RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, CAREER PATHING AND UTILISATION OF SENIOR MANAGEMENT SERVICE MEMBERS’ EXPERTISE AND SKILLS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
AUGUST 2017
Vision

A champion of Public Service excellence in democratic governance in South Africa.

Mission

To promote the constitutionally enshrined democratic values and principles throughout the Public Service by -

- investigating, monitoring, evaluating the organisation and administration, and personnel practices;
- proposing measures to ensure the effective and efficient performance;
- issuing directions with regards to personnel procedures relating to the recruitment, transfers, promotions and dismissals;
- advising on personnel practices; and
- reporting on its activities.
FOREWORD

The Public Sector, inclusive of the Public Service and local government, remains the largest ‘single’ employer in South Africa. The South African government is a human capital intensive organisation and its ability to deliver on its mandate is largely dependent on the availability of a competent, professional and committed workforce.

Mindful of the importance of human capital in enhancing government’s ability to deliver quality service to the citizens, the Public Service Commission (PSC) has over the years conducted a number of studies on various aspects of human resource management policies and practices. Findings from all reports highlighted several challenges, including the lack of formal career management programmes in the Public Service, career uncertainty and high turnover rate at the HoD level, and a relatively high turnover at other levels of the Senior Management Service. The PSC made recommendations to address the challenges identified in each report and some of the recommendations were implemented by the employer while others were subsequently incorporated into the National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030. In spite of the recommendations and interventions made this far, some of the challenges alluded to in previous PSC reports and the NDP persist.

In line with its mandate to investigate, monitor and evaluate the organisation and administration and the personnel practices in the Public Service, the PSC embarked on this study to gain an in-depth understanding of practices related to Recruitment, Retention, Career pathing and Utilisation of Senior Management Service members’ expertise and skills in the Public Service.

The PSC is of the view that the findings of this study will shed more insight on the underlying causes and the recommendations presented will be given serious consideration by different role players.

PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION
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- Senior managers from the SOEs and private sectors companies that participated in the study
- Deputy Directors-General,
- Chiefs of Staff in the Premiers’ Office,
- Chief Directors, and
- Directors.

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<td>Chief Director</td>
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<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
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<td>CORE</td>
<td>Code of Remuneration</td>
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<td>Centre for Public Service Innovation</td>
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<td>D</td>
<td>Director</td>
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<td>DG</td>
<td>Director General</td>
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<td>DDG</td>
<td>Deputy Director General</td>
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<td>DIRCO</td>
<td>Department of International Relations and Cooperation</td>
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<td>DPME</td>
<td>Department of Performance Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<td>DPSA</td>
<td>Department of Public Service and Administration</td>
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<td>EA</td>
<td>Executive Authority</td>
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<td>HCD</td>
<td>Human Capital Development</td>
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<td>National Development Plan</td>
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<td>National School of Government</td>
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<td>OCHRO</td>
<td>Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer</td>
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<td>OPM</td>
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<td>SETA</td>
<td>Sector Education and Training Authority</td>
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<td>SESCDP</td>
<td>Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program</td>
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<td>SOE</td>
<td>State Owned Enterprise</td>
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<td>SMS</td>
<td>Senior Management Service</td>
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<td>Veterans Affairs</td>
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<td>Veterans Benefits Administration</td>
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<td>WSP</td>
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The prerequisite to any organisation’s efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness is having the right persons for the job and in the right place. Equally important, is that the right persons must be appropriately utilised. Therefore, recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills are critical in ensuring organisational performance. In South Africa the significance of recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of expertise and skills are also emphasised in various legislative frameworks and National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030.

In the execution of its oversight mandate, the PSC has identified persistent challenges with the recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills, especially at the Head of Department (HoD) level. The challenges met led the PSC to conduct a study on Recruitment, Retention, Career pathing and Utilisation of Senior Management Service members’ expertise and skills in the Public Service. The overall aim of the study is to gain an in-depth understanding of practices related to recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills in order to contribute towards building a capable, career oriented and professional Public Service that underpins a developmental state in South Africa.

In terms of Section 196 (4) of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, the PSC has a mandate to monitor and investigate adherence to applicable procedures, propose measures to ensure effective and efficient performance, and advise national and provincial organs of state regarding personnel practices in the Public Service. Thus, the issues dealt with in the study fall within the mandate of the PSC.

The methodology followed in conducting the study included documentary analysis, semi-structured interviews, survey questionnaires conducted electronically and a roundtable discussion. Primary data was collected from national and provincial departments, selected State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and private sector companies.

The overall findings from the study are that there is a comprehensive framework and procedures to guide the recruitment and selection of SMS members in the Public Service. However, the existing framework has gaps and its effectiveness is influenced and impacted by various factors and challenges during implementation. The Public Service Human Resource Management (HRM) framework does not address critical issues related to Senior Management Service (SMS) career pathing, retention and utilisation of expertise and skills adequately, and this results in loss of expertise, inconsistent practices, organisational instability and uneven performance. The major factors that influence the recruitment of SMS members include the following:
The open recruitment system can lead to employee dissatisfaction, low staff morale, organisational instability and poor employee and organisational performance because it frustrates the upward mobility of competent internal candidates.

There is general support for contract appointment at the HoD level, however, the method used to determine the suitability of candidates to serve as HoDs should be strengthened before candidates can be appointed on a 5 year term, renewal for another term subject to performance.

The current method of appointing HoDs which makes provision for the involvement of EAs during the recruitment and selection process is not supported by HoDs who participated in the study. Instead, the participants support the NDP Vision 2030 recommendation that the recruitment and selection of HoDs should be managed through a hybrid approach, with minimum involvement of political principals.

Because of the existing current policy gaps and implementation challenges, most of the SMS members who participated in the study indicated that they will never apply for the position of HoD. To encourage existing Public Service employees to apply for HoD positions without fear of the fixed term contract and its potential of not being renewed, participants proposed the introduction of 5 year contracts uniformly at the national and provincial level, renewable subject to performance or even permanent appointment after few years of proven satisfactory performance. Other proposals included creating job security for HoDs by protecting their continued employment when there is a change of government administration or reshuffling, and implementation of skills and professional development opportunities to ensure the employability of HoDs in the future, especially after the end of term of their contracts.

To address the identified challenges and enhance the recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of SMS members’ expertise and skills in the Public Service, it is recommended that government should review the current HRM framework in order to address the recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills in the Public Service adequately. The review should take into consideration, amongst others, the recommendations of the NDP Vision 2030 and provisions of the Public Administration Management Act, 2014, on transfers and secondment of employees across the three spheres of government. In addition, an overarching policy framework to guide retention, career pathing and utilisation of SMS members’ expertise and skills in other public institutions and across the three spheres of government is critical and should therefore be developed.
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Government’s ability to deliver on its mandate is largely dependent on the availability of a competent, professional, skilled and committed workforce. The Public Service is a human capital intensive organisation and human capital is the primary source of organisational productivity, innovation, competitiveness and responsiveness.¹

According to the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) Persal data for the period ending February 2017, there were 1 441 466 employees in the South African Public Service. This figure excludes employees in local government, state owned entities and agencies, Defence, Commissioners of chapter nine (9) and ten (10) institutions, Judges, Magistrates and Special Advisors. Of the 1 441 466 employees, 10 187 form part of the Senior Management Service (SMS).² The numbers support the view that the Public Service remains the largest ‘single’ employer in South Africa.

Given the country’s discriminatory past, persistent economic challenges such as unemployment and related social challenges such as poverty and inequality, it is undeniable that the availability and development of human capital is key to the achievement of South Africa’s economic and social transformation agenda. According to the Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI)’s Human Development Report, the adoption of a comprehensive Human Capital Development (HCD) “framework would enhance all the above strategies as HCD represents a planned, strategic and integrated approach to managing and developing the entire value chain of human capital on whose skills and capabilities the success of the public service depends.” ³

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has over the years conducted a number of studies on various aspects of the career incidents of senior managers, including Heads of Department (HoDs) in the Public Service. In the 2000 report, the PSC⁴ highlighted the lack of formal career management programmes in the Public Service. Some of the reasons identified for the non-existence of career management programmes included high work pressure, high number of vacancies, lack of expertise and knowledge about talent management, and the fact that career management is not deemed a priority.

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The PSC’s 2008 Report on the Turnover Rate of HoDs\textsuperscript{5} noted that whilst the limited employment contracts for HoDs were established to attract outside talent and manage performance, all current and former HoDs interviewed as part of the study agreed that this system is problematic as it creates high levels of uncertainty for HoDs. The report further noted that whilst the system of appointing HoDs on contract was not a matter of deep concern, anxieties relating to future employment possibilities was very high on the agenda of HoDs given that some officials give up permanent and secure positions in the Public Service in order to take up HoD positions. The uncertainty was of concern to the individual candidates and the PSC because many officials who apply for and get appointed to HoD positions are career public servants and remain committed to serving the South African society from within the Public Service. Whilst recognizing that the HoD position is a contract position, career civil servants felt disadvantaged and asserted that the system discourages internal candidates given the high level of job insecurity and uncertainty on the re-appointment or redeployment of HoDs at the end of term, challenges at the executive interface, and biased management of performance and incentives.\textsuperscript{6}

In the Report on Strategic Issues Emanating from the Evaluation of HoDs,\textsuperscript{7} the PSC noted the importance of the Public Service to not only ensure the recruitment of capable senior managers as HoDs, but also that the expertise and experience of these HoDs are not prematurely lost to the Public Service.\textsuperscript{8} The report further noted that only a small percentage of the initial cohort of HoDs who joined the Public Service soon after democratization in 1994 still remained in the Public Service. These HoDs were a critical part of the conceptual phase of the country’s Public Service transformation process, and through involvement in this process, they gained firsthand experience on the challenges encountered and the strategies implemented. As these HoDs continue to exit from the employ of the Public Service due to multiple factors, including those related to contract termination and strained relations at the political-administrative level, there is a risk that their accumulated expertise and experience may be completely lost to public administration.\textsuperscript{9}

With regard to retention, the PSC published a factsheet on the duration of employment per grade of SMS members in 2011,\textsuperscript{10} where it was reported that the turnover at the SMS levels was relatively high. The recent intervention in the form of a Directive from the Minister for Public Service and Administration (MPSA) regulating minimum qualifications and experience required for appointment and promotion at the SMS level is aimed at addressing a number of challenges.

\textsuperscript{6} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{8} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{9} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{10} Public Service Commission, 2011. *Fact Sheet on the Duration of Employment per grade of Senior Management Service members*. Republic of South Africa.
including, the turnover rate, capability and competence of the SMS echelon, whilst also providing for some level of career progression for career public servants.

There were related observations and challenges that were made in other strategic documents such as the National Development Plan (NDP), Vision 2030. The NDP, Vision 2030,\(^\text{11}\) identifies instability of the administrative leadership, erosion of accountability, skills deficit, and low staff morale that lead to unevenness in capacity and performance. According to the NDP, reporting and recruitment structures have allowed for political interference in selecting and managing senior staff, thus resulting in unnecessary turbulence at the senior management level. This has in turn undermined the morale of public servants and citizens’ confidence in the state’s capacity to deliver.

The NDP further makes observations at junior levels where there has been insufficient focus on providing stimulating career paths that ensure the reproduction of skills and foster a sense of professional common purpose. Whilst blaming weak managerial capacity and lack of leadership for this, the NDP notes that the state needs a clear vision from where the next generation of public servants will come from and how specialist professional skills will be reproduced. This is critical in order for the Public Service to ensure a constant feeder for middle and senior management. According to the PSC, without addressing the capacity deficits of the Public Service, South Africa’s goal of becoming a capable and developmental state will be compromised.\(^\text{12}\)

Informed by the findings of its previous studies, the assertions made in the NDP and continued concerns about the capacity of the Public Service to deliver on the objectives of a developmental state, the PSC decided to embark on this study to gain an in-depth understanding of current practices related to recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of SMS members in the Public Service. The findings of this study will enable the PSC to propose and recommend solutions for consideration by the executive and administrative leadership of the Public Service and key stakeholders such as Parliament, public service employees, organised labour and other interest groups.

1.2 OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The overall aim of this study is to gain an in-depth understanding of practices related to recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers in order to contribute towards building a capable, career oriented and professional Public Service that underpins a capable and developmental state in South Africa. The specific objectives of the study are:

- To determine the level of awareness and extent of implementation of policies on the recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers in the Public Service.


To determine the factors that influence recruitment practices of senior managers and their impact on the professionalisation of the Public Service.

To determine the factors that influence the retention and career pathing of senior managers and their impact on professionalisation of the Public Service.

To explore the extent of utilisation of current and former senior managers’ expertise and skills in the Public Service.

To propose recommendations that will inform the Public Service Human Resource Management and Development (HRM&D) policy framework.

1.3 THE MANDATE OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

The PSC derives its mandate from sections 195 and 196 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996. Section 196 (4) (b) of the Constitution, 1996, read in conjunction with Section 9 and 10 of the PSC Act, mandates the PSC to investigate, monitor and evaluate the organisation and administration, and the personnel practices of the Public Service. In terms of Section 196 (4) (f) of the Constitution, 1996, the Commission may either of its own accord or on receipt of any complaint, (i) investigate and evaluate the application of personnel and public administration practices, and report to the relevant executive authority and legislature; (iv) advise national and provincial organs of state regarding personnel practices in the Public Service including those relating to the recruitment, appointment, transfer, discharge and other aspects of the careers of employees in the Public Service. Therefore the scope of this project falls within the mandate of the PSC.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This section of the report explains the overall research methodology applied during the study. The section also discusses the procedures followed in selecting participants, data collection and analysis in order to address the objectives outlined in section 1.2 above. The research methodology outlined serves as a master plan or logical framework that explains how the study was executed and how the various components of the study contribute towards the realisation of the research objectives. The methodology adopted in the study is elaborated below:

1.4.1 Scope

The following was the scope of the study:

- Former and current Heads of Departments (HoDs) and other SMS members (i.e. Deputy Directors-General (DDGs), Chief Directors (CDs) and Directors (Ds) from both national and provincial department; and
- Selected executive senior managers from state-owned companies (SOEs) and private sector companies in South Africa.
1.4.2 Sampling of participants

Purposive and simple random sampling procedures were applied to select participants for the study. A purposive sampling procedure was used for the identification of former and current HoDs and executive senior managers from SOEs and private sector companies. A simple random sampling procedure was used for other SMS members below the level of the HoDs in national and provincial departments.

1.4.3 Data collection

A combination of qualitative and quantitative research methods was employed in conducting this study. Data was collected from both primary and secondary data sources. For primary data collection, four complementary interview schedules were developed for each of the following groups of participants: former and current HoDs; and senior managers from SOEs and private sector companies. With respect to other SMS members in the Public Service, an electronic self-administered questionnaire was designed and circulated for completion by DDGs, CDs and Ds from all national and provincial departments. The rationale for using the electronic self-administered survey questionnaire was to reach more participants to ensure validity and generalisation of findings.

The electronic survey questionnaires and interview schedules included structured statements and questions, which participants had to agree or disagree with and where necessary, they were requested to substantiate their responses. The electronic survey questionnaires and interview schedules were piloted with selected few SMS members within the PSC before finalisation to test the functionality of the electronic system and the relevance of the survey. The results of the pilot were positive and the study was rolled out throughout the Public Service.

Secondary data was collected through the review of key documents and literature. The following documents were reviewed: PSC reports and literature on recruitment, retention, career pathing and skills utilisation practices in selected SOEs and private sector companies in South Africa and other countries. In addition, an analysis of prescripts that are relevant to the recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills, particularly HoDs in the Public Service, was conducted.

A roundtable discussion was convened to discuss the draft report with former and current HoDs, other senior managers and the respondents from national and provincial departments, and key respondents in order to validate and enrich the findings and recommendations.

1.4.4 Data analysis

In analysing collected data, both quantitative and qualitative methods were used. Excel was used to capture and analyse quantitative data, while qualitative data was analysed according to thematic areas informed by the objectives of the study.
1.5 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations were encountered during the study:

- There were concerns regarding anonymity and confidentiality by some current HoDs, hence the response rate was not high regardless of the follow ups made.
- The inaccessibility of former HoDs from national and provincial departments made it impossible to collect data from them.
- There was a low response rate from Deputy Directors-General (DDGs) and Chief Directors (CDs), but the information collected from the HoDs, few DDGs, CDs and Ds was sufficient to draw conclusions and make inferences.
- Although small in number, erroneous and incomplete electronic survey questionnaires by some SMS members could not be included in the study. However the number was insignificant to affect the findings.
- Due to financial constraints, there was reliance on the contact persons in the respective departments to distribute the electronic survey questionnaires to all SMS members and make follow ups.

Regardless of the above identified limitations, the information gathered is adequate for the PSC to make the findings and recommendations contained in this report.

1.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The PSC upholds the Chapter 10, Section 195 Constitutional Values and Principles (CVPs) governing public administration. The following ethical considerations were observed in the study:

- All the participants and respondents were informed of the purpose and objectives of the study;
- They were assured that their responses will be used for the purposes of the study; and
- They were assured that the findings will be aggregated in order to protect their rights to confidentiality and anonymity.

Therefore, acceptance of the interview appointment and return of the electronic survey questionnaire was considered as consent to voluntarily participate in the study.

1.7 STRUCTURE OF THE REPORT

The remainder of report is structured as follows:

**Chapter 2:** Highlights the legislative and regulatory framework applicable to the study.

**Chapter 3:** Presents a review and analysis of local and international literature on recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills.

**Chapter 4:** Presents key findings of the study.

**Chapter 5:** Presents the recommendations and conclusion of the study.
CHAPTER 2: LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents an overview of the applicable legislative, policy and regulatory frameworks underpinning recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of Senior Managers’ expertise and skills in the Public Service in South Africa.

2.2 OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC SERVICE LEGISLATION, REGULATIONS AND POLICIES

2.2.1 Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996

The Constitution is the supreme legal framework that governs every conduct, policy and process within the country. It provides basic guidelines to all public and private sector legislation, policy and regulatory frameworks. Chapter 10, Section 195 (1) (h) and (i) of the Constitution stipulates that good human-resource management and career-development practices must be cultivated to maximise human potential; and “public administration must be broadly representative of the South African people, with employment and personnel management practices based on ability, objectivity, fairness, and the need to redress the imbalances of the past to achieve broad representation”. In addition, according to Section 196 (4) (c) of the Constitution, powers and functions of the PSC include proposing “measures to ensure effective and efficient performance within the public service”.13

2.2.2 Public Service Act, 1994, (Act 103 of 1994), as amended

In Chapter II, Section 7 (a) and (b), the Act provides for the powers and duties of the Executive Authority concerning the internal organisation of a department. This includes the career incidents of employees other than HoDs, such as recruitment, appointments, performance management, discipline, service termination and all other career incidences of employees of the department. In Chapter III, Section 7 (3) (b) the Act stipulates that the 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.14

The Public Service Act (PSA) takes the Section 195 Constitutional principles one step further by requiring, in section 11 that “all persons who qualify for appointment, transfer or promotion shall be considered”. Chapter IV, Section 11 (2) (b) of the Act states that the evaluation of applicants shall be based on training, skills, competence, knowledge and the need for redress in accordance with the Employment Equity Act of 1998.

2.2.3 Public Service Regulations, 2016

The Public Service Regulations (PSR) is subordinate to the Public Service Act (PSA) and elaborates on the powers conferred upon Executive Authorities in terms of the PSA. The PSR

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14 Public Service Act, 1994, as amended, Department of Public Service and Administration. Republic of South Africa.
provides clarity on the implementation of the PSA in order to enable HoDs to manage their departments effectively and efficiently with the support and guidance of the Executive Authority. The PSR addresses a number of mandatory elements and key principles on which recruitment, retention, utilisation and development of human resources must be based. Some of the principles have general application whilst others focus particularly on the Senior Management Service (SMS). General principles include open competition and fair selection processes. According to PSR 2016, Section 26(2)

“When preparing a human resource plan for his or her department, an executive authority shall (a) assess the human resources necessary to perform his or her department’s functions; (b) assess existing human resources by race, gender, disability, age and any other relevant criteria; (c) identify gaps between what is required under sub-regulation (2)(a) and what exists under sub-regulation(2)(b) and prioritise interventions to address the identified gaps; (d) consider the employment equity plan contemplated in regulation 27; and (e) consider the available budgeted funds, including funds for the remaining period of the relevant medium-term expenditure framework, for the recruitment, retention, utilisation and development of human resources according to the department’s requirements; and (f) take into account any other requirements as may be directed by the Minister.\(^{15}\)

2.2.4 Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act 66 of 1995), as amended

The Labour Relations Act (LRA) rules out discrimination in the work place and puts in place measures for the protection and promotion of economic development, labour peace and democratisation of the workplace. The LRA protects the rights of the employee and the employer and outlines mechanisms for dispute resolution. According to Chapter II Section 5 (3), “no person may advantage, or promise to advantage, an employee or a person seeking employment in exchange for that person not exercising any right conferred by this Act or not participating in any proceedings in terms of this Act”.\(^{16}\)

2.2.5 Employment Equity Act, 1998 (Act 55 of 1998), as amended

The purpose of the Employment Equity Act (EEA) is to achieve equity in the workplace by, amongst others, promoting equal opportunities and fair treatment in employment through the elimination of unfair discrimination and implementing affirmative action measures to redress the disadvantages in employment experienced by designated groups to ensure their equitable representation in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce. Section 15 (2) (d) (i) seeks to ensure the equitable representation of suitably qualified people from designated groups in all occupational categories and levels in the workforce and to retain and develop people from designated groups and to implement appropriate training measures, including measures in terms of an Act of Parliament providing for skills development.\(^{17}\)

\(^{15}\) Public Service Regulations, 2016. Department of Public Service and Administration. Republic of South Africa.


2.2.6 Skills Development Act, 1998 (Act 97 of 1998) as amended

The current legislation in the form of the Skills Development Act (SDA) has been enacted in order to implement structures and processes to transform skills development in South Africa. One of the purposes of the SDA\textsuperscript{18} is to improve the employment prospects of persons previously disadvantaged by unfair discrimination. This purpose is in line with the Employment Equity Act. The SDA provided for the establishments of Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs), The SETAs are required to develop sector skills developments and to approve Workplace Skills Plans (WSP) from individual institutions affiliated with them. To this end, Public Service departments submit their WSPs to the Public Service Sector Education and Training Authorities (PSETA).

2.2.7 White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995

The aim of the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service is to establish a planning framework that will guide the creation and implementation of new policies and legislation aimed at transforming the South African Public Service.\textsuperscript{19} The White Paper calls for the elevation of the role and status of human resource development within the overall framework of government policy and the development of effective and lifelong career development paths for all categories of public servants through promotion and career advancement based on performance rather than on seniority or qualifications. The White Paper further advocates for the development of a coherent strategic framework for human resource development at both the national and provincial levels to ensure “optimal fit between the needs of the employee, the job, the organisation and the environment, so that employees reach their desired level of satisfaction and performance, and the organisation meets its goals.”

2.2.8 White Paper on Transforming Public Service, 1997

In terms of Section 7.2 (7.2.8) of this White Paper,\textsuperscript{20} human resource training, supervision and appraisal systems will need to be refocused on service delivery; and senior management must ensure that human and financial resources are shifted from inefficient and unnecessary activities and used instead to ensure that delivery of service standards can be met.

2.2.9 White Paper on Human Resources Management in the Public Services, 1998

The purpose of the White Paper on HRM in the Public Service (1997)\textsuperscript{21} is to provide a policy framework that will facilitate the development of human resource management practices which support an effective and efficient Public Service, geared for economic and social transformation.

\textsuperscript{18} The Skills Development Act 97 of 1998. Department of Labour, Republic of South Africa.

\textsuperscript{19} White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995, Department of Public Service Administration, Republic of South Africa.

\textsuperscript{20} White Paper on Transforming Public Service, 1997. Department of Public Service Administration, Republic of South Africa.

The White Paper further states that the Public Service values employees who are willing to devote themselves to a career in the service of the public, and there will be opportunities to develop their individual skills and abilities, provided these are in line with the Public Service's operational requirements. According to the White Paper, career management is the process by which the career aspirations of the individual employee are reconciled with the operational objectives of the organisation.

Accordingly, effective career management: (a) enables employees to maximise their career potential by availing themselves for job opportunities, training and development; and (b) enables employers to develop the organisation's human resource capacity while supporting, as far as possible, employees' career aspirations. The White Paper also states that the primary responsibility for career management rests with the employee. It is for individuals to determine, in light of their personal aspirations, the direction in which they wish their careers to advance, whether within or outside the Public Service. Departments also have a responsibility for career management, given the importance of human resource capacity in ensuring the achievement of operational and organisational objectives. Provincial administrations and national departments should therefore develop career management procedures, linked to their performance management systems, which comply with the following principles:

(i) The individual employee is responsible for his or her own career management. Employees have a duty to avail themselves for job training and development opportunities as they occur.

(ii) The employee's immediate manager is responsible for familiarising himself or herself at regular intervals with the employee's career aspirations, and for reaching an understanding with him or her about how these can best be met within the organisation's future operational objectives.

The manager should keep up to date with training and development opportunities which are likely to assist in meeting both the employee's career aspirations and the organisation's operational objectives. The manager should also inform the employee of such opportunities and support him/her to utilise them optimally.\(^{22}\)

### 2.2.10 Toolkit on Recruitment and Selection

The Toolkit\(^ {23} \) aims to provide a framework on the recruitment and selection procedures in the Public Service. The effectiveness of recruitment and selection is in itself dependent on the quality of HR planning, proper job descriptions and staffing requirements dictated by transformation and service delivery objectives. If these areas are neglected, this will inevitably spill over into the area of recruitment and selection, setting off an ever-increasing vicious circle.

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\(^{23}\) The Toolkit on Recruitment and Selection. Public Service Commission. Republic of South Africa.
Given the link between good quality recruitment and service delivery, the importance of the Toolkit is paramount. However, its importance is often overlooked.

2.2.11 Senior Management Service (SMS) Handbook, 2003, as amended

The Handbook provides clear and concise terms, the conditions of employment and the roles of SMS members. Chapter 2 of the Handbook encourages good practice in the recruitment and selection of members of the SMS, thereby assisting departments in appointing high quality candidates, while Chapter 4 describes the process and requirements of performance management and development for SMS members.24


Several years after the structural transformation of the historically divided public administration systems, a Presidential Review Commission (PRC) on the Reform and Transformation of the Public Service in South Africa25 was established to conduct a review of the structures and functions of the Public Service. The PRC's report, in Section 2.1.5.1, stated that “a professional public service requires professional leadership. International experience suggests that the senior official or officials responsible for exercising this leadership function should be located within the Office of the President, with the necessary management support. It would then be the responsibility of the designated officer (who could and perhaps should also be designated as Head of the Public Service) to promote the continuing development of the senior professional cadre.” … “As the DPSA is currently playing an important role in trying to exercise this leadership-function, it is recommended that this department be reconstituted as an Office of Public Management, located in the Office of the President.”

The Presidential Review Commission (PRC) on State Owned Entities (SOE)26 recommended that the appointment of Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of SOEs should be done by the Minister in the Presidency in concurrence with Cabinet, at the recommendation of the Board. The Board is responsible for the process of recruitment, assessment and career pathing of the nominated candidates. For the Board to manage sustainable development and retention of skills, the PRC recommended longer term employment contracts.

2.2.13 Public Administration Management Act, 2014

The Act27 was ratified by the President of the Republic on 22 December 2014 and its commencement will be effective on the date still to be proclaimed. Chapter 3 of the Act provides for the transfer and secondment of employees across the three spheres of government.

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With regard to the *individual transfers*, Section 5 (1) to (4) of the Act, subject to Sections 151(3), 153 and 197(4) of the Constitution, prescribes that “an employee may only be transferred where reasonable grounds exist; if the employee is suitably qualified, as envisaged in Section 20 (3) to (5) of the Employment Equity Act, 1998, for the intended position upon transfer; if the employee requests or consents in writing to the transfer; and within that institution by the relevant authority, or to another institution with the concurrence of the relevant executive authorities of the transferring and recipient institutions”.

The Act further states that if an employee is transferred between a national or provincial institution and a municipal institution or from one provincial or municipal institution to another provincial or municipal institution, “the transfer does not interrupt the employee’s continuity of employment; and the employee may not upon the transfer suffer any reduction in remuneration and conditions of service and may not be less favourable than those on which the employee was employed immediately before the transfer, unless the employee consents.”.

In terms of *secondment*, Section 6 (1) to (4) provides that an employee may be seconded to another institution or to any other organ of state in such manner, and on such terms and conditions as may be prescribed. “If the employee possesses the necessary skills and knowledge for the intended position at the time of the secondment; and if the employee requests or consents to the secondment; or in the absence of consent, after due consideration of any representations by the employee, if the secondment is justified. Any employee of an institution may only be seconded to another institution in consultation with the relevant executive authorities of the seconding and recipient institutions; or an organ of state other than an institution, on request of the organ of state and in consultation with the relevant authority of the seconding institution”.

Lastly, if an employee is seconded between a national or provincial institution and a municipal institution or from one provincial or municipal institution to another provincial or municipal institution, the remuneration and conditions of service of the employee upon the secondment are as agreed between the executive authorities of the transferring and recipient institutions and may not be less favourable than those on which the employee was employed immediately before the secondment, unless the employee consents.

2.3 CONCLUSION

The legislation, policies, regulations and strategic documents discussed above provide a framework for recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of the expertise and skills of senior managers, mainly in the Public Service and to some degree other public sector institutions. However, the main weakness is that the retention, career pathing and utilisation of competent current and former senior managers, especially heads of departments in the Public Service is not clearly defined. As a result of the lack of clarity there are previous HoDs whose
skills and expertise are not utilised. It is however noted that implementation of the Public Administration Management Act (2014) will, in the medium to long term, partially address the weakness regarding the retention, career pathing and utilisation of competent current and former senior managers in the Public Service, local government and other public sector institutions.
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW AND COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

3.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this chapter is two-fold, namely, to contextualise the importance of recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of former and current senior managers’ expertise and skills to enhance the performance of the Public Service; and to explore strategies and lessons on how recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of former and current senior managers are undertaken in the private sector and public sector in other countries. The analysis in the following sections will also illustrate that recruitment and retention represent different but complementary processes that strengthen the career pathing and utilisation of staff on a fulltime, part-time or contractual basis.

3.2 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF RECRUITMENT

Recruitment is a process of finding and employing the most suitable, qualified and competent candidate for a position, from within or outside an organisation, in a timely and cost-effective manner. The recruitment process includes analysing the requirements of a position, attracting applicants to the position, screening and selecting applicants, hiring and integrating the new employee into the organisation. Irrespective of whether it is the public or private sector, effective recruitment is important because it infuses existing organisational capacity and competitiveness with new skills (Swanepoel, Erasmus & Schenk, 2008; Dessler, 2011). This assertion is supported by modern economic theory, which highlights human capital and the acquisition of people with exceptional skills, knowledge, experience and attitude as a high priority in organisations today (Brindusoiu, 2013). This makes human capital more important for organisations than having the best technology and physical resources because the effectiveness and contribution of the latter resources is dependent on the capabilities of human capital (Ballantyne, 2009).

3.3 RETENTION STRATEGIES AND BENEFITS

As will be evident in the discussions below, employee retention and career pathing are interrelated, however, the two are not the same. Focus in this section is on employee retention, however, the interdependence with career pathing will be briefly highlighted where necessary given that career pathing will be discussed in detail in Section 3.4 below.

Retention is a strategic effort by an organisation to maintain a working environment which supports and encourages current and future workforce to remain competitive within the organisation (Mecer, 2015). The main purpose of retention and career pathing is to “prevent the loss of competent employees from the organisation as this could have adverse effect on productivity, performance and service delivery” (Bafaneli, 2015: 31). Retention activities should not solely be understood based on reward, position and recognition, but they should include possible career pathing for employees to senior management and leadership levels (Edell, 2006). Outlining specific sets of competencies for different levels is a prerequisite to help employees better understand career directions and growth areas within organisations, and improves retention efforts and the optimal utilisation of existing employees (Bliss, 2013).

Other mechanisms to retain employees and simultaneously enhance productivity and performance include continuous training and professional development; appropriate and fair treatment; conducive work environment; competitive benefits such as share options and medical subsidy; enhancement of professional recognition in the industry/profession through provision of space to interface with other professionals and experts; providing space and support for coaching and mentoring; job security and job satisfaction (Cummins, 2015; Rees & French, 2010; Scott & Royal, 2012).

According to some writers, employees in the public and private sector today pursue careers that provide diversity of responsibilities, career development, work-life balance, and comfortable organisational culture, amongst others (Scott & Royal, 2012; Allen, 2008). Organisations should therefore adopt comprehensive retention policies and strategies, as opposed to using ‘remuneration counter-offers’ in order to retain employees who have expressed a desire to resign. The effectiveness of the policies and strategies should be evaluated and reviewed at key intervals (Scott & Royal, 2012; Allen, 2008).

3.4 CAREER PATHING - IMPLEMENTATION GUIDE

A traditional career path is defined in terms of upward advancement within a single organisational unit (Barling & Cooper, 2008). Increasingly, organisations are identifying boundaryless career paths which emphasise potential higher levels of specialisation, stimulated...
or incentivised lateral transfers and/or upward movement across functions (Spierenburg & Wels, 2006). These boundaryless career paths induce employees to be utilised in a variety of career options whilst being retained. Boundaryless career paths benefit employees and employers in that employees get the opportunity to strengthen and/or diversify their expertise and skills, whereas employers save substantial costs involved in the recruitment and training of new employees. In addition, boundaryless career paths reduce the risks associated with career progression ceiling or obsolescence by enhancing employee and organisational relevance, effectiveness and efficiency.

The Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM, 2015) asserts that most senior managers or executives who operate at the self-actualization stage, as expounded in Maslow’s hierarchy of needs, value job enrichment, career development and the opportunity for advancement more than job security and stability. However, they may be harder to motivate if they do not have career paths or logical career progressions. Obviously, the expectations and needs of senior managers who operate at different levels will be different. Therefore there is no blue print career pathing strategy that would be appropriate in every organisation. The strategy will, by and large, be informed by the core purpose of the organisation and other contextual variables such as the industry size, availability or shortage of skills, market size and share, and legislation. This means that employee retention and career pathing should be on every organisation’s radar (Half, 2016).

The question is, how can organisations facilitate the retention and career paths of existing human resources for the benefit of the employees themselves and the organisation? According to Half (2016), career maps help employees think strategically about their career paths, vertically or horizontally, and how to meet their career goals within the organisation’s value chain rather than an exodus to other organisations in order to explore avenues for growth. Farren (2009) shared the same views and maintained that “career maps contain detailed information to facilitate choices, based on individual talent and organisational needs. Thus, they enable HR organisations and employees separately or together to choose development paths that build intersections between career aspirations and the needs of the business”.

To develop effective career maps, the organisation should begin by cataloguing the core professions required in the organisation instead of cataloguing specific jobs, titles, positions and compensation levels. The mapping process should enable the organisation to identify, amongst others, the multiple routes of entry into the identified professions, linkages between professions where they exist, the required behaviours, functional and leadership competencies and the

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levels of mastery in each profession. Thorough and detailed career maps present employees with alternative paths towards the achievement of personal and professional mastery and simultaneously create opportunities for organisations to develop competencies and capabilities that will ensure adaptation in rapidly changing environments.

According to Cao and Thomas (2013), “in today’s diverse, global, and technologically savvy work environment, careers are no longer perceived as strictly vertical movements up the rungs of a ladder. Instead, a more appropriate metaphor for one’s career path is a rock climbing wall. You can go straight up the rock face, climb at an angle, or you may choose to go up for a while, move over to find a different path, and then continue on. In a career context, each one of these handholds and footholds could represent a particular role, development experience, or job competency along an individual’s career path. Likewise, an effective career path process should be multi-faceted, support each step in the talent management cycle, and align a workforce to the company’s future state. In this way, well-crafted career paths with contextualized success factors can play a pivotal role in driving organisational change and building workforce capability.”

3.5 UTILISATION OF SENIOR MANAGERS’ SKILLS AND EXPERTISE

Staff utilisation can be defined as the “optimum use of competent staff, their employment at strategic places or positions and the creation of an enabling environment for the practice of acquired skills and experiences” directed towards optimising staff and organisational performance and ultimately the achievement of organisational objectives (Buchanan et al. 2010; Ocheni, Atakpa & Nwankwo, 2013, p.76). According to Business Dictionary (2016) and Law Black Dictionary (2015), the methods of staff utilisation vary according to the needs and specifications of organisations, for example, it can include working from home, short-term contracts or residents’ mentorship or change hours to suit the needs of specific projects or tasks. Therefore, the utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills is an important element of workforce development, organisational competitiveness and sustainability for both public and private sector institutions.

Pilichowski et al. (2007), in reference to Barbara et al. (1994), states that most private sector organisations derive the greatest benefits from utilising the services of retired executives and managers and current senior managers to train and advise other senior managers within their networks on more specialised tasks on a short-term basis. Recruitment, retention and career pathing are crucial activities in staff utilisation because they determine to a large extent, the

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45 Cao, J., & Thomas D. 2013. When developing a career path, what are the key elements to Include? Cornell University ILR School. http://digitalcommons.ilr.cornell.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1042&context=student.
caliber of employees and their contribution to government departments and other public sector organisations (Ezeani, 2002; Ocheni, Atakpa & Nwankwo, 2013). Ocheni et al. (2013: 77) further explain that “wrong or poor recruitment and selection practices” influenced by ethnic, religious and political affiliations can create a situation of “garbage in and garbage out” and thus limit the future prospects of skills transfer through mentoring and coaching.

According to the Office of Personnel Management (OPM), “situational mentors” can lend assistance for as little as a one-time meeting to discuss a problem or as long as it takes to complete a long-term project. Situational mentors can also provide guidance and support that can last throughout one’s career. In the Army, former generals are often used as mentors and coaches (Lopez, 2015) and “civil service employees in both State and USAID can participate as either mentors or protégés.” According to OPM, “situational mentors may help employees solve a particular problem, find an expert to answer a question, teach new skills, or help an employee complete a project.

The key lesson from the preceding discussion is that enhancing the utilisation of employees’ expertise and skills can enhance Public Service departments’ performance and ultimately sustain the provision of better services by inculcating ethical practices consistently and uniformly across departments and generations of public servants (Martin, 2015). Therefore, understanding strategies and lessons from other countries and organisations on retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills is important to provide invaluable insight into government policy and decision-making processes and to ensure that interventions are relevant and efficient.

3.6 INTERVENTIONS TO PROFESSIONALISE THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The National Development Plan (NDP) 2030 was adopted by the South African government as a plan to, amongst others, build a capable, skilled and professional public service and developmental state. The NDP, inter alia, focuses on the development of career paths that ensure the reproduction of skills and expertise necessary for future public service cohorts and retain high-calibre people and experienced professionals. It also proposes the use of placements and secondments to enable staff to develop experience of working in other spheres of government. The NDP also recommends: amendment of the Public Service Act to locate responsibility for human resources management with the Heads of Department (HoDs); and the creation of an administrative Head of the Public Service with the responsibility to manage the

career progression of HoDs, including convening panels for recruitment processes, performance assessments and disciplinary procedures. At provincial level, the same role should be played by the Director-General in the Office of the Premier.

To contribute towards the achievement of the NDP’s vision, the PSC hosted a Developmental State Conference (DSC)\textsuperscript{56} themed “Building a capable, career-oriented and professional public service to underpin a developmental state in South Africa”. The conference culminated in the publication of a discussion document with the same title. The PSC hosted this conference with the ultimate aim of developing a shared understanding on what a capable, career oriented and professional Public Service and its leadership attributes would entail in South Africa, and to explore mechanisms to enhance the capacity of the Public Service to deliver on its constitutional mandate and the strategic objectives of the NDP. As stated in the NDP, to cultivate a sense of professional common purpose and to stabilise the political-administrative interface, the PSC-DSC discussion document makes critical observations and proposals, inter alia, that:

- recruitment and appointment should be based on a rigorous meritocratic process taking into consideration the applicants’ qualifications, experience and skills;
- proper career development and training programmes for HoDs should be put in place to ensure delivery on their functions;
- the Public Service Act, 1994 (as amended) should be amended to assign all powers with regard to the career incidents of public servants below the level of DDG to the HoD;
- the power of the HoD as the Accounting Officer, as stipulated in the PFMA, must remain with the HoD; and
- because of the influence of political office bearers in top appointments, cadre deployment is possible. However, deployees must meet the inherent requirements of the post.

Mindful of the above aspects, the NDP and the PSC’s Discussion Document emphasise that South Africa has the potential and capacity to build a state that is capable of playing a developmental and transformative role.

\subsection{3.7 LESSONS FROM OTHER COUNTRIES}

\subsubsection{3.7.1 United Republic of Tanzania}

United Republic of Tanzania (URT) is a member of the Commonwealth family of nations and is highly committed to integrated education, capacity building and skills development in the public sector and society in general. Capacity building and skills development is considered an ongoing cyclical process focusing on a major goal, namely, to have a well-planned, educated, trained, deployed, career paths and motivated workforce for optimal human resources to meet

\textsuperscript{56} Public Service Commission, (2016). Building a capable, career-oriented and professional public service to underpin a capable and developmental state in South Africa: Discussion Document. Republic of South Africa.
the envisaged government strategic goals (Kiragu, 2005; Morgan & Baser, 2007; Peters & van Nieuwenhuyzen, 2012).

Educational qualifications and skills, amongst others, are some of the key criteria considered in order to be appointed as an Executive Authority (EA) or head of department, or deployed in government, parastatals, non-profit organisation or Commonwealth projects. Moreover, most of the EAs and heads of department are in possession of Doctoral degree qualifications and are recruited from a pool of academics, party members, government officials and other institutions (Morgan & Baser, 2007). This provides the EAs and/or heads of department with wide opportunities to be utilised during and after expiry of their tenure. Political involvement of EAs in the day-to-day administration of institutions is minimal (Kiragu, 2005), as such, EAs do not have the power to change heads of department at their discretion, but are required to make a satisfactory submission to a committee consisting of sector ministries, regional commissioners and independent institutions’ representatives (Morgan & Baser, 2007).

Former or outgoing senior managers are utilised to strengthen key institutions, and stabilise key positions and appointments instead of a ‘big bang’ approach to recruitment and replacement (Morgan & Baser, 2007; Peters & van Nieuwenhuyzen, 2012). Kiragu (2005) and OECD (2005) share the same view and maintain that the approach of utilising former and outgoing managers is measured, monitored and evaluated by a committee of parastatals and independent institutions’ representatives and it reports to the Prime Minister. It is clear that URT has put in place the standard administrative procedures to manage the recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers, however, EAs retain the final authority on key policy issues. The approach has enabled URT to lessen tension at the political-administration interface.

3.7.2 Republic of Botswana

The Republic of Botswana (RBW) is “a patriarchal society, characterized by cultural norms, beliefs and practices” (Maundeni, 2010). The RBW invests in and considers cultural norms and education as key fundamentals to development, performance and success. The Government is also comprised of a small size of 15 ministries and departments and it remains a politically and administratively effective bureaucracy. According to Hope (2002: 1) “it is a tolerant democracy with a desire for good governance; it boasts an environment that is

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conducive to private investment and promotes market-oriented sustainable development; and it engenders macroeconomic stability”. The Botswana government is regarded as one of the countries where HoDs have the longest serving terms. The same approach can be applied in the South African Public Service.

In the Botswana government administration, matters such as appointments, promotions, transfers and disciplinary issues of senior managers were previously handled by the Department of Public Service Management (DPSM). These matters were shifted to the PSC of Botswana. The DPSM is now responsible for Public Service manpower planning, recruitment and development, grading and deployment, and performance and productivity improvement for employees below senior management (Infinium HR, 2012). Entry into and advancement in the Public Service is based on a combination of proven skills, competencies and record of performance. The academic requirements and admission competencies are determined from time to time and apply for entry-level posts (BPSA, 2008).

Each ministry appoints its own leadership team – same as in South Africa. Despite a diffusion of new approaches to human resources management in government (UNDP, 2012), skilled staff turnover at all levels of government remains a critical challenge due to poor organisational structure, declining morale and productivity (Phillips & Phillips, 2002 as cited in Mothupi, 2014), and lack of staff progression and succession planning (Headman, 2012 as cited in Mothupi, 2014). These challenges are attributed to the fact that the Botswana government does not have retention and utilisation of staff policy or strategy and succession planning, which resulted in some departments failing to achieve their mandatory objectives, according to Headman (2010).

3.7.3 Brazil

Pires (2016), a researcher at the Institute for Applied Economic Research, during the PSC’s Developmental State conference in 2014, indicated that the Brazil government is the key player in the development of the country. Pires further stated that the political influence in the appointment of senior managers or involvement in the day-to-day administration of government is stabilised but not completely excluded. Accordingly, change of government or Executive Authorities (EAs) does not have an impact on the day-to-day administration and/or change of heads of department. The appointment of heads of department can be on a permanent or contractual basis, depending on the strategic function of the particular department or public

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entity and it is facilitated by independent institutions. Therefore, meritocratic recruitment, career development, capacity building and stakeholder’s participation are important factors in the retention and utilisation of senior managers in Brazil.

3.7.4 Canada

In Canada, the recruitment, retention and career paths of public servants are guided by the Public Service Commission’s (PSC) workforce management information kit that consists of a series of guides on specific components of the career transition process and utilisation of senior managers and executives. The appointment, career transition and retention of senior managers in the Public Service and executives for state owned entities are vested with the PSC of Canada. In some instances this process is facilitated by the Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer (OCHRO) or Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) through delegated authority by the PSC of Canada, depending on the specific needs and challenges of the particular sector. Senior managers and executives are selected for retention or lay-off, depending on the specific needs of the organisation and the reasons for the career transition situation. The Canadian government adopted similar talent management strategies as Brazil on recruiting, retaining and developing young people through training in various functions of Public Service management and leadership. These strategies were developed to minimise the exodus of competent senior managers, especially heads of department due to a lack of career progression and career certainty in the Public Service.

3.7.5 China

Yike (2016), Lecturer at China Executive Leadership Academy, Pudong, highlighted the fact that the Chinese government is guided and informed by two fundamental factors: the traditional culture (Confucianism) and the value of Chinese socialism – which place emphasis on the need to ‘serve the people whole-heartedly’. The Chinese Public Service is dynamic and therefore puts greater emphasis on attracting human capital, comprehensive training and development, succession planning and rotational programmes. Notably, Department of Party Organisation is responsible for organising all education, job training and recruitment for their cadres. Political parties in China are all committed to and uphold the principle of meritocratic non-partisan recruitment. To be employed as a civil servant, one has to be a Chinese citizen with clear values, including being public minded and transparent. No civil servant including senior managers are appointed from outside government institutions.

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70 Ibid.
72 Ibid.
Heads of department are appointed from a pool of competent and highly qualified candidates (in possession of Doctoral Degrees). Such candidates should have undergone at least 2 years of basic labour work experience before applying for a job as entry level civil servant (specific qualifications are set as entry requirements for the exam), then promoted to middle level civil servant and senior management level and so forth. To ensure continuous and diversified professional development, civil servants are rotated to be able to learn and gain experience through different positions in different departments before they can be considered for appointment as senior managers in the Public Service departments. According to Yike, senior officials and politicians in China are appointed, promoted or deployed to senior positions in the Public Service based on qualifications and considerable public service experience, which has not been the case in South Africa.

3.7.6 Malaysia

According to Hamid (2016), Chief Executive Officer at Razak School of Government, the Malaysian Public Service consists of a considerable and manageable size of Public Service departments to avoid duplication of services, and to foster stability in the leadership of departments, accountability and good governance, amongst others. Engagement with all relevant stakeholders and collaboration with other statutory independent institutions is a key characteristic used for the appointment of senior managers in the Public Service, as the Public Services Commission of Malaysia is responsible for the appointment of candidates at the senior management level.

In Malaysia EAs do not completely interfere with the day-to-day administration of departments and appointment of senior managers but provide quality of instructions to senior management on what is expected and how they should deliver on their mandate (PSC Developmental State Report, 2016)\textsuperscript{74}. A number of studies attest that the Malaysian Public Service has comprehensive recruitment, training and development, career development, performance management and reward programmes for former and current senior managers in place (Abdul & Azmi, 2010\textsuperscript{75}; Lodge & Hood, 2005\textsuperscript{76}). Former and current senior managers, especially heads of department, are utilised in various Public Service institutions, thus enhancing retention, career paths and utilisation of staff (Hamid, 2016)\textsuperscript{77}.

\textsuperscript{74} Public Service Commission, 2016. 
\textit{Building a capable, career-oriented and professional Public Service to Underpin a capable and developmental state in South Africa}. Discussion Document. Republic of South Africa


3.7.7 India

The Indian Civil Service is guided by a strong organisational culture that encourages employees to continuously develop and utilise their skills optimally across the Public Service. People are recruited to civil service on the basis of their moral level and acquired skills (CSIMN, 2016). In many organisations, proficiency frameworks are utilised to identify the skills and qualities needed from potential employees. Leadership training is a prerequisite for newly hired and promoted supervisors and managers to handle employee relations matters at the department level (CSIMN, 2016). It is worth noting that the Indian civil service ensures that job descriptions are up-to-date and classified at the appropriate level prior to advertising and selected candidates must not be placed in a lower level than the post as classified and advertised. Departments and public entities are required not to select and appoint an individual who does not meet all the requirements for a post as advertised with the expectation that he/she will eventually develop the necessary skills and competencies or acquire the minimum qualifications for the post.

Notably, the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) of India is entrusted to perform, evaluate and enforce the recruitment and selection practices and conduct the eligibility examination, as one of the requirements in the Indian Public Service. The candidate’s admission to all the stages of the examination is purely provisional subject to satisfying the prescribed eligibility conditions. For senior management positions, priority is given to eligible internal employees with the minimum academic qualifications, experience and time-in-post requirements. The recruitment, appointment and retention as well as employment contracts of senior managers are all based on merit promotion to ensure compliance (UPSC, 2016).

General retention strategies espoused by the UPSC include the following:

a) Expanding the pool of upward mobility of internal employees to provide a cohort available to rapidly replace retiring senior employees and to address diversity issues.

b) A Senior Executive Service Candidate Development Program (SESCDP), which is a competitive programme designed to create qualified candidates for Senior Executive Service positions. The SESCDP focuses on a variety of activities that prepare candidates for success in the Senior Executive Service and advances the goal of a “corporate” Senior Executive Service.

c) A Veteran Affairs (VA) Training and Retention Program whose aim is to identify leaders in VA who exhibit leadership talent and potential and to provide an enrichment of their career development through intense leadership training experience.

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79 Ibid.
81 Department of Veteran Affairs in India, Recruitment and Selection Best Practice Guide. Avoiding equal employment opportunity pitfalls to create a diverse workforce, April 2010.
d) A Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA) Leadership Enhancement and Development (LEAD), which is designed to help identify and develop the skills and talent of high-performing employees and enhance their preparation for leadership responsibilities in the future.

3.8 CONCLUSION

The literature analysis has highlighted that recruitment, retention and career pathing are the most critical aspects of human resource management in ensuring organisational efficiency, effectiveness and competitiveness in a dynamic and competitive global environment. It is also true that no organisation, industry or sector is immune to challenges associated with recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of staff’s expertise and skills (Miller, 2014)\(^2\). Likewise, the literature affirms that there is no shortage of ideas, and tried and tested models in the public and private sectors that seek to address challenges in these areas.

It has emerged that one of the interventions used to address challenges highlighted in the study relates to the development and implementation of comprehensive and integrated policies and strategies to ensure effective recruitment, retention and career pathing, and the optimal utilisation of current and former senior managers’ expertise and skills.

Notwithstanding the fact that there are political, social and legislative differences between countries, the South African Public Service can learn from some of the countries mentioned in this chapter to bring about leadership stability, continuity and consistent performance across departments.

CHAPTER 4: FINDINGS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter presents and discusses the key findings of the study with respect to the recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of Senior Management Service (SMS) members’ expertise and skills in the Public Service. The findings are presented according to the thematic areas derived from the objectives of study. The first part of this chapter presents the profile of participants, then the second part focuses on the key findings and discussion thereof.

4.2 PROFILE OF PARTICIPANTS

This part of the chapter presents the profile of participants. There were participants who were interviewed face-to-face and those who responded through electronic survey questionnaires.

4.2.1 Interviews conducted

Interviews were conducted with selected former and current Heads of Department (HoDs) of national and provincial departments, senior managers of State Owned Enterprises (SOEs) and Private Sector Companies as well as selected institutions outside South Africa. Table 1 below provides a breakdown of responses in terms of location and the level and number of participants that were interviewed.

Table 1: Interview Responses from national and provincial departments, institutions outside South Africa, SOEs and private sector companies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National / Provinces</th>
<th>No. of current HoDs</th>
<th>No. of former HoDs</th>
<th>Permanent Secretaries from other African Countries</th>
<th>State Owned Enterprises: Senior Managers</th>
<th>Private Sector Companies: Senior Managers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
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<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
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<th>M</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1 shows that the total number of current HoDs interviewed was high compared to the number of former HoDs. The majority of the HoDs interviewed were from four provinces, namely...
Eastern Cape, Limpopo, Mpumalanga and Northern Cape, with ten (10) participants in each province. Only eight (8) HoDs from national departments were interviewed, whereas interviews were done with between two (2) and four (4) HoDs in other Provinces. A total of 12 senior managers were also interviewed, consisting of two (2) Permanent Secretaries from the embassies of Kenya and Ghana, four (4) senior managers from four SOEs as well as six (6) senior managers from two private sector companies within South Africa. Table 1 shows that the majority of the former and current HoDs who were interviewed were males (60), as compared to 18 females, which is understandable given that the majority of HODs in the Public Service are males.

4.2.2 Completed electronic survey questionnaires

The electronic survey questionnaires, that were similar for all participants, were circulated to national and provincial departments for completion by Chiefs of Staff (CoS) in the Ministers’ offices, Deputy Directors-General (DDGs), Chief Directors (CDs) and Directors (Ds). Table 2 below provides a breakdown of responses in terms of location, level and the number of participants that completed the electronic survey questionnaires from national and provincial departments.

Table 2: Survey questionnaires responses from SMS members excluding HoDs of national and provincial departments

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National / Provinces</th>
<th>Number of Questionnaires Analysed</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Deputy Directors-General</td>
<td>Chief of Staff and Chief Directors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eastern Cape</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Free State</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gauteng</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>KwaZulu-Natal</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Limpopo</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mpumalanga</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Northern Cape</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Western Cape</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>139</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>No Gender Status</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>300</td>
<td>201</td>
<td>651</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Spoilt questionnaires were either incomplete or blank

As reflected in Table 2 above, a total of 665 questionnaires from SMS members were captured and analysed. The majority of the participants were at the Director (D) level (i.e. 507, which is 7.1% of approximately 7100 Ds in the Public Service), followed by 139 CDs and 19 DDGs from various departments. Both at national and provincial levels, the majority of DDGs and CDs were
expected to participate in the study given that there are more than 2300 CDs and just over 550 DDGs in the Public Service. However this has not been the case. However, the low rate of participation by SMS members, especially DDGs and CDs, has no effect on generalisation of issues identified as other levels that have responded in reasonable numbers made similar observations on the issues studied. Table 2 shows that the majority of the SMS members who responded to the electronic survey questionnaire are males at 393 compared to 258 females. Fourteen (14) SMS members did not indicate their gender.

4.2.3 Work experience of HoDs and other SMS members

The study sought to establish the work experience of participating HoDs and their previous work experience in other levels of SMS. The findings of the study showed that few HoDs have gained experience in various national and provincial department as heads of department. Some HoDs held SMS positions below the level of HoD in the same or numerous departments before they were appointed or headhunted as HoDs and there were other HoDs who held positions in municipalities, the private sector and/or other public institutions before they were appointed or headhunted to the HoD positions.

*Figure 1: Work experience of Ds, CDs and DDGs*

*Figure 1* above shows that most of the Ds, CDs and DDGs who participated in the study had between six (6) and twenty nine (29) years work experience as senior managers in the Public Service. The findings of the study further showed that the majority of the SMS members had extensive work experience from other public sector institutions such as municipalities, research institutions and state owned entities, while just under a quarter of the participants had private sector work experience.

The following sections of the chapter present key findings based on the thematic areas derived from the objectives of study.
4.3 LEVEL OF AWARENESS AND EXTENT OF IMPLEMENTATION OF POLICIES ON THE RECRUITMENT, RETENTION, CAREER PATHING AND UTILISATION OF SENIOR MANAGERS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The study sought to establish the level of awareness and extent of implementation of policies on recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of SMS members’ expertise in the Public Service. The findings show that there is an uneven awareness of policies on recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation amongst SMS members. The SMS members who operate below the HoD level confirmed their awareness of recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation policies and procedures, and HoDs indicated awareness of the recruitment policy and procedure, but lack of awareness of the retention, career pathing and utilisation policies. However, there is an indication by the HoD level of ad hoc practices of retention and career pathing, which are supported by some Executive Authorities (EAs). Further, the utilisation of SMS members’ expertise and skills is said to be minimal and indirectly addressed through participation in intergovernmental task teams in the Public Service whilst in service, but not across the public sector.

In terms of the extent of implementation of these policies, there is an indication from the SMS members who operate below the HoD level that only the recruitment policy and procedure is effectively implemented in the Public Service, whereas the retention, career pathing and utilisation policies and procedures are not effectively implemented.

4.4 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE RECRUITMENT PRACTICES OF SENIOR MANAGERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The study sought to establish the factors that influence recruitment practices for senior managers and their impact on the professionalisation of the Public Service. The findings show that there are many factors that influence recruitment practices in an organisation. There are internal factors ranging from human resource planning, recruitment policy and cost of recruiting. There are external factors ranging from supply and demand of specific skills, unemployment rate, labour-market conditions, political and legal consideration, and the organisation’s image. The sections below discusses in detail the factors highlighted by the participants.

4.4.1 Open recruitment system

Recruitment into the South African Public Service is largely done through an open (external) and competitive process, in line with the provisions of the Public Service Act and Regulations. The advantage of the open recruitment policy is that the organisation would attract new talent that would bring new ideas, perspectives and solutions to challenges. The disadvantage of open recruitment policy is that it is costly in terms of the recruitment and selection process, and time taken to socialise and train the new person on how the Public Service operates. It can also lead to low staff morale and dissatisfaction among existing employees who feel overlooked. By the same token, the closed (internal) recruitment policy has its own advantages and disadvantages.
The advantages include retention of institutional memory, expertise and capabilities and increase of staff morale and the disadvantages include narrow and stale perspectives.

There is a view that the recruitment of HoDs should not be opened for external competitors unless the post requires particularly scarce skills that cannot be found internally. There is another view that the internal candidates who have acquired the necessary skills over time are overlooked using an excuse that the department wants ‘someone who can hit the ground running’, forgetting that external candidates must be guided and supported by internal candidates to understand the mandate, strategic objectives and priorities, and Public Service processes and systems before they can make any meaningful contribution to the organisation. However, the MPSA Directive has partly addressed the challenges related to the ‘open’ recruitment system for the HoD level.

There is a further view that the appointment of external candidates into senior management positions creates tension (especially when appointed candidates have limited competencies) and short to medium term instability for departments; and this has a negative effect on the staff morale, career pathing of skilled, loyal and experienced Public Service employees and performance of departments.

During the roundtable session, respondents and participants endorsed the concerns raised about the open recruitment system as presented in the report. The view was that the Public Service should consider the principle of “growing your own timber”, where people will develop within the organisation up to the most senior levels.

In instances where the open recruitment system is used, the roundtable participants emphasised the importance of meritocracy in the appointment and deployment of DDGs and HoDs as well as other SMS levels. According to the respondents and participants, between 1994 and 1999 most of the senior bureaucrats who came from outside government did not have real Public Service experience. However, they were appointed / deployed based on their expertise (i.e. qualifications and areas of specialisation or strength). The strong message from the roundtable was that meritocracy for both the executive and civil servants should not be compromised, but it should inform the recruitment, selection and appointment of suitable candidates. Additionally, to attract competent candidates from outside the Public Service, there is a need to address perceived reputational risks because it is known among some professionals that accepting work in the Public Service and being associated with some departments, EAs or HoDs can lead to a person’s reputation being tarnished.

The overall conclusion from the preceding discussion is that the open recruitment policy, in spite of its advantages, has many negative implications for senior management service members and departments alike.
4.4.2 Contract versus permanent appointment for HoD positions

The findings show that there is no support for the employment of HoDs on a permanent basis. The idea of a five year contract at the national and provincial levels was supported by most participants, with the view that it should be renewable for another 5 year term, subject to the leadership capability, technical expertise and performance of an individual during the first 5 year term. It should be noted that some provinces are still applying the 3 year term contract appointment, which participants said should be reviewed to ensure consistency at the national and provincial levels. Although there is general support for contract appointment, the view is that there is a need to strengthen the systems used to determine the suitability of candidates to serve as HoDs before being appointed on a 5 year term. The one year probation period, for new/first-time appointed HoDs should be effectively monitored and the appointed candidates should be properly supported during this period.

The roundtable participants agreed with the findings of the draft report and further proposed that HoDs should be given the option after a five year term of office to decide whether their contracts should be renewed for a further three to five years. The concern was that a successive term of 10 years in one department might lead to burnout because “the reality is that working with certain EAs or for some departments can lead to serious burnout, hence many HoDs are stressed.” It was suggested that HoDs should change departments after the first 5 years or take time out from the stressful environment and/or the Public Service altogether. The change of environment will create opportunities for HoDs to reflect on their achievements and weaknesses and explore alternative strategies that can be used by other/newly appointed HoDs or ‘returning’ HoDs to enhance organisational effectiveness and performance.

4.4.3 Appointment of HoDs and other SMS members

There is a view that the recruitment and selection of SMS members below the HoD level should be managed through a purely administrative process. However, at the HoD level, there is support for the hybrid approach that provides for the minimal involvement of political heads in the final approval of recommended candidates as described in the National Development Plan (NDP). The hybrid approach is perceived to be objective and has the potential to create stability at the HoD level. Since HoDs should take responsibility for all administrative and management issues for their departments, persons who are appointed as HoDs must be competent and knowledgeable about government operations to ensure consistent performance across government departments. According to some participants, the consultation with Cabinet on the appointment of HoDs is not supported by the law, but it is a problematic practice that was created when the management of career incidents of HoDs was delegated by the former President to EAs.

There was also a view that the current Public Service Human Resource Management policy and Code of Remuneration (CORE) do not address the needs and challenges of unique
departments who provide foreign services. The arrangements and translation of posts with dual administrative and Foreign Service responsibilities has not been addressed in policy. The HoDs of departments such as DIRCO, Trade and Industry, and others have the unenviable responsibility of navigating the tension between the Public Service Act (PSA) and Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) in relation to the powers vested in Executive Authorities and Accounting Officers, and other Foreign Policies that the South African government should comply with or work around. This level of complexity impacts on the recruitment and retention of HoDs for such departments.

There was a further view that HoDs’ professional development is not prioritised in the Public Service in order to improve the performance of departments and to prepare HoDs for career opportunities in the future, especially after the end of term of their contracts.

The roundtable participants concurred with the observations and findings made in the draft report. There was a strong view that there is need for a system that ensures that the power to recruit, select and appoint HoDs does not reside in one person (i.e. EAs) and HoDs should not be treated like “personal assistants” of or political advisers to EAs. This will ensure that HoDs are free to run departments and take charge of the bureaucracy. Equally important, roundtable participants asserted that HoDs must be strong enough to make tough decisions, if they are committed to transformation (even if that might be risky for their careers).

There was also a view that in order to professionalise the Public Service, the recruitment of quality and good performing HoDs at the Provincial level (and local government level) is of paramount importance than at national level because Provinces (and municipalities) are at the core of service delivery and policy implementation.

4.4.4 Effects of political-administrative interface

The concept of ‘political-administrative’ interface is, by its nature a life time phenomenon. Miller and McTavish (2009), describes the political-administrative interface as “the intersection of leadership roles within…a tradition of a dichotomous relationship between political and administrative realms.” The PSC defines the political administrative interface as “the terrain of interaction between Executive Authorities and HoDs”. However, for good or bad reasons, the findings from the study suggest that this concept has negative connotations in the Public Service.

There is a perception that in South Africa the political-administrative interface has weakened rather than strengthened the recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of HoDs by compromising and destroying the professionalism of the senior management level in the Public Service. The cadre deployment has resulted in unintended consequences due to the

marginalisation of competent people and appointment of HoDs with limited technical, management and leadership competencies. There is misalignment between the expectations of EAs and strategic goals and objectives of departments which undermines the execution of administrative duties by HoDs. This leads to tensions between EAs and HoDs which then affect the performance of HoDs and departments in general. Due to tensions between EAs and HoDs as a result of genuine or artificial limited understanding of each other’s roles and responsibilities, EAs begin to demand support from other officials below the HoD level, leaving the HoD marginalised.

These practices, do not just undermine the integrity of HoDs, but compromises service delivery and the integrity of the Public Service. The job security of HoDs and the processes of recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of expertise and skills are dependent on the quality of interpersonal relations with EAs. This makes HoD positions more risky, unattractive and stressful. The perceived victimisation of senior managers who refuse to tolerate instructions they consider to be unlawful and/or contrary to government policies and prescripts result in toxic work environments, unfair treatment, and low morale among senior managers and junior employees.

The roundtable participants supported the above mentioned findings. The view was that in the early days of the democratic state, political-administrative tension was minimised by a number of factors such as chemistry between the EA and HoD because of common backgrounds, comradeship, and the fact that it was a learning phase for most people. At that time there was a strong sense of common values and everyone was preoccupied with the issue of reconstruction, development and service delivery. Those who joined the Public Service did so by choice because they were committed to the transformation process. Of course there were tensions at times but these were not as pronounced as they have become post 2000 to date because the shared commitment to the transformation agenda previously made it possible for people to take tough decisions when required.

The roundtable participants highlighted the following challenges:

- In South Africa, the difficulty for the Public Service is that the political environment and the bureaucracy reinforce each other in a negative manner, given the frequent changes in the executive and administrative heads that result in programme discontinuity, change in the strategic priorities and the fact that some senior managers willingly undermine HoDs in order to serve the various interests of the serving EA.
- Another difficulty is the lack of a common national interest, thus a change of government often results in a completely different policy approach and direction. As such, frequent policy changes and inconsistencies create tensions, frustrations and confusion of government mandate.
- Another challenge is the lack of soft skills at the executive and administrative level which may require interventions in the form of training, coaching and mentoring. Soft skills can
include, amongst others, people management, communication with various stakeholders at work and outside work, diversity sensitivity and change management.

In spite of the negative perceptions alluded to above, there was recognition that the ‘political-administrative’ interface is a life time phenomenon and an important feature of Public Service administration. Therefore, challenges at the political-administrative interface should be addressed and dealt with decisively to enhance the effectiveness of Public Service administration without compromising the policies and strategic objectives of the government of the day.

4.4.5 Restructuring and/or reorganisation

Restructuring and/or reorganisation has an impact on the recruitment and retention of competent SMS members in the Public Service. Whilst there is acceptance that restructuring and/or reorganisation cannot be avoided, some participants were of the view that sometimes restructuring and/or reorganisation is used for ulterior motives as a mechanism to marginalise and frustrate some SMS members and create posts for ‘so-called’ trusted or politically connected individuals, in spite of their experience, skills and competence. The view is that restructuring and/or reorganisation should be undertaken in a strategic, participatory, transparent and procedurally fair manner to promote and strengthen the effective and efficient performance of departments. If properly done, restructuring and reorganisation can enhance the recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills because employees would be confident about the process. In turn, they will be certain of the appropriateness of their placement and utilisation. However, if there is no fit between the department’s requirements and their skills and expertise, they would be willing to consider a change in career direction and motivate for suitable positions during restructuring and/or reorganisation process.

4.4.6 Impact of factors that influence recruitment practices on the professionalisation of the Public Service

The findings show that the factors discussed above have the potential to undermine the professionalisation of the Public Service due to failure to retain competent career public servants who are often overlooked for promotions into senior positions. They can also lead to leadership instability and difficulties in building an experienced senior management cadre. It has also been proven that short-term contract appointments lead to institutional instability and it is a deterrent to capable career public servants who could make a difference, if given the opportunity to serve at the HoD level, given that the majority of SMS members who participated in the study said they will never apply for the position of HoD, whereas few said they would consider applying for the HoD position provided the proposals outlined below are implemented.
The proposals are as follows:

- The Public Service should make time for HoDs to participate in skills and professional development programmes in order to open up opportunities for their employability in the future, especially after the end of term of their contracts.
- Create meaningful career paths for HoDs and put in place policy frameworks to facilitate the retention, rotation, deployment and utilisation of HoDs in different departments, SOEs, different spheres of government, other public institutions and specialised structures/committees. Implementation of such frameworks will create opportunities for HoDs to develop a holistic understanding of government operations from all perspectives.
- Create job security for HoDs by protecting their continued employment when there is a change of government administration or reshuffling because properly appointed and competent HoDs are professionals with the capacity to serve the government of the day.
- The PSC and NSG should establish networks for HoDs to facilitate and foster collegial support and the sharing of expertise and experience in the execution of their duties.
- Create an independent credible structure or process that will enable HoDs to deal with their work related challenges in order to find relief especially in instances where there are disagreements and tensions.

4.5 FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE RETENTION AND CAREER PATHING OF SENIOR MANAGERS AND THEIR IMPACT ON THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The study sought to establish the factors that influence the retention and career pathing of senior managers and their impact on the professionalisation of the Public Service. The findings of the study show that employee retention can be very difficult in a competitive and rapidly changing environment because retention goes beyond remuneration. It is also about career development, job satisfaction and support for work-life balance, thus indicating that there is no retention without career paths.85

For the purpose of this study, a career path is defined in terms of upward movement and lateral advancement across functions within an organisation86 which induce employees to be utilised in a variety of career options whilst being retained87. In the Public Service, promotion posts are advertised mainly through an open/external competitive process and minimally through a closed/internal competitive process. Therefore all internal or external interested candidates who meet the minimum requirements can apply.

4.5.1 Factors that influence the career pathing of SMS members in the Public Service

The findings of the study show that the majority of the participants were of the view that *sometimes* training and development leads to clearly defined career paths, whereas some participants said training and development *never* clearly defined career paths. Few participants (12%) were however of the view that training and development always leads to clearly defined career paths.

The majority of participants were of the view that some departments are not doing enough to decisively deal with career planning and pathing. As such, there are no in-depth discussions regarding career development between managers, supervisors and employees. They further indicated that career planning and pathing is not enabled in the public sector given the lack of clear policies or guidelines. The view was that training and development in the Public Service tends to be linked to the individual employees’ performance agreements and personal development plans (PDPs), rather than professions and career paths that are relevant to the department.

There were participants who were of the view that some departments support training and development, however, because of limited opportunities for upward mobility in the Public Service, successful completion of training and development does not often translate into career progression. This is also a challenge for HoDs as they are on the last occupational level in the Public Service. As such there was a proposal from participants that HoDs should be given one year sabbatical after every five years to broaden their knowledge and sharpen their skills, before they can be given another 5 year contract. Other factors identified by participants inhibiting effective implementation of career pathing in the Public Service included the following:

- It is very difficult to attend developmental short courses because of work pressures, multiple *ad hoc* deadlines or meetings which are always strategic in nature, and interruptions by some senior managers during training.
- Training and development is a compliance matter because after training, employees are not given the opportunity to apply the skills acquired.
- Lack of mentoring and coaching by some senior managers is prevalent and has a demoralising and demotivating effect on officials, and further discourages employees from remaining within the Public Service.

There was also a view from some participants that training and development is not provided to all suitable employees fairly because of workplace ‘politics’ and the insecurities of some SMS members.

4.5.2 Strategies that influence the retention of SMS members in the Public Service

The study sought to establish whether departments have strategies/mechanisms to enhance the retention of SMS members in the Public Service. The findings of the study show that the
majority of participants are of the view that their departments do not have a strategy/mechanism to retain critical and scarce skills of senior managers. There was a small number which indicated that their departments have a strategy/mechanism in place. Most worrying were some senior managers indicating they were not aware if such strategies/mechanisms were in place. Amongst those senior managers who indicated that their departments have a guiding strategy/mechanism, there were those who felt these were not effective or successful in retaining SMS members. For example, the widely used mechanism in this instance is the counter offer which is also not always successful.

The lack of effective strategies/mechanisms or poor implementation where they exist has impacted negatively on efforts to retain skills and expertise in the Public Service. Participants pointed to the exodus of SMS members from various departments as one indication that there is no retention strategy/mechanism in place to curtail the loss of skills and expertise or where they exist implementation is very poor. Some participants identified opportunities that exist for senior managers to be seconded to other organisations like Embassies, IMF, World Bank, SOEs and other spheres of government, but due to the fact that there are no approved comprehensive retention strategies/mechanisms these are not utilised across the Public Service. This has resulted in EAs and/or HoDs making subjective and/or inconsistent decisions when requests for secondment are made by individual employees. Poorly defined career paths as well as departmental politics were also cited as contributory factors that lead to the failure to retain competent and reliable senior managers.

One of the key elements of retention is succession planning, which can be defined as the “identification and development of potential successors for key positions in an organisation, through a systematic evaluation process and training. Unlike replacement planning (which grades an individual solely on the basis of his or her past performance) succession planning is largely predictive in judging an individual for a position he or she might never have been in.”

Although different, there is an inter-dependent relationship between succession planning on the one hand, and career pathing/planning and retention.

In the Public Service, the principle of succession planning is supported in principle, within the limits of the legislative and regulatory framework. All participants in the study concurred that succession planning is essential to prepare potential candidates for senior management positions. However, the legislative framework requires that appointment into the next level of senior positions should be based on a transparent, open and competitive process. Hence potential candidates cannot be guaranteed promotions or appointment into senior positions. To deal with this, there may be a need for legislation and regulations to be reviewed to synchronize succession planning from the Director to HoD levels. It was also proposed that coaching, mentoring and job shadowing should be implemented as part of a broader career pathing, retention and succession strategy.

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The National Treasury and South African Reserve Bank succession standards and norms were mentioned by some participants as exceptional examples that other Public Service departments can learn from. According to the participants, these institutions develop key individuals to take over should the current HoD or Governor resign or get deployed elsewhere. Denmark was also mentioned as one of the countries the South African Public Service can also learn from. The participants stated that the Denmark model encourages HoDs to remain competitive and relevant.

The participants proposed that the PSC and DPSA must work together to develop policies for retention, career pathing and utilisation of HoD expertise and skills. The DPSA must develop the policies and the PSC must play an oversight role to ensure successful implementation, placement or deployment in order to foster professionalism and meritocracy in the Public Service. The policy must specify the criteria for deploying performing senior managers and executives to all levels of government and SOEs, including Section 56 and 57 local government managers. This approach will help to reduce or prevent corruption and reduce the anxiety of HoDs about their future at the end of the 5 years terms.

The roundtable participants asserted that the current Public Service setting and framework does not take into account work-life balance into consideration, and yet it is common knowledge that humans are not motivated by a single factor, like money. According to the participants, work-life balance is a key ingredient in the retention of competent employees. Therefore, the Public Service must have a comprehensive system to identify, groom and retain the best talent available.

4.6 EXTENT OF UTILISATION OF CURRENT AND FORMER SENIOR MANAGERS’ EXPERTISE AND SKILLS IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE

The utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills as mentors and coaches is a cornerstone to skills development, talent management, improved performance and productivity, and organisational stability. The findings of the study on the extent of utilisation of current and former HoDs and other SMS members are presented below.

There were mixed views on whether the Public Service makes an intentional effort to utilise the expertise and skills of current and former HoDs. Some participants indicated that there is no evidence of a deliberate effort to utilise former and current HoDs’ expertise and skills for purposes of improving the performance of the Public Service and the public sector in general. Other participants argued that there are efforts to utilise the skills and expertise of senior managers and pointed to the following examples:

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The State Information Technology Agency (SITA) CEO was deployed to the Department of Home Affairs;

The DG in the Presidency was deployed from the KZN Department of Education;

The DG of the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development journeyed from the Departments of Social Development and Cooperative Governance and Traditional Affairs (COGTA);

The Principal of the National School of Government (NSG) journeyed from DPSA, Department of Economic Development and the Public Service Commission;

Some former HoDs and DDGs have been deployed to SOEs and diplomatic posts in foreign countries;

In the Health sector, some former HoDs and even academics have been appointed into Ministerial Task Teams to look into health challenges across all nine provinces and make recommendations to the Minister of Health on how health care provision can be improved and sustained;

The former Minister of Public Service and Administration, Minister Lindiwe Sisulu, brought back some former HoDs from provinces to work on key Public Service strategies; and

The Department of International Relations and Cooperation has established a former Ambassadors Association to act as a sounding board within the department.

These examples support the assertion that identification of talent and deploying it where it is needed and relevant should be done in a structured manner. Participants proposed that a framework should be developed to provide for former and current HoDs to be utilised as trainers by the NSG, serve as mentors and coaches for newly appointed HoDs and serve in Boards of SOEs. It was also proposed that the DPSA, in collaboration with other relevant departments, should develop a secondment, rotation and placement policy framework plus strategy that applies to all three spheres of government to enable former and current SMS members to develop a holistic understanding of government operations from all perspectives.

As part of the proposed framework, a database of competent former and current HoDs and other senior managers with scarce skills must be developed and continuously updated to facilitate speedy access to relevant expertise and skills as and when required. Participants at the roundtable session also proposed that suitable and talented retired and former civil servants should be integrated back into all spheres of government on a contractual basis to continue to contribute to the community, instead of heavily relying on consultants who charge exorbitant fees to repackage existing information that is already known to many public servants.

There was caution that a formalised approach to the optimal utilisation of current and former HoDs and other SMS members should not result in job reservation for some people, whilst creating challenges related to career-pathing and utilisation for other sectors and institutions. The roundtable participants argued that the South African political environment post year 2000 has, in fact, made patronage networks more influential over time, and yet patronage militates
against the recruitment, retention, career pathing and the utilisation of the skills and expertise of HoDs in the Public Service. It was also argued that patronage promotes loyalty rather than excellence; routine work rather than productivity and compliance rather than innovation. While participants acknowledged that routine work and compliance are important, they also argued that emphasis on routine and compliance can sometimes undermine the responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency of the Public Service.

Senior managers, below HoDs, who participated in the study, were of the view that their skills and expertise are properly utilised in their departments. According to these participants, their departments allow them to use their knowledge, skills and expertise, and as a result some of the participants get to be headhunted by other departments due to the competencies they possess. The downside is that SMS members who are highly skilled, competent, experienced and have excellent management abilities are given too many responsibilities beyond their core strategic functions, thus dissipating their efficacy and impact.

Only a small number of SMS members below the HoD level indicated that their skills and expertise are not properly utilised due to misplacement or mismatch between their expertise and skills and the posts they have been placed in. Another view that also featured strongly amongst participants was that loyalty to the leadership is, in some instances, more recognised than skills and expertise which result in the employment of senior managers with limited capacity as long as the HoD’s “eyes and ears” are well placed in the organisation.

According to some SMS members and the roundtable participants, it can be professionally frustrating to be a competent HoD with an incompetent EA who struggles to understand the strategic direction of government and the ministry. This leads, in some instances, to the EA in question getting involved with the administration and operations because that is the level at which he/she can understand and operate. In an environment of this nature, the skills and competencies of the HoD and other SMS members would not be optimally utilised to the benefit of the Public Service.

Overall the roundtable participants supported the findings and recommendations of the report and asserted these will go a long way in ensuring that the best candidates are identified and retained to serve in the Public Service. The recommendations will ensure that those who have exited the Public Service ‘after a successful career’ can be accommodated to continue to apply the skills they have attained within the Public Service and develop other employees who are still in the service.
4.7  SUMMARY

a)  Awareness and extent of implementation of policies, procedures and guidelines

There is an awareness of recruitment and retention policies, procedures and guidelines mostly in the Public Service and at departmental level. However, awareness of career pathing and utilisation of expertise and skills policies, procedures and guidelines is low. Where available, the policies, procedures and guidelines on the retention, career pathing and utilisation of SMS members’ expertise and skills are not effectively implemented in the Public Service departments.

b)  Factors that influence SMS recruitment

-  Open competition

Open recruitment system which results in outside candidates (i.e. candidates from outside the Public Service and possibly from other departments) being appointed, may be necessary in some instances, but it leads to employee dissatisfaction because it frustrates the upward mobility of internal candidates, contributes to low staff morale, organisational instability and poor employee and organisational performance. The overall view is that the open recruitment system has many negative implications for SMS members, especially at the HoD level, and departments alike.

-  Permanent versus contract

Although there is general support for contract appointment at the HoD level, the participants said there is a need to strengthen the systems used to determine the suitability of candidates to serve as HoDs before being appointed on a 5 year term. It was also argued that the one year probation period, for newly/first-time appointed HoDs should be effectively monitored and the appointed candidates should be properly supported during this period.

-  Administrative and hybrid approach to SMS recruitment

The study revealed that HoDs support the NDP Vision 2030 recommendation that the recruitment and selection of HoDs should be managed through a hybrid process. However, recruitment and selection below the HoD level should be managed through a purely administrative process.

-  Political administrative interface

There is recognition that the political-administrative interface is an important feature of Public Service administration. However, there was a view that the political-administrative interface has
weakened rather than strengthened the recruitment, retention, career pathing and utilisation of HoDs by compromising and destroying the professionalism of senior level management in the Public Service. The misalignment between the expectations of EAs and the strategic goals and objectives of departments undermines the execution of administrative duties by HoDs and this often leads to tension between many EAs and HoDs, which then creates instability for departments. Therefore, challenges at the political-administrative interface should be addressed and dealt with decisively to enhance the effectiveness of Public Service administration without compromising the policies and strategic objectives of the government of the day.

c) Factors that influence the career pathing of SMS members in the Public Service

According to the majority of SMS members who participated in the study, sometimes training and development leads to clearly defined career paths, whereas some participants said training and development never leads to clearly defined career paths. Some participants were of the view that training and development always leads to clearly defined career paths.

d) Strategies to ensure the retention of SMS members

According to the majority of participants, departments do not have a strategy/mechanism to retain critical and scarce skills at SMS levels. Some participants said the only mechanism used to retain SMS members is the possibility of offering employees few notches within the salary band as a way to counter that which is given by another department/employer. However, the counter offer mechanism is not effective and successful in retaining SMS members.

e) Extent of utilisation of current and former SMS members in the Public Service

The study revealed that lack of policy makes it difficult to utilise competent former and current HoDs in a structured and consistent manner. It was thus recommended that a framework in the Public Service should be developed to ensure consistency in selection procedures and utilisation of current and former HoDs and other SMS members.

Overall, the study has revealed that the constructs of and practices relating to recruitment, retention, career-pathing and utilisation of staff (RRCU) are fragmented, viewed and dealt with in silos in the Public Service which is not addressing challenges relating to the capacity and performance of the organisation. Therefore, RRCU should be integrated and addressed holistically through a comprehensive talent management framework.
CHAPTER 5: RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

It is an undisputed fact that senior managers, particularly HoDs in the Public Service play a central role in the implementation of government policies and programmes. Their ability to function and deliver on expectations depends firstly on their skills, competencies, experience and motivation, and secondly on the extent the Public Service is able to utilise their skills appropriately and retain the most critical and scarce skills. This makes the management of recruitment, retention, career-pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ skills and expertise, critical.

The study has established that recruitment, retention, career-pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills in the Public Service are interrelated and interdependent, but there are no comprehensive policies and strategies that address all these areas in a coherent manner. The Public Service HRM framework deals extensively with the recruitment of SMS members, however, the existing framework has gaps and its effectiveness is influenced and impacted by various factors and challenges.

This Chapter presents recommendations which are informed by the legislative, policy and regulatory frameworks outlined in Chapter 2, the literature analysis presented in Chapter 3 and the findings and proposals highlighted in Chapter 4.

5.2 RECOMMENDATIONS

The following proposed recommendations are made with a view to address the challenges identified:

- The Public Service should implement the NDP recommendations on a hybrid system in managing the recruitment and other career incidents of HoDs, including assigning HoDs the power to appoint SMS members below the HoD level.
- There is a need to review the HRM framework to address the identified challenges and to comprehensively address the areas of retention, career-pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills in the Public Service. The review should take into consideration, amongst others, the recommendations of the NDP Vision 2030 and provisions of the Public Administration Management Act, 2014.
- An overarching policy framework to guide retention, career-pathing and utilisation of SMS expertise and skills in other public institutions and across the three spheres of government is critical and should therefore be developed.
5.3 CONCLUSION

The findings in this study indicate that properly managed recruitment, retention, career-pathing and utilisation of senior managers’ expertise and skills in the Public Service can contribute positively towards leadership and organisational stability, improved performance and service delivery. The study further highlighted the need to address policy gaps and challenges especially in the areas of career-pathing, retention and utilisation of current and former SMS members’ expertise and skills. The proposed solutions in this regard include a review of the existing HRM framework and establishment of a credible structure/institutions and processes to manage the career incidents of HoDs in the Public Service.

The PSC hopes that the proposals made by SMS members who participated in this study and roundtable participants, and the recommendations above will contribute towards the professionalisation of the Public Service, and improve personnel practices and the overall performance of the Public Service.