

# **Development of the Civil Service in South Africa**

## **Historical Developments**

The development of the national civil service in South Africa is closely linked to the physical, social and political environment; it has its roots in the political and administrative institutions and practices brought to the country by settlers and colonists, and the policy of separate development (apartheid) of the governing political party which was in power for more than 44 years from 1948.

At the time of the arrival of Jan van Riebeeck at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 to establish a refreshment station, the territory was occupied by various indigenous groups. Van Riebeeck and the people forming part of the settlement were in the employ of the Dutch East India Company and they remained subject to the directing body of the Company (the Council of Seventeen) with its head office in Holland. The institutions that came into being during this period were fashioned on those of Holland (Cloete JJN, 1982:2). The officials employed to perform government functions during this time were thus in the service of a company and were of foreign descent.

After 143 years the Cape came under British rule in September 1795. The British philosophy of government and administration was characterised by rule of law, which provides for limited discretion of the executive authority, equality before the law, and an independent judiciary; government authority was divided into legislative, executive and judicial authorities, and ministers had parliamentary responsibility implying that the ministers who function jointly as a Cabinet are responsible to Parliament (Hanekom and Thornhill, 1983:10).

The British philosophy was to impact on the political and administrative institutions and practices in South Africa in view of the fact that, following the initial occupation of the Cape in 1795 and after brief Dutch rule from 1803 - 1806, the Cape became a British Colony in 1806 and remained one till 1910. British expansion continued when the territory of Natal was declared a British colony in 1843. The Republic of the Orange Free State was conquered by Britain in 1900, placed under military rule and later administered as a

crown colony, while responsible government was introduced in 1907. The South African Republic came into being in the territory later known as the Transvaal in 1858. After the second South African War of Independence (1899-1902) the Transvaal was occupied by Britain. As in the Orange Free State the Transvaal was first placed under military rule, later administered as a crown colony and in 1906 responsible government was granted to the territory. The British system of using a commission to control and oversee civil service personnel management and administration also spread to the various British colonies, i.e. a Board of Examiners was established in the Cape Colony in 1850, a Civil Service Board in Natal in 1894 and a Public Service Board in the Transvaal in 1902 (see Cloete JJN, 1985:48).

The need for co-operation between the four British colonies in Southern Africa became evident after the conclusion of the Peace Treaty of Vereeniging. A National Convention was established at which a draft Constitution for the political unification of the four territories was drawn up. The British Government accepted the proposed constitution and it was passed by Parliament in Westminster as the South Africa Act, 1909, which came into effect on 31 May 1910. In terms of this constitution the colonies Cape of Good Hope, Natal, Orange Free State and Transvaal became provinces of the Union of South Africa.

Although the public institutions and administrative practices of the new Union were largely based on those that had been established in the four colonies during the periods of responsible government (see Cloete, JJN, 1982:18&19), this was the start of a national civil service for the newly created state. The national civil service created was also to include the majority of the officials employed in the administrations of the four provinces (the former colonies). Local government officials were, however, never part of the national civil service.

After Union in 1910 a Public Service Commission was created in 1912 with the power to make recommendations to political functionaries on civil service matters such as the grading and classification of posts, appointments, promotions, termination of service and the organisation and reorganisation of departments. At the time of Union in 1910 there were ten central government

departments created to manage and administer the functional areas of agriculture; railways and harbours; internal affairs; mining and defence; justice; education; finance; lands; native affairs; commerce and industries and public works. Civil servants were thus organised functionally. Legislative provision was made for their conditions of service including remuneration, pension, leave and allowances (Coetzee, 1987:42).

The Union of South Africa was not fully independent and it was subordinate to the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. In 1934, however, the Union Parliament became the sovereign legislature in the Union with the passing of the Status of the Union Act, 1934.

In terms of the provisions of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act of 1961 the Republic of South Africa was established outside the Commonwealth and the State President became the head of state.

When the National Party came into power 1948 with the ideology of separate development (apartheid) as policy, various legislative and administrative institutions and practices were instituted over time to operationalise this policy. Firstly, the creation of ten homelands within the South African territory with self-governing status for the various black ethnic groups were initiated. Furthermore, it was provided that these homelands could develop into independent states (four of these homelands did become "independent", namely Transkei, Bophuthatswana, Venda and Ciskei, referred to as TBVC states). Secondly, in accordance with the provisions of the Republic of South Africa Constitution Act of 1983, a tricameral parliamentary system was created. This made provision for a separate chamber for the White, Coloured and Asian population groups respectively. In these chambers the three groups could legislate separately in respect of matters classified as "own affairs" whilst "general affairs" (which affected all three groups and also the Black population, who were not represented in Parliament) had to be approved by all three chambers. This meant that there were eventually thirteen Houses of Parliament and a quasi-legislative President's Council (established in 1981). The advent of a new democratic dispensation in 1994 in accordance with the provisions of the interim Constitution of 1993 led to the abolition of the tricameral parliamentary system and the re-incorporation of the homelands

and independent states into South Africa. The new government made clear in the White Paper on Reconstruction and Development (Republic of SA, 1994) and the White Paper on Transformation of the Public Service (Republic of SA, 1995b) that it also intended to transform the following constraints from the past in the civil service, namely (Republic of SA, 1995b): lack of representativeness; lack of popular legitimacy; lack of service delivery; centralised control and top-down management; lack of accountability and transparency; absence of effective management information; low productivity; poorly paid and demotivated staff; conflicting labour relations, and lack of a professional ethos and work ethic.

The following transformation priorities and processes for the civil service have been identified (Republic of SA, 1994 and Republic of SA, 1995b): rationalisation and restructuring to ensure a unified, integrated and leaner civil service (a reduction of 200 000 personnel is envisaged) (SAIRR, 1995:478); institution building and management to promote greater accountability and organisational and managerial effectiveness; representativeness and affirmative action; transforming service delivery to meet basic needs and redress imbalances; human resource development; employment conditions and labour relations; and the promotion of a professional service ethos.

### **Recruitment to the South African Public Service**

As mentioned earlier, vacancies are advertised by the department, where the job is to be situated, in local newspapers, while vacancies for senior management levels, must be advertised nationally. Candidates apply directly to the department for the job and these vacancies may come at any level. The requirements of the vacancy and tasks are clearly stipulated in the advertisement but these advertisements must be aimed at previously disadvantaged communities i.e. Blacks, women and peoples with disabilities to ensure the widest pool of applicants. At times, departments may outsource this task, advertising and reception of applications, to an employment agency.

A selection committee is formed, in the department, and is chaired by the head of department. After the closing date, the committee screens the applications and short-lists candidates, again always taking into account, race, gender, disability and “merit”. It then communicates with short-listed

candidates, interviews them and agrees upon a selection<sup>1</sup>. A probation period may follow the appointment and no candidate has the (automatic) right to promotion. Promotion happens simply through a candidate applying for a vacancy at a higher level and then through the normal recruitment procedure as just outlined. Thus it is often the case that candidates inside the public service will compete against candidates coming from outside for a vacancy at a higher level/grade.

While senior managers are specialists and are often head-hunted, recruitment for these must be as competitive as possible, thus ensuring the best capable candidate. Affirmative action appointments, at this level, are the prerogative of the respective minister, who decides who should be targeted and what the competency requirements should be. Ministers usually request a transfer or promotion for a senior manager, if the candidate so desires (DPSA 2001: 55-61). In this we see a clear blurring of the roles of administrators, i.e. heads of departments, and politicians.

### **Training and development in the public service in South Africa**

The importance of training and development in the public service is articulated in the Constitution of the Republic, 1996, primary and secondary legislative prescripts, white papers and strategic frameworks, and more recently, the National Development Plan.

### **Constitutional, legislative and policy frameworks**

To give effect to the Constitutional imperative of a “development-oriented, transparent, responsive and broadly representative” public service, the White Paper on the Transformation of the Public Service, 1995, was published. Chapter 13, part 13.3 of the White Paper states that, “government has adopted the view that all public servants, from the most senior to the most junior, require on-going training as an integral part of their professional life. The training of senior and middle management must be linked to the processes and policy-making challenges defined by the RDP and this current White paper.” The White Paper goes on to state that “training programmes

would need to be flexible in order to maximise the access of workers to in-service training; this will include access to adult basic education.”

Co-ordination, quality and funding challenges in the implementation of training and development in the public service led to the development of the White Paper on Public Service Training and Education, 1997. The White Paper recommended that training should be coordinated and delivered through a combination of centralised and decentralised mechanisms, with norms and standards being set at the central level and training delivered through a combination of decentralised provision by state and non-state providers in a competitive framework. The paper explored various funding options, including state and donor funding. At departmental level, the White Paper proposed the setting aside of a portion of the allocated budget for training and development.

According to Section 4 (1) and (2) of the Public Service Act, 1994, “there shall be a training institution listed as a national department in Schedule 1. The management and administration of such institution shall be under the control of the Minister”. Section 4 (3) of the Public Service Act further states that “such institution - (a) shall provide such training or cause such training to be provided or conduct such examinations or tests or cause such examination or tests to be conducted as the Head of the institute may with the approval of the Minister decide or as may be prescribed as a qualification for the appointment or transfer of persons in or to the public service; (b) may issue diplomas or certificates or cause diplomas or certificates to be issued to persons who have passed such examinations.”

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

generic managerial and leadership training needs of members of the SMS; ensure that standard courses and programmes are developed on the basis of the identified training needs; and evaluate the relevance and value for money of the courses and programmes is specifically assigned to the Minister of Public Service and Administration (Chapter 4, Part VI (A) of the Public Service Regulations, 2001, as amended).

Pursuant to the Public Service Act, 1996, and the Public Service Regulations, 2001, the Minister for Public Service and Administration published the Human Resource Development (HRD) Strategic Framework for the Public Service, 2008. The framework defines human resource development in the public service as “those efforts undertaken by organizations to ensure that employees are well prepared to undertake their responsibilities and grow into viable careers, thereby adding value to the productivity and service of their organizations, the motivation and performance of their peers and the attainment of the overall vision of the developmental state. In doing so, organisations seek to ensure that the right people are prepared at the right place, at the right time and for the right positions to which they can readily contribute.” The first pillar of the strategy states that “capacity development initiatives” should focus on „building human capital for high performance and service delivery“. The capacity development pillar has eight areas of strategic intervention, including internships and learnerships, which are aimed at providing on-the-job experience for young people and prospective future public servants; strengthening systems for workplace learning; integrated adult basic education and training; leadership and management development; and forging partnerships with Higher Education and Training Institutions (HETIs) and Technical Vocational Education and Training institutions (TVETs).

The National Development Plan (NDP), which was published in 2012, has also put emphasis on the need for a capable, developmental, professional and responsive public service and makes recommendations to address the uneven and poor performance of the public service through the provision of appropriate skills and recruitment of suitably qualified personnel. Training programmes should focus on, among others, management and frontline

services to ensure that the service delivered to the citizens of this country is efficient and of good quality. Implementation of the NDP is being taken forward through various initiatives, two of which are outlined below.

The 2014-2018 National Integrated Human Resource Development Plan outlines five outcome-oriented goals which are aligned to, among others, the National Development Plan (NDP) and the National Growth Path (NGP), of which goal number three focuses on a “capable public sector with effective and efficient planning and implementation capabilities (Human Resource Development Council, 2014:9). The key deliverables for this outcome-oriented goal is the “revision of the public service HRD strategies and plans in line with the vision of the NDP for a professional and capable public service” and the need to “turn the public sector into a training space” (Human Resource Development Council, 2014:10).

The Medium Term Strategic Framework (MTSF) for 2014-19 has outlined fourteen strategic outcomes that cut across the various chapters of the NDP. In particular, the role of “an efficient, effective and development oriented public service and an empowered, fair and inclusive citizenship” is dealt with in outcome twelve of the MTSF. Some of the key outputs for this outcome put emphasis on the achievement of “sufficient technical and specialist professional skills” and “increased responsiveness of public servants and accountability to citizens”. The strategic plans of all public service departments are aligned to the MTSF.

### **Provision and funding of training and development in the public service**

In addition to HETIs and TVETs that offer pre-service/under-graduate and post-graduate qualifications and short-term training programmes, there are several institutions that are mandated to offer specific programmes in the public service and/or specific sectors in the public sector. For example, the Department of Justice and Constitutional Development has a Justice College that offers various types of courses for, among others, officials from the department and public service employees from other departments; the Department of Health operates Nursing Colleges; the South African Police Service has a Police College that provides for new recruits and existing officers; and some provincial administrations have training academies. There

are also Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs) that are responsible for coordinating sector-specific training and development across the public and private sector. The recently established National School of Government (NSG), which replaced the Public Administration, Leadership and Management Academy (PALAMA), is responsible for the provision of education, training and development programmes in the public service. The current and former institution is established in terms of Schedule 1 of the Public Service Act, 1994, as amended. The objective of the NSG is to develop a professional and capable public service for a developmental state. The NSG offerings include a combination of compulsory training programmes for all public service officials, tailor-made programmes based on the needs of various government departments and optional programmes that are necessary for continuous training and development. The NSG is expected to implement the following programmes:

- The Compulsory Induction Programme (CIP), which targets all new public service employees and is aimed at ensuring that all public servants are oriented to the public sector and to their respective job responsibilities.
- In-service learning and development programmes that give public servants access to continuous quality learning and development that will make an impact on public sector performance and service delivery, targeting administration support staff, management and executive leadership.
- In-service learning and development programmes that are aimed at impacting on public sector performance and service delivery, including Strategy, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Problem Solving and Analysis, Financial Management, Human Resource Development and Communication.

Prior to the establishment of the NSG, PALAMA coordinated the provision of short and medium-term training and development programmes in key targeted areas such as human resource management, labour relations, financial management, ethics and anticorruption, gender mainstreaming and diversity management. It also coordinated the provision of training for the management and leadership echelon in collaboration with several higher education institutions. Training programmes in these areas included mentoring and coaching, an executive development programme, and an

accelerated development programme for middle managers. Within the public service, PALAMA worked closely with provincial training academies and sector-based training providers.

The PALAMA approach to training and development has had mixed results. The major weaknesses of the training approach and programmes included the following:

- Training focused on individual needs instead of building organisational capacity.
- Training offered was fragmented, lacked strategic focus and was not relevant to continuously changing contexts.
- Programmes reached less than 3% of public service employees and were predominantly focused on management and leadership.
- The outsourcing cost recovery model resulted in a focus on income generation and an escalation of the costs of training, which made PALAMA less competitive when compared to many higher education and training institutions.

In addition, only one training programme offered by PALAMA/NSG, that is, the Compulsory Induction Programme, which was introduced in 2012, is mandatory for confirmation of probation. Implementation of the CIP is characterised by challenges such as the shortage of trainers and there are no mandatory programmes for promotion purposes and many of the programmes are not accredited. The shortage of trainers has been criticised on the basis that mechanisms have not been put in place to tap into the expertise of existing public service officials and competent former public servants, commissioners and ministers.

The weaknesses in the training and development programmes offered has meant that many Public Service employees preferred to obtain their short-term training from accredited public and private HETIs and FETIs/TVETs. This is in addition to pursuing formal qualification studies through higher education institutions, with the financial support of government departments in line with their approved bursary schemes. It is estimated that national and provincial departments spend approximately 2-4 billion rand per annum on employee bursaries for formal qualifications and ad hoc funding for short-

term training programmes. Most of this money pays for programmes that are offered by public and private FETIs and HETIs. The decentralised model for funding the NSG has also meant that public service institutions such as the NSG compete for resources with private and public TVETs/FETIs and HETIs.

The legislative and regulatory framework to facilitate training and development in the public service in South Africa is in place. However, coordination of the training offered by various institutions, including HETIs, remains a challenge. According to the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande (Developmental State Conference, 13 November 2014) “we have enough resources in the Public Service for education and training to really make a big impact in building this developmental state. The issue is, are we using that maximally?”

### **Classification of Jobs in South Africa**

Positions in the Civil Services of South Africa are covetable by many people due to higher salaries and good pensions civil servants usually receive. The desirability of jobs in the public sector makes them highly competitive. Many people aspire to be employed as public servants and thus work for the government of South Africa, subscribing to its regulations and policies. Working in the Civil Services also means that the person has to work in areas affecting people’s every day existence; that is, may be working in health or education departments.

A division of departments in the public sector is easy to understand. The Civil Services sector is divided into ministerial and non-ministerial departments, each of which engages employees in different activities and lays different responsibilities upon them. Note, however, that working as a civil servant requires flexibility, because employees in the public sector are often moved from one department to another, especially in times of political changes and political turmoil. Depending on political circumstances, the Civil Services sector gets often restructured, with the result that employees may be transferred from a ministerial to a non-ministerial department and vice versa without warning. Although relocating from one department to another may be stressful, it does not cause the loss of employment rights or benefits.

<b>Civil Service Jobs in South Africa</b>			
South African Police Service - SAPS	South African Public Servants	Federal and Mogul South Africa	Parliament of South Africa
Public Sector South Africa	South African Qualification Authority	South African Revenue Services	South African Service

There are many executive agencies and governmental departments in the Civil Services Sector. A variety of jobs are there in the public sector. Depending on the skills and specialization, Civil Servant can work in the following areas, among others:

- Housing
- Health
- Agriculture
- Education
- Border Control

In these areas, Civil Servant has to fulfil different roles. Each of this field requires administrators, for example. If you are employed as administrator, you will be required to research, compile reports, and work on policy documents. Equally popular positions are found a management, finance, and human resources departments. If you are a doctor, nurse, lawyer, engineer, geologist, or surveyor, you can also find job in the Civil Services, because the South African government hires people with these professions. Another popular profession is advisor. The government hires a lot of advisers across many departments, often giving them higher salaries and better benefits.

### **Classification structure**

The structure of the South African Standard Classification of Occupation comprises of the following levels:

- Major Group
- Sub-Major group
- Minor group

- Unit group
- Sub-division of unit group

**Major groups -**

- denoted by a one-digit code.
- the broadest level of the classification.
- there are nine major groups.

**Sub-major groups -**

- denoted by a two-digit code.
- sub-divisions of the major groups.
- there are 30 sub-major groups.

**Minor groups -**

- denoted by a three-digit code.
- sub-divisions of the sub-major groups.
- there are 151 minor groups.

**Unit groups -**

- denoted by a four-digit code.
- sub-divisions of the minor groups.
- there are 634 unit groups.

**Sub-divisions of unit groups -**

- denoted by a five-digit code.
- it is distinguished from other occupations in the same unit group on the basis of detailed skill specialization