, as identified by respondents. The PSC is of the view that if PALAMA training is effective in improving the skills of employees, especially senior managers, a positive change in service delivery and implementation of government programmes and policies should be visible, and there should be a decrease in protest actions and complaints that display unhappiness by citizens. The study has revealed that trained SMS members are of the view that their performance has improved after attending specific training programmes, however, they have identified training needs that needs further training such Human Resource Management (HRM), Strategic Planning and Operations Management and Project Management. They raise questions as to whether the training provided was
systematically identified, prioritised and properly targeted to ensure that SMS members attend training in line with their developmental needs.

The methodology and scope adopted in this study is as follows:

- Desktop analysis of relevant prescripts and frameworks as well as literature analysis to contextualize the nature and effectiveness of training offered by PALAMA.
- Human Resource (HR) units in both the National and Provincial Departments were requested to identify SMS members who previously attended training at PALAMA during the 2009 to 2012 period to participate in the study.
- A questionnaire was developed and in coordination with the HR units, the questionnaires were electronically distributed to 126 national and provincial departments. Identified SMS members were requested to complete the questionnaire and return them back electronically or by post to the PSC.

The study experienced the following limitations:

- Limited responses from sampled departments were received, thus affecting the validation process. Due to the low response rate, the findings and conclusions cannot be generalized to the whole public service.
- The study was also overtaken by events, mainly, the establishment of the National School of Government (NSG) in October 2013. This however, did not affect the findings in terms of the work already done by PALAMA.

In light of these limitations, it is proposed that a holistic and in-depth study looking at capacity building and its returns on organizational performance and individual employee performance should be conducted.
CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION
1.1 BACKGROUND

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has been doing oversight work into the performance of the public service over the years. One of the functions of the PSC as stated in the Constitution, 1996\(^1\), section 196 (4) (f) (ii), is “to investigate grievances of employees in the public service concerning official acts or omissions, and recommend appropriate remedies”. Through the grievance work and complaints received through the National Anti-Corruption Hotline (NACH) that is managed by the PSC, the PSC observed that these grievances and complaints are as a result of senior managers’ limited capacity to manage projects, interpret and/or implement policies correctly, and manage people and performance. The PSC is aware that all senior managers undergo competency assessment before being appointed for purposes of identifying their competency strengths and weaknesses. If developmental gaps are identified during the competency assessment, the senior managers would include the skills gaps in their personal development plans, which should be implemented within a period of twelve months.

In terms of the Senior Management Service Competency Framework, senior managers are expected to be competent in the areas of Strategic Capability and Leadership, People Management and Empowerment, Programme and Project Management, Financial Management and Change Management, which are core generic leadership and management competencies. They are also expected to be competent in the areas of Knowledge Management, Service Delivery, Innovation, Problem Solving and Analysis, Client Orientation and Customer Focus and Communication, which are process competencies. The Public Administration Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA) is mandated to provide training for employees as per the identified skills gaps and in line with departmental needs.

With the challenges of basic service delivery being witnessed across the country, the increasing cases of grievances and the complaints that PSC receives and results of evaluations that PSC embarks on, it became evident that there is a skills challenge among senior managers. Using information provided by PALAMA on the training provided to senior managers, the PSC identified a need to assess the effectiveness of training provided by PALAMA in improving the skills and competences of senior

managers in the public service. The PSC is of the view that training should contribute to improvement not only in the senior managers’ skills and competencies but also in their performance and service delivery.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE ASSESSMENT

The objectives of the assessment were to:

a) Determine the nature and effectiveness of training programmes offered by PALAMA;

b) Establish the degree of skills improvement of trained senior managers, as demonstrated in improved performance; and

c) Identify skills gaps and needs for training not offered by PALAMA to inform curriculum development by the National School of Government (NSG).

1.3 SCOPE OF THE ASSESSMENT

The study focused on a sample of departments at national and provincial level. The scope included members of the Senior Management Service (SMS) who participated in various training programmes at PALAMA during the 2009 to 2012 period.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

The methodology adopted in gathering data was as follows:

a) A desktop study of published reports by the PSC, legislative and regulatory frameworks and PALAMA review report was conducted; and

b) A questionnaire was developed and distributed to SMS members who attended training at PALAMA to complete and return to the PSC.

1.5 LIMITATIONS TO THE STUDY

The response rate was inadequate, thus resulting in the extension of deadline for submission of completed questionnaires to the PSC. The PSC relied on departments’ Human Resource sections to identify participants for the study. This imposed a major time risk and affected the validation of information received through the questionnaire and the convening of focus groups to discuss developmental needs that are not covered in the PALAMA curriculum.
Given that the total number of completed questionnaires is limited, inferences in the findings and conclusions cannot be generalised to the whole public service. In addition, the impact of training on performance is based on the respondents' views, and not verified with supervisors, HR performance monitoring section or the leadership of departments.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The report is structured as follows:

**Chapter 2:** Presents the legislative and regulatory framework;

**Chapter 3:** Presents the findings; and

**Chapter 4:** Presents the recommendations and conclusion.

**Appendix A:** Includes the survey questionnaire.
CHAPTER TWO: LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY FRAMEWORK
2.1 INTRODUCTION

Human Resource Development in South Africa occurs within a definite legislative and policy framework. This chapter outlines the legislative and regulatory framework relating to Human Resource Development in the Public Service. The framework serves as the legal foundations for HRD practices in the Public Service.

2.2 LEGISLATIVE AND REGULATORY PROVISIONS

2.2.1 Public Service Act (PSA), 1994, as amended²

Chapter 2 section 4 (1) and (2) of the PSA indicates that “there shall be a training institution listed as a national department in Schedule 1. The management and administration of such institution shall be under the control of the Minister”. Section 3 states that “Such institution - (a) shall provide such training or cause such training to be provided or conduct such examinations or tests or cause such examination or tests to be conducted as the Head of the institute may with the approval of the Minister decide or as may be prescribed as a qualification for the appointment or transfer of persons in or to the public service.”

Chapter III, section 3 (b) of the PSA states that “a head of department shall be responsible for the efficient management and administration of his or her department, including the effective utilisation and training of staff ...”.

2.2.2 HRD Strategic Framework for the Public Service, 2008³

According to the HRD Strategic Framework for the Public Service, “human resource development in the Public Service is defined as those efforts undertaken by organizations to ensure that employees are well prepared to undertake their responsibilities and grow into viable careers, thereby adding value to the productivity and service of their organizations, the motivation and performance of their peers and the attainment of the overall vision of the developmental state. In doing so,

organizations seek to ensure that the right people are prepared at the right place, at the right time and for the right positions to which they can readily contribute.”

Pillar 1 of the strategy, states that “capacity development initiatives of the strategy focus on ‘building human capital for high performance and service delivery’. Capacity development is at the centre of HRD as a profession, and, as a result, it is one of the primary areas of focus here. Interventions related to capacity development sought to identify strategic interventions which could add the highest value to the public infrastructure for developing the capacity of people. Adding the highest value here means the interventions must resolve the persistent challenges that compromise the process of capacity development. In addition, interventions were also designed to set the foundation for a new era of capacity development where learning environments are created where people can assume the responsibility for developing themselves.” The capacity development pillar has eight areas of strategic interventions, two of which are relevant for this study:

(a) Strengthening systems for workplace learning: the objective of this pillar is to “enhance the design, management, and integrated of workforce learning and capacity development interventions in the workplace to enhance the quality and relevance of training materials.” The intended outcome being to effectively manage educational initiatives “in the workplace where skills are developed on an ongoing basis, and where learning takes place in the field of practice where knowledge can be applied.”

(b) Fostering leadership development management strategies: the objective is “to promote leadership development management programmes in general, with specific reference to the HRD competence of SMS and with particular focus to the needs and requirements of women and persons with disability”. The intended outcome is to ensure that the Public Service has “managers in general who are able to manage well; and Line Managers who understand the role of HRD in improving performance and are able to use capacity development initiatives to maximize the performance of their work unit.” The strategic framework further states that “better managers in the Public Service will greatly enhance the performance of the public organisation”.

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2.2.3 Public Service Regulations (PSR), 2001, as amended

Chapter 1, Part IX (A) of the PSR, 2001, as amended, states that “employees should have ongoing and equitable access to training geared towards achieving an efficient, non-partisan and representative public service. Training should support work performance and career development. It should become increasingly driven by needs, and should be strategically linked to broader human resource management practices and programmes aimed at enhancing employment equity and representativeness.” It further requires the executing authority to determine the required competencies of and prescribe training for various occupational categories or specific employees in her or his department.

Chapter 4, Part VI (A) of the PSR, 2001, as amended, provides for development of programmes to equip SMS members to fulfil their duties and responsibilities. The programmes shall be based on the competencies required of members of the SMS in terms of both their current and future responsibilities.

In terms of Chapter 4, Part VI (B) of the PSR, 2001, as amended, the “Minister of Public Service and Administration is specifically required to:

(a) identify the generic managerial and leadership training needs of members of the SMS;
(b) arrange that standard courses and programs be developed on the basis of those training needs; and
(c) continuously evaluate those courses and programmes with due regard to their relevance and value for money.”

2.2.4 SMS Handbook, 2003, as amended

Chapter 4, Part XII of the SMS handbook, 2003, as amended, indicates that “in addressing the gap that exists between the required competency profile and actual competencies needed, a training and development plan will be designed for the individual SMS member. The training and development needs will not only be identified during performance reviews and assessments, but also on initial appointment when

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the work plan is developed. The members should have ongoing and equitable access to development. Development should support work performance and career development, driven by the needs of individual SMS members linked to their department’s strategic plan and operational plans, wherein training and development activities will focus on equipping members with the competencies they require to perform effectively in their current jobs and to prepare them for the future. The training and development needs of the members will be determined through continuous monitoring, quarterly reviews and annual assessments”.

2.2.5 The White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995

Chapter 13, part 13.3 of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995, states that, “government has adopted the view that all public servants, from the most senior to the most junior, require ongoing training as an integral part of their professional life. The training of senior and middle management must be linked to the processes and policy-making challenges defined by the RDP and this current White paper. The training of workers must be linked to the new emphasis on customer care and service delivery, the development of career paths and the reorganisation of grading systems within the public service. Among lower-level workers, this would necessitate the rewriting of job descriptions to meet the new skills and knowledge requirements of the RDP. To this end, particular attention would be paid to competency based training as a means of improving the relevance of training to specific work situations.

Training programmes would need to be flexible in order to maximise the access of workers to in-service training; this will include access to adult basic education. Such in-service training will need to be linked to the National Qualifications Framework and Industry Training Boards. The training and career development of public officials would also need to be conducted in close cooperation with public sector trade unions, as well as the proposed transformation forum and units”.

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2.2.6 Human Resource Development Strategy for South Africa (HRD-SA) 2010–2030

HRD-SA, 2010 – 2030, indicates that the HRD-SA national goals, are: “to urgently and substantively reduce the scourges of poverty and unemployment in South Africa; to promote justice and social cohesion through improved equity in the provision and outcomes of education and skills development programmes; and to substantively improve national economic growth and development through improved competitiveness of the South African economy”.

2.3 SUMMARY

The regulatory framework provides clear guidance on how continuous training and development of, among others, members of the SMS, should be provided and managed. It is emphasized that SMS developmental needs should be linked to performance management and development and the departments’ strategic objectives and priorities.

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CHAPTER THREE:

FINDINGS
3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter provides the analysis of findings of the study. The data analyzed was sourced from SMS members through a questionnaire that was developed and distributed to sampled departments. The focus of the study is on assessing the effectiveness of training provided by PALAMA in improving the skills and competencies of the public service leadership. There is an assumption that limited or lack of service delivery emanates from lack of requisite skills within departments. PALAMA as an institution established to address the skills deficiency in the public service provides a range of courses and training to address the challenge.

3.2 QUESTIONNAIRE DISTRIBUTION AND RESPONSE RATE

Table 1 below indicates the departments that responded from the 126 national and provincial departments that received the questionnaire through their Human Resource Management units. In total, 76 completed questionnaires from 15 participating departments were returned, of which 8 were spoiled. Therefore, the analysis and findings are based on a total number of 68 questionnaires, which were correctly completed.

Table 1: Total number of respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Departments</th>
<th>Number of completed questionnaires received</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Higher Education and Training</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South African Police Service</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Development</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tourism</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easter Cape</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Safety and Liaison</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Treasury</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kwa-Zulu Natal</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Premiers Office</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Works and Transport</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>North West</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture and Rural Development</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local and Traditional Affairs</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3.3 PROFILE OF RESPONDENTS

Figure 1: Gender profile

Figure 1 above shows the gender profile of the respondents. Of the 68 respondents, 53% were males and 47% were females.

Figure 2: Age

Figure 2 shows that 54% of the respondents are between the ages of 40-49 years, followed by 27% of the respondents who are between the ages of 50-59 years. Only 3% of the respondents are 60 years and older. Since the retirement age in the public service is 65 years, an assumption could be made that the 3% of the respondents are closer to retirement. Also Figure 2 shows that the majority of employees in the respondents are middle-aged and close to the retirement age. Assuming that the number of respondents are fairly representative of the SMS profile in the Public Service, it can be argued that the Public Service has an aging workforce at the senior management level. Therefore, there is a need to ensure that young and energetic people are recruited into the public service for purposes of bringing new and innovative ideas and for ensuring continuity and minimising loss of institutional memory.
Figure 3 shows the duration of the respondents working in the public service. 29% of the respondents indicated that they have been working in the public service for more than 21 years. 22% of the respondents indicated that they have been working in the public service for 20 years. While 10% of the respondents indicated that they have been working in the public service for 5 years, the other 10% of the respondents has been in the public service for more than 31 years.

Figure 4 shows how many years’ respondents have been in their current positions. As illustrated in Figure 4, the majority of the respondents have been in their current positions for five to ten years, given that 44% have been in one position for 5 years, while 46% of the respondents have been in one position for 10 years. Only 4% of respondents have been in one position for 16 to 30 years and above.
Figure 5: Job levels

**Figure 5** shows that the majority, that is, 80% (55) of the respondents, are at Director Level, while 15% (10) of the respondents are at Chief Director Level. 3% (2) of respondents are at Director-General level and 2% (1) of the respondents are at Deputy Director-General level.

Figure 6: Education level

**Figure 6** above shows that 34% (23) of the respondents have junior degrees, 31% (21) have Masters Degrees, while 20% (14) of the respondents have Honours degrees and. It is worth noting that 5% (3) of the respondents have a Doctorate degree, whereas 7% (5) of the respondents are the holders of Diplomas, and 2% (1) of the respondents have Grade 12. Although the findings cannot be generalised, **Figure 6** illustrates that many SMS members in the public service are well educated.
As illustrated in Figure 7 above, 95% of the respondents are permanently employed, while 5% of the respondents are on contract. This is an indication that there is job security for employees in the public service.

3.4 ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

3.4.1 Skills Development linked to Departmental Goals and Objectives

Departmental goals and objectives are the focus results that a department seeks to achieve by its existence and operation. They are predetermined and describe future results towards which present efforts are directed. Within organizations, skills development is the intended output in ensuring quality service delivery and individual self-career development. Skills development is concerned with the enhancement of employees to improve the department’s effectiveness and efficiencies within the employees’ specific areas of responsibility. The ultimate objective is to improve the levels of service delivery by the department. Departments embark on skills development for purposes of improving performance at work and indirectly this contributes to improvement of the quality of life of employees through prospects of upward mobility.

It is important for employees to understand the goals and objectives to be achieved which emanate from the mandate, vision and mission of the department. The strategy of the department, which is an approach taken to achieve goals and objectives, also need to be communicated to employees clearly and precisely. It is more important to ensure that education and training planned by departments is informed by the analysis of skills needed to achieve the goals and objectives of the department.
Research on education, training and development indicates that there is always a need to acquire and sharpen employees' capabilities so that they are able to perform present and future responsibilities. According to the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995, education and training is a critical mechanism to develop the professional capacities of public servants and to promote institutional change. PALAMA, as a key vehicle for public service education and training ensured that it addresses the skills shortage by designing programmes that are meant to develop employees' skills.

The study revealed that, 94% of the respondents confirmed that there is a link between skills development and the departments’ goals and objectives. Respondents confirmed that there was relevance in the training offered by PALAMA and they gained an in-depth understanding of the importance of the link between government objectives and their responsibilities.

3.4.2 Link between training and personal development plans

In terms of the SMS Handbook, 2003, departments should make provision for a “self-assessment” approach in order to identify training needs. Such is conducted in the context of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) and the Personal Development Plan (PDP). The intended purpose for such initiatives as provided by different regulatory frameworks is to ensure continuous career development, which will eventually improve service delivery within the public service.

The findings of this study illustrates that 66% of the respondents stated that the training they attended at PALAMA was part of their PDP. This implies that it was training that was intended to address specific developmental needs as identified by the individual employee and agreed upon by the responsible manager. The training would strengthen management capacity to drive the transformation agenda of the departments, as provided for in the SMS Handbook, (2003). Other respondents (34%) stated that their training was not linked to their PDPs, but they attended the training because they were selected by their superiors to attend the training as it was deemed to be aligned to the departmental objectives. In some instances, respondents said they attended training due to late cancellation by their colleagues. It can therefore be concluded that some of the SMS members attended training that aligned to their developmental needs and the objectives of departments.
3.4.3 Relevance of training to daily responsibilities

Job training is an important step of getting employees up to speed with the expected standards, as well as new and changing roles of a position. Most organizations utilize either informal training or formal training programme that rely on the job descriptions and functions of employees to identify training interventions and outline training objectives. PALAMA provides formal training programs that are needs-based and competency-based. The study revealed that, 87% of the respondents confirmed that there is always relevance in the training provided by PALAMA to their daily activities and responsibilities. An assumption could be made that after training, employees perform effectively and efficiently.

Only 13% of the respondents indicated that it is not always the case that the training offered is relevant to their work. The implications of undertaking training that is not relevant to an employee’s responsibilities is that the employee’s performance will not improve and this has an impact on the overall performance of a component and ultimately the department. The cost incurred for the training could be deemed as wasteful as no positive results in terms of performance were yielded. Planning for training as per employee and departmental needs is very important as it is meant to address the skills gaps and to curb resources (finance and time) wastage through enhanced productivity.

3.4.4 Promotion of professional ethics, group learning and innovation

Section 195 of the Constitution, 1996, states the basic values and principles governing public administration. One of the principles stipulated in Section (1) (a) states that “a high standard of professional ethics must be promoted and maintained”. This implies that departments are expected to promote professional ethics throughout their leadership and management practices and training. There are different definitions and understanding of professional ethics. Research indicates that “Professional Ethics is a code of values and norms that actually guide practical decisions when they are made professionally. Professional ethics is a fully idealised set of values whose purpose is to explicate the best possible world in which the given profession could be working” (Airaksinen, n.d.: 28). This definition implies that if an employee acts according to

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8 Timo, Airaksinen. The Philosophy of Professional Ethics. Institutional issues involving ethics and justice_ Vol. 1
certain norms, standards and values that are set within the workplace, his/her behaviour may be classified as ethical. That is an example of a rule-based approach as a basis for ethical conduct. Furthermore, professional ethics encompasses the personal, organizational and corporate standards of behaviour expected of professionals.

The study revealed that 87% of the respondents confirmed that there is continuous promotion of professional ethics, group learning (referring to change in behavior that is informed by the experiences gained during training and interaction with others); and innovation during the training (attributed to employing different measures towards challenge process). On the contrary, 13% of the respondents indicated that there was no experience gained during training. In as much as the respondents confirmed that promotion of ethics during training was evident and are currently aware of the importance of ethics in the workplace, the PSC continues to deal with public administration related complaints and grievances that are not only questioning compliance with policies but also questions the professional ethics of senior management. It is important for employees to demonstrate the ability to engage in ethical behaviour and reasoning to explore and resolve ethics related issues and dilemmas. Understanding the consequences of ethical or non-ethical actions and making ethically sound decisions in the workplace is important.

3.4.5 Management Competencies, Skills Gap and Administrative Processes

Competence as defined in the Public Service Regulations, 2001, as amended, is “the blend of knowledge, skills, behaviour and aptitude that a person can apply in the work environment, which indicates a person’s ability to meet the requirements of a specific post”. Chapter 5 of the SMS Handbook, 2003, presents the Competency Framework applicable to the public service. The competency framework is intended to assist in professionalizing the SMS level by ensuring that a consistent approach to performance management and improvement initiatives is implemented. The competency framework is more focused on the critical generic competencies which senior managers should possess.

The following competencies as per the SMS handbook, 2003, are viewed as critical for high performance for senior managers: Strategic Capability and Leadership, People Management and Empowerment, Programme and Project Management, Financial
Management, Change Management. These mentioned competencies fall in the category of core generic leadership and management competencies that describe thought processes that influence behaviours and the functional characteristics that represent what needs to be done by SMS members in demonstrating their leadership and managerial roles. The other competencies fall in the category of process competencies and determine how leaders make good or poor decisions. The competencies are Knowledge Management, Service Delivery, Innovation, Problem Solving and Analysis, Client Orientation and Customer Focus and Communication.

PALAMA in its training plans had to ensure that the above mentioned competencies are covered so as to assist in the development of areas that show less competency levels in Senior Managers. The study revealed that 84% of the respondents acknowledged that the training offered by PALAMA addressed the skills gap identified in terms of the SMS. Below is Figure 8, which presents what respondents indicated as areas in which competency were improved after completing the PALAMA training.

![Figure 8: Areas of improvement after training](image)

30% of the respondents indicated that their strategic planning and operational management ability improved and 27% of the respondents reported improvements in policy analysis and implementation. With respect to financial management, 22% of the respondents reported improvement while 15% of the respondents said they improved in on the area of human resource management. Only 4% of respondents said they improved on project management and 2% improved on communication. Despite these
Improvements in some of the areas, some respondents indicated the need for further training.

In Figure 9 below, the areas for further training as per respondents are presented.

![Figure 9: Areas needing further training](image)

The priority area of training, as indicated by 33% of the respondents, is financial management, followed by policy analysis and implementation, which was identified by 25% of the respondents. Overall, 16% and 15% of the respondents identified the need for improvement in Human Resource Management (HRM) and strategic planning and operations management, respectively. In spite of the fact that a small percentage (4%) of respondents reported improvement in project management, only 9% identified project management as an area of need. The same observation applies to communication, which was identified by 2% of the respondents. The findings confirm that there is a need for training for SMS members in the Public Service. The approach to providing training should not be generic, but more specific to individual or groups of employees and departments.

In the report on the “2011-2013 Statistical Analysis of Competency Assessment Data”, the DPSA (2014) identified financial management as one of the areas of weakness identified through the competency assessment. Overall, the report indicates that the average competency levels of the 5702 SMS members who participated in the competency assessment between 2011 and 2013 is 2.5 for Directors, 2.6 for Chief
Directors and 2.7 for Deputy Directors-General and Directors-General. This illustrates that the findings of this study corroborate the DPSA findings.

The study has confirmed that several SMS members attended various training programmes provided through PALAMA and they are of the view that the training has had a positive impact on their performance. However, the respondents have identified the need for further training in other areas that are provided by PALAMA. It can therefore be argued that the manner in which the candidates are identified for training is not systematic, hence, training is required in areas where interventions have already been implemented. Since the respondents were positive about the impact of the training on their work, it can also be argued that many of the departmental performance and service delivery challenges are partly linked to skills gaps and employee attitude and commitment to serve the public. Therefore, future training interventions should address generic competencies and soft skills such as employee attitude and commitment, which are integral to the values and principles that govern public administration.
CHAPTER FOUR: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION
4.1 RECOMMENDATIONS

In this section, recommendations to address the challenges alluded to in Chapter 3 and to strengthen areas which were found to be ineffective are presented.

Cognisant of the limitations outlined in Chapter 1 and the fact that the study has been overtaken by events, that is, the establishment and launching of the National School of Government (NSG) in October 2013:

1) It is recommended that the NSG should commission a holistic assess on capacity building programmes for SMS members and their return on organisational performance, in addition to individual employee performance. For such study to be successful, it is important to assess whether the current performance management and development system is assisting in identifying, addressing and improving organizational performance.

2) It is recommended that measures to foster positive attitudes towards the call to serve citizens professionally and in line with the Batho Pele principles and Constitutional values and principles should be vigorously implemented.

4.2 CONCLUSION

The study assessed the effectiveness of training provided by PALAMA in improving skills and competencies of senior managers in the public service. The SMS competency framework, is aimed at improving and enhancing the leadership and management capability of departments. The study revealed that PALAMA, as a government training institution, managed to train senior managers as per departmental needs and gaps identified in the core management competencies as stated in the competency framework. The majority of senior managers who participated indicated that areas such as Planning and Operational Management, Policy Analysis and Implementation and Financial Management has improved. Such has left a sense of being empowered to lead and manage service delivery programmes and to improve the performance of their departments. The areas requiring further training by the respondents are in line with the DPSA’s 2014 report on the “2011-2013 Statistical Analysis of Competency Assessment Data”. This clearly indicates that in spite of the limited sample, the findings for the study provide a valuable source of information for curriculum design and prioritisation of training.
APPENDIX A: QUESTIONNAIRE
Dear SMS members

You are invited to participate in a study conducted by the PSC. The purpose is to assess the impact of training offered by PALAMA between 2008 and 2012.

Please note the following

- The study involves an anonymous survey. Your name will not appear on the questionnaire and your responses will be treated as strictly confidential. You cannot be identified in person based on your response.
- Your participation in this study is very important to the PSC. Please respond to all questions in the attached questionnaire as honestly as possible. This should not take more than 10-15 minutes of your time.
- The information collected will be used for the purpose of this study and will form part of a report that will be published by the PSC.
- You are free to request a copy of the report at any given time once the study has been completed. The report will be made available on the PSC website: www.psc.gov.za
- For more information and clarity contact: Ms. Amanda Kelengeshe Tel: 012 352 1146 and or Ms. Dorcas Lesenyeho Tel: 012 352 1065

Please append your signature or mark with an X to indicate that

- You have read and understood the information provided above.
- You are consenting to the study voluntarily

______________________________  ____________________________
Respondent’s signature              Date
### Part 1: Personal details (Mark with X where options are provided)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicate your Department</th>
<th>Indicate whether: National</th>
<th>Provincial</th>
<th>State your Province:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>African</td>
<td>Colored</td>
<td>Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home language (write in full):</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age group</td>
<td>30-39 yrs.</td>
<td>40-49 yrs.</td>
<td>50-59 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your highest level of education?</td>
<td>Grade 12</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
<td>Diploma/Advanced Diploma</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indicate the nature of your employment</td>
<td>Permanent</td>
<td>Fixed-Term</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For how long have you worked for government including PS, Local Government, Agencies, Entities, etc.?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For how long have you been in the Public Service?</td>
<td>0-5 yrs.</td>
<td>6-15 yrs.</td>
<td>16-25 yrs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is your job level?</td>
<td>Director General</td>
<td>Deputy Director General</td>
<td>Chief Director</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For how long have you been in that position?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specify the type of training you received from PALAMA and the year:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Include training targeted at MMS and SMS only)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the training part of your PDP?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If it was not part of your PDP, what criterion was used to select you?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Part 2: Training offered by PALAMA

Part 2 aims at establishing capacity building initiatives, as to whether as an individual you managed to obtain some level of applicable knowledge through training that was offered by PALAMA. Please read each statement or question carefully, then indicate your opinion on a scale of 1 (never) to 4 (always). Please do not skip any statement or questions.

SCALE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Were there clear links between government’s strategic objectives and the training offered?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Was the training received applicable to your day to day activities?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the training promote professional ethics, group learning and innovation?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did the training address current administrative processes or issues?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that management competencies were addressed through that training?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Do you think that the training provided addressed skills gaps identified in government?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you receive a certificate of competence after completion of the training and assessments?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Part 3: Competency Assessment

Part 3 looks at your level of performance after completing training from PALAMA. Please read each statement or question carefully, and rate yourself by choosing from the options on a scale of 1 (poor) to 4 (excellent), that is ‘poor’, average ‘good’ or excellent’. Please do not skip any statement or questions.

SCALE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>STATEMENTS</th>
<th>SCALE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your ability to identify organizational goals and match them with expected skills from individuals?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your ability to interpret and apply policies to enhance performance of one’s team?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your level of participation and promotion of teamwork?</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

12. Indicate performance areas in which you developed competence as a result of the training you received from PALAMA

______________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________
____________________________________________________________________________________________

13. Indicate competency areas that need further training

______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________