



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

SCARCE SKILLS RETENTION POLICY

REF: S4/5P

2017 Reviewed Edition

Date of Approval: 8 Feb 2018

Recommended by

[Signature]

Head of Department
(Maisela, RJ)

2018-02-06

Date

Approved by

[Signature]

Hon Member of Executive Council (Acting)
Sekoati, SC (MPL)

2018/02/08

Date

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1. Acronyms and abbreviations

CD	Chief Director
ECSA	Engineering Council of South Africa
EEA	Employment Equity Act
EPWP	Extended Public Works Programme
HOD	Head of Department
HRP	Human Resource Plan
HRD	Human Resource Development
LDARD	Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
MEC	Member of the Executive Council
SMS	Senior Management Services
OSD	Occupational Specific Dispensation
PDP	Personal Development Plan

2. Executive summary

The Scarce Skills Retention Policy has been developed to ensure that the Department as an organ of state strives for the retention of employees to address skill shortage and staff turnover in the workplace. This specific policy outlines the objectives of the policy and also indicates how these objectives can be obtained.

The Policy Pronouncements set out and the literature also attends to the various principles which underpins the policy, explain the powers, roles and responsibilities of all involved in the process and discuss considerations for the implementation of the policy. Apart from that, it is also addressing the very important success factors on retaining employees as well as service delivery priorities of the department. The institutional arrangements are set out clearly and indicate the responsible persons regarding the implementation of the policy.

3. Introduction

This Policy is directed by the Public Service Regulations as amended in 2016 as well as the Determination and Directive on Employment of Persons into Developmental Programmes in the Public Service in terms of PSR 58 and 75.

The dynamics in the country and particularly in the Public Service has resulted in the shortages of skilled staff and this has prompted and compelled the Department of Public Service and Administration to call for a renewed focus by Departments on retention of employees and management thereof.

Government departments and South Africa as a whole are experiencing a shortage of skilled and specialist employees. These types of employees are sought after and competitive/lucrative remuneration packages are offered by the private sector for their services. The Public Service is diverse and employees are taking for their own personal responsibility for career-mobility/growth, career opportunities and advancement.

The Department for Public Service and Administration embarked on a programme “Occupation Specific Dispensation” (OSD), especially for scarce skills and highly skilled occupations in the public sector. The revised occupation specific salary structures are aimed at improving the public service. This alone will not solve the problem in its entirety because it is selective and does not address a number of skills and occupations that is limited and difficult to attract.

LDARD saw a need to develop comprehensive retention strategies in the light of their own unique needs and circumstances. It has been observed that certain specific occupational categories are by their nature characterized by high staff turnover due to a variety of reasons such as compensation for skills in the market, prospects for career mobility and working conditions. It is the aim of this policy document to value and address concerns of competent employees whose skills and services are regarded as critical towards the achievement of departmental objectives.

4. Purpose and objectives

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework to facilitate and enhance the retention of skills - particularly those that are scarce and critical skills to achieve departmental objectives.

OBJECTIVES:

The following objectives underpin the development and implementation of this policy and they are as follows:

- a) To retain employees who would have been identified to process scarce and critical skills to ensure continuity of services in the execution of the departmental mandate.
- b) To build and maintain the departmental skills base in order to enhance the departmental capacity to deliver services.

5. Authority of the policy

This policy is issued under the authority and functions under the custodianship of the Honourable Member of the Executive Council (MEC) as

the Executive Authority and Head of the Department (HOD) as the Accounting Officer in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture (LDARD).

6. Legal framework

The policy is aligned and reflects the provisions of the following core legislations and prescripts:

- Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996
- Public Service Act 103 of 1994 (as amended)
- Public Service Regulations, 2001, Chapter 1, Part V
- Public Service Regulations as amended in 2016
- The Scarce Skills Strategy Framework for the Public Service, 2002
- The Scarce Skills Policy Framework for the Public Service, 2003
- Managing Staff Retention, An information Guide for the Government Departments
- Skills Development Act of 2006 as amended
- Determination and Directive on Employment of Persons into Developmental Programmes in the Public Service in terms of PSR 58 & 75

7. Scope of application

The policy applies to all current and prospective employees in respect of jobs classified as scarce, critical and high risk in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

8. Definitions

For the purpose of this policy, Scarce, Critical and High-Risk skills shall be defined as follows:

1. **Scarce skills** –skills that are needed to realise the department’s goals and objectives, but which are difficult to recruit and expensive to replace. These are skills which are in short supply in the labour market. These will not always be the same and may change due to various reasons e.g. changes in the labour market environment

(supply and demand) and changes in the strategic direction of the department.

2. **Critical skills** – these are those scarce skills which are critical to the Department, however the focus is not on the scarcity of the skill as such but rather on the critical staff member who contributes positively and whose loss would have a negative impact on the department's ability to meet its objectives.
3. **High Risk Skills:** These are scarce skills which are critical to the department, however the specific employees who possess these skills are either demotivated or have reached a career ceiling, and as such are considering leaving the department or for some reasons are highly susceptible to poaching by other institutions.

9. Policy pronouncements

9.1 Scarce skills retention strategies

9.1.1 An employee who has been offered a post of higher salary level or notch in another department or any other organization outside the public service may be retained in line with the objectives and priorities of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture and Rural Development, if such an employee has:

- (a) scarce/critical skill i.e. he/she has skills needed to achieve the core operational objectives of a branch/component; or
- (b) A scarce/critical , i.e. he/she has highly valuable skills which are difficult and expensive to recruit and are rarely available on short notice.

9.1.2 The retaining of an employee shall occur to the extent that the retention offer made to the employee by the prospective new Employer shall be similar to the total remunerative package to the notch closest to the salary scale used in the Public Service that LDARD may consider offering.

9.1.3 LDARD shall provide growth, development and empowerment opportunities to ensure employees within specified categories acquire competencies that improve their ability to work in other areas within the department to improve prospects for career pathing.

- 9.1.4 LDARD shall ensure that employees have access to development and training that should support work performance and career development , i.e. bursaries, short courses, job rotation(within specialised field), in-house training to broaden knowledge and expertise, thereby improving capacity of employees.
- 9.1.5 LDARD shall design and conduct job evaluation on scarce/critical skills and high risk categories in order to align with appropriate and justifiable compensation for the job.
- 9.1.6 A counter offer may be considered in the event that the officer has an approved appointment letter, of which the job description of the job offered need to be matched with the job content within the LDARD.
- 9.1.7 An employee requesting horizontal interdepartmental transfer from one department or from private sector may be retained if there is a funded vacant post.
- 9.1.8 Contractual obligations entered with bursars (funded by LDARD) especially on scarce skills such as Veterinary and Agricultural Engineering shall be strictly adhered to.

9.2 Roles, responsibilities and powers

Authority/ Office	Policy Agenda	Formulation & Drafting Policies	Policy Approval	Policy Implementation	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEC	Contributes to policy agenda Approves development of new policies	Contributes to policy agenda Approves development of new policies	Approves all policies applicable to LDARD	Oversees policy relationship of policy implementation with electoral mandates.	Approves amendment of policy resulting from a review
HOD	Contributes to policy agenda -Can approve development of new policies in line with powers conferred by law or delegation	Recommends approval of draft policy to The MEC on advise of Executive Management	Can approve policies relevant to LDARD in line with powers conferred by law or delegation	Oversees implementation of policies	Can approve amendments to policies relevant to LDARD in line with powers conferred by law or delegation
Executive Management	Inputs into policy agenda	Recommend the draft policy before submission to HOD and/or The MEC	None	Implement policy within area of responsibility	Monitor and evaluate implementation of the policies at a strategic level
Senior Management	Inputs into policy agenda	Draft policy within the area of responsibility (as policy sponsor)	None	Implement policy within area of responsibility	Monitors & evaluates implementation of policies within areas of responsibility
Human Resource Management	Inputs into policy agenda	-Supports all branches in the drafting of policies; -Coordinate the consultation process	None	Ensure that all employees are informed about all policies applicable to LDARD	Supports branches and the Executive Authority/ Accounting Officer in monitoring & evaluating implementation of policies

9.3 Policy implementation considerations

9.3.1 Principles

- a) The Executing Authority or his/her delegate shall utilize his/her discretion to determine the appropriate salary range for employees whose services are considered critical/scarce skills for the Department in line with relevant legislations.
- b) The continuous training and development of staff shall be maintained in line with the Skills Development Act and as per individuals Performance Instruments.
- c) The creation of sustainable, pleasant and human working environment that values and recognize the contribution made by its employees.
- d) The potential and reasons for leaving the Department shall be determined through conducting exit interviews
- e) The career development plan should be used as a means to create a pool of capable and potential employees.
- f) Information about the employee's career path should be kept confidential and under no circumstance should be disclosed to other employees.

9.3.2 Identification of scarce skills

- i) The identification of scarce and critical skills shall be done through conducting skills audit and references.
- ii) In assessing the supply/demand, the department shall determine the scarce skills/critical skills on an annual basis.
- iii) By so doing, it will be possible to identify and classify the current skills and future needs of the Department.
- iv) The outcome of such analysis shall be reviewed annually to take into consideration changing circumstances.
- v) The Employee's Personal Development Plans (PDP's) as well as Workplace Skills Plan (WSP) will form the basis of such analysis.

Line functions play a critical role in providing inputs to the process of scarce skills determination. The Human Resource Development submits for approval

on an annual basis to the Head of Department a list of priority fields or skills that are essential to enhance service delivery.

The following fields are prioritized as critical/scarce as per approval by the Accounting Officer (and the period for this approval is from 2018 - 2020,) i.e.:

1. BVSc:Veterinary Medicine = Veterinarians
2. BSc: Agricultural Engineering = Agricultural Engineers
3. BSc Hons (Aquaculture) = Aquaculture Specialist/Scientist
4. BSc: Geomatics / Geographic Information Systems = GIS Professionals, GIS Technicians & GIS Technologists
5. BSc: Entomology = Entomologists

9.3.3 Administrative procedure

- i) The decision to request the retention of an employee shall be in line with the approved HR delegations.
- ii) The relevant line manager may provisionally indicate to the employee concerned that he/she would submit a proposal for the retention of the employee's services to the Executive Authority/Accounting Officer.
- iii) The line manager must request the relevant employee to complete the Retention Questionnaire (Form RQ) without creating any legitimate expectation of retention and this must be sent to the Chief Director: HRM. The request for retention must be accompanied by a written motivation. It is the responsibility of the relevant Chief Director to sign the request directed to the Chief Director: HR.
- iv) Human Resource Management shall write a submission for consideration and approval by the Executive Authority or Accounting Officer.

9.3.4 Agricultural Engineers

Agricultural Engineers play a pivotal role in the Department with regards to the execution of the mandate. Engineers are usually appointed subject to the following (according to the Determination and Directive

on Employment of Persons into Developmental Programmes in the Public Service in terms of PSR 58 & 75):

- i) Permanent engineers: These are persons who are permanently employed by the Department. These staff members qualify for all staff benefits (such as OSD, Pension, leave, subsidized medical aid membership, etc.) These engineers need to:
 - a) Be graduated as engineers
 - b) Must have completed the practical training for registration to ECSA and need to have complied with all the stipulations for Candidate engineers (as stipulated by ECSA)
 - c) Need to have completed the full ECSA registration process (which is a 12 month process)
 - d) Need to have evidence of ECSA professional membership
- ii) Contract appointments: Contract appointments take on different forms and serve different purposes:

Candidate engineers: Contract appointments to enable an engineer to obtain and qualify for ECSA membership. (As directed by and according to the Determination and Directive on Employment of Persons into Developmental Programmes in the Public Service in terms of PSR 58 & 75). After graduating as an engineer, a period of three (3) years practical training is required before an engineer can register at the professional engineering association of South Africa, named ECSA. Engineers who obtained their degree outside South Africa, may experience more challenges (such as recognition of qualifications by the National Qualifications Framework of SA, a delay in the registration process by ECSA, etc.) to obtain ECSA membership and these situations may need specific interventions. As is the case with all persons appointed per contract, the engineer appointed on contract for this purpose, will function as follows:

- a) Fixed salary is applicable since remuneration takes place as per OSD job specifications.

- b) The person appointed in terms of the contract, will function according to Terms of Reference (which is stipulated by the LDARD) which specify all relevant details.
- c) Persons appointed on contract, qualify for the normal S&T as well as fuel claims which are applicable to permanent staff.
- d) Persons appointed in terms of this contract need to submit their final report to ECSA in order to qualify for ECSA member ship.
- e) After completion of the practical period and/or the full registration process, preference will be given to meet the minimum appointment requirements although the LDARD is not under any obligation to appoint the person permanently.
- f) All ECSA registration fees is the responsibility of the engineer/candidate engineer.
- g) Contracts for Candidate engineers may be for a period of 12 months (renewable) or a contract for a 3 year period during their practical experience (which have professional experience by ECSA.)

Contract appointments other than Candidate engineers: These contracts are normally three (3) year contracts due to the nature of the agricultural projects, but may also include shorter periods if an engineer's inputs are needed for a specific phase of a project only. In all these instances, the contract will have the same specifications (with the exception of the period/length of the contract).

As is the case with all persons appointed per contract, the engineer appointed on contract for the purpose of a specific project, will function as follows:

- a) No fixed salary is applicable since remuneration takes place on an hourly basis.
- b) The person appointed in terms of the contract, will function according to a Terms of Reference (which is stipulated by the LDARD)
- c) The person appointed in terms of this contract, should submit a monthly timesheet and progress report to the relevant Chief Director; this should be accompanied by the invoice. Remuneration is per hour.
- d) Persons appointed per contract, qualify for the normal S&T as well as fuel claims which are applicable to permanent staff.
- e) After completion of the contract, the LDARD is under no obligation to employ the engineer further in any capacity.

9.4 Monitoring, evaluation and reporting (with regards to the Policy)

The monitoring, evaluation and reporting will be done as follows:

(a) Chief Director:

The Chief Director: Human Resource Management shall be responsible for overseeing, monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the Scarce Skills Retention Policy.

b) All line managers:

Line Managers shall also be responsible and take steps in ensuring that scarce skills within the relevant division is recruited, developed and retained.

c) Quarterly Exit Interview Report:

The Quarterly Exit Interview Report, detailing staff turnover trends shall be compiled with recommendations and submitted to Executive Management for further considerations and discussions.

9.5 Institutional arrangements/delegations

Strategic Management has facilitated the establishment Policy Coordinating Committee to oversee the ratification of all policies prior approval by the Executive Management.

(a) The Executive Authority is the custodian and the Accounting Officer ensures that the Policy is implemented by putting in place measures for implementation. HRM shall provide support and advice in this regard to ensure effective and efficient implementation.

(b) Chief Directors/Directors/Deputy Directors are implementers of the policy to ensure that good representative workforce are recruited, developed and retained in the department.

(c) Officials implementing this policy are required to comply with the latest delegation framework and identify appropriate delegations applicable to this policy, which may be subject to change from time to time.

9.6 Service delivery priorities

This policy aims to contribute towards the retention of staff to sustain departmental objectives and is underpinned by the following Government Priorities:

(a) Creation of decent work and sustainable livelihoods

(b) Education, e.g. HRD

(c) Health

(d) Rural Development

(e) The fight against Crime and Corruption, e.g. Anti-fraud and Corruption Unit

(f) Food Security

10 Default

Since it is the intention of this policy to ensure Scarce and Critical Skills Retention, no deviation from this Policy shall be allowed. Should it be impossible to comply with the policy, for whatever reason, a written motivation would be needed and approved by the Accounting Officer. Such incidences should be treated with the greatest care and consideration.

11 Inception date

The date of inception is the date on which this policy is approved by the Hon. MEC for the Department Agriculture and Rural Development (as indicated on the cover page).

12 Termination and review conditions

The policy should be reviewed every three (3) years after the date of approval or as and when a need arise.

Should the Policy still be in the review process by the time it lapses, an extension period is applicable and the approved policy remain valid until the reviewed version is approved.

13 Enquiries and reporting

Enquiries regarding this policy should be directed towards:

DIRECTORATE: HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES (LDARD)

TEL: 015-294 3000

The Directorate: HR is responsible for the timeous review, circulation, advocacy, availability and feed-back regarding this document. The

Directorate: HR is responsible for reporting towards oversight bodies in the event of enquiries with regards to this Scarce Skills Retention Policy.

RECOMMENDED:


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**HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
(MAISELA, RJ)**

2018-02-06
.....

DATE

APPROVED:


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**HON MEMBER OF EXECUTIVE COUNCIL (ACTING)
SEKOATI, SC (MPL)**

2018/02/07
.....

DATE