

## **GUIDELINES ON THE MANAGEMENT OF VACANCIES**

**Vide Cabinet Conclusion No. 1025 of 7 July 2014, these Guidelines are in effect.**

### **SECTION I - INTRODUCTION:**

In line with Government's policy on the creation of a leaner and more efficient Public Service and its freeze on hiring and in support of its wage reduction policy critical to the country's fiscal stability and long term survival, the manpower control mechanisms in this document are in full effect for the period January 1, 2014 to December 31, 2016 in the first instance.

As of January 1, 2014 there is a freeze on the automatic filling of permanently vacant posts as a means of controlling the wage bill and the size of the Public Service.

These Guidelines on the Management of Vacancies relate to truly permanent vacancies, in which there is no substantive post holder, unless otherwise stated. They constitute a paradigm shift from the practice that once a post becomes vacant it would be filled.

The guidelines are developed and implemented in keeping with established Constitutional and Legislative provisions, labour conventions and Public Service Administrative Orders.

These guidelines apply to all professional categories of staff across the Public Service with the exception as applicable to the Disciplined Forces, that is the Police and Prisons Services.

All Ministries/Departments are required to strictly adhere to these guidelines, failure to do so would result in automatic application of sanctions as outlined in the related Attrition Policy.

The Department of Public Administration in collaboration with key partners will monitor the application of these guidelines on a quarterly basis for compliance and to ensure that they are achieving the desired effect. Necessary review to these guidelines will be effected by the Department as and when necessary.

These guidelines hereby cancel and supersede all previous directions on the filling of vacancies and other aspects on the management of vacancies as contained in previous Circulars and policy documents.

## **SECTION II - MANAGEMENT OF VACANCIES:**

The strategic management of vacancies is a critical corollary to the attainment of the Government's Natural Attrition agenda. The replacement ratio of 70:30 is in effect.

Ministries and Departments will be required to make strategic determinations on how to treat existing vacancies which encompass the following options:

### **I. FILLING OF VACANT POSTS**

1. No new posts would be permitted unless there is a corresponding reduction elsewhere in the organisation.
2. Transfers and redeployment will be effected to fill vacancies in the Administrative and Clerical schemes and for junior non-specialist roles.
3. Filling of vacant posts will only be considered and allowed:
  - i. Where the post is of high strategic or operational impact to the organisation and contributes to Government's strategic agenda.
  - ii. Where the post provides a core and essential service critical to the business case of the organisation.
  - iii. Where the option of not filling would be detrimental to the organisation's effectiveness and its fulfillment of its core business.
  - iv. In critical cases of highly specialized functional roles which may require particular qualifications and training.
  - v. Where the post contributes or has sound potential to contribute to revenue generation and could pay for itself.
4. Retraining, shared services, and flexibility of arrangement will be effected to fill vacancies except in cases described in (iv.) above.
5. In order to pursue redeployment and retraining there should be consultation between the Department of Public Administration and the Public Service Commission so that approved vacancies would be filled with staff from low impact positions if deemed suitable until there is complete absorption.

## II. ABOLITION OF VACANT POSTS

The following guidelines govern the abolition of vacant posts with the Public Service.

1. Posts may become vacant through planned or unplanned circumstances. Any post which has been declared vacant by way of retirement, resignation, death, promotion or termination is subject to review by the Department of Public Administration and Centre of Government partners, with the view of advising on the management of the resultant vacancy.

The general principle is that no post becoming vacant would be automatically filled but will fall subject to critical scrutiny as outlined in the below section titled – *'Implementation Procedure'*.

2. Any post regardless of its professional categorization once it is truly vacant after review by the relevant authority, may be abolished.
3. Vacant posts may also be abolished in the following circumstances.
  - (i.) Where the post is deemed not to provide a core essential service to the organisation;
  - (ii.) Is not of a direct revenue generating function and/or required to address financial health of the organisation.
  - (iii.) The function of the post is determined to be obsolete and therefore the post is no longer relevant.
  - (iv.) Determination that another more cost-effective and -efficient form of engagement such as contractual appointment or service delivery for example through outsourcing would be used.

### **III. TRADING-OFF OF VACANT POSTS**

Ministries and Departments would be required to trade-off posts to facilitate post creation within their own organisation or elsewhere in the Public Service in keeping with the strategic goals of Government.

The rule of one to one reduction no longer applies across the board. The trade-offs will not be based solely on physical man-count 'exchange' but on budgetary implications of creating the requested post.

Consequently, a critical assessment of each case would be conducted and a determination made of the corresponding number of posts to be traded to facilitate post creation.

### **IV. FREEZING OF VACANT POSTS**

The option of freezing a post would be allowed for a period not exceeding one fiscal year. This option maybe considered in such circumstances.

1. When required specialist skills are not immediately available, but attempts are being made to secure such skills
2. To consider if to abolish or otherwise
3. Adequate budgetary allocations are not provided/identified for the current period but the post is essential to the organisation
4. The post is not of current high strategic or operational priority ranking but is in need of filling in anticipation of a high priority (up-coming) work programme/project

### SECTION III - IMPLEMENTATION PROCEDURE

The following procedure would be stipulated for the management of vacant posts. The entire process should take place approximately *six (6) weeks* of receipt of the Ministry's recommendation to accommodate Cabinet's deliberation. To expedite the process Ministries/Departments are encouraged to engage in forward planning and succession management.

***Step 1: Notification of Vacant Position***

Whenever a public officer exits a permanent position, the Permanent Secretary/Head of Department submits an immediate notice to the Department of Public Administration with following information:

- (i) ***Employee Profile***
  - The name of person, the post designation, the key duties and responsibilities performed.
  - The annual salary and allowances (where applicable) of the outgoing person
  - The location of position (Unit, Division/Department)
  
- (ii.) ***Job Profile***
  - Post designation, key duties and responsibilities
  - Requisite qualifications, skills/competencies, knowledge and experience
  - Annual salary and allowances
  - Post location
  - Numbers budgeted for in the Estimates
  - Numbers currently in posts
  - Availability of funds to meet the proposed expenditure
  
- (iii) ***Impact Analysis***
  - High Strategic/Operational
  - Medium Strategic/Operational
  - Low Strategic/Operational
  
- (iv) ***Recommended Options by Ministry/Department re: Vacant Position***
  - Abolish the position and its function (justify);
  - Abolish position and reallocate tasks among other positions (justify);
  - Abolish the position and redesign the business process using technology or other solutions.
  - Maintain and fill the position as key with the same job classification (level of seniority and salary) (justify);
  - Maintain and fill the position with amended duties and job classification
  - Employ alternative means of service delivery to fulfil job function such as out-sourcing
  - Freeze the position
  - Trade off the position to facilitate alternative post creation

***Step 2: Review of Recommendation by Centre of Government Committee***

When such information is submitted to the Department of Public Administration it is analyzed in conjunction with Centre of Government partners and a recommendation to approve or disapprove the request of the submitting organization is made in writing to the Cabinet of Ministers.

***Step 3: Decision-making***

Cabinet of Ministers review and direct on recommendation.

***Step 4: Communication of Decision***

Final decision communicated by the Department of Public Administration to the requesting Ministry/Department and other implementing agencies such as the Office of the Public Service Commission, Ministry of Finance, Office of the Cabinet secretary

***Step 5: Implementation of Decision***

Necessary implementing agencies effect decision in keeping with Cabinet's directive.