



CHAPTER SIX

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

“The need for an effective system to manage and monitor the performance of managers within the context of a public service in transformation is self-evident. Managers must have the most crucial role to play with regard to the achievement of institutional objectives. The effective monitoring of their performance and competency levels should therefore be accorded a very high priority” (Sangweni, 2003:20).

6.1 Introduction

Taking into consideration the above statement, a brief summary of this study is presented in this chapter. Furthermore, a reflection on the major findings of the study is provided, as well as the recommendations for the improvement of the current policy and practical environment associated with the effective institutional support for managerial capacity building of the senior public servants in the North West Province. These are important in view of the increasing demands for effective public service delivery, the complex challenges facing the public service and the dire need to preserve the constitutional status as well as professional image of the North West Province.

6.2 Summary of the study

Chapter One introduced the study on the managerial support for capacity building of the senior public servants in the North West Province of South Africa. It provided the background to the study, followed by the problem statement, the objectives of the study, the significance of the study, the definition of concepts and the organisation



of the study. The chapter stressed that the new constitutional and democratic order engineered the amalgamation and reordering of government departments as part of the creation of new provinces. However, the establishment of provincial government poses a number of administrative and financial challenges. In this regard, the Constitution specifies that public administration must be development orientated. In view of this, therefore, the senior public servants are central to the success of the transformation programme and the achievement of superior public service performance in the North West Province. The current service delivery challenges raise questions about the capacity of the North West Province, in particular the support for managerial capacity building of the senior public servants. Therefore, the study examined the preparation and development of the senior public servants and evaluated the diagnostic mechanisms for supporting managerial capacity building of the senior public servants in the North West Province.

Chapter Two, which discussed research methodology, presented methods of research of this study. It emerged from this chapter that this study is a descriptive case study which employs data collection instruments such as document analysis, structured interviews and a questionnaire. The participants came from the Department of Health, the Department of Education and the Department of Social Development and included senior HRD staff from each department as



well as their senior public servants. Critical issues that relate to data analysis, ethical considerations and delimitation of the study were also reviewed in this chapter.

The need for managerial capacity building in the public service was examined in Chapter Three. From the literature consulted, it emerged very clearly that scarcity of resources, changing social and cultural values and increasing organizational complexity challenge the scope and nature of governmental actions, thus, forcing public administration to redefine and reposition itself both in applied practice and as a field of scholarship. Within the context of the changing legislative paradigm shift in South Africa, more than ever before, the public institutions and public officials are required to be more democratic, accountable, effective, efficient, ethical and capable when it comes to discharging their services to the South African population. To live up to these expectations, senior public servants who function in today's public administration have been required to be prepared and developed with a view to embracing change and strategically meeting the challenges of managing current public services. At the same time, there have been growing expectations for senior public servants to have a clearer and stronger sense of vision, mission and focus in the departments of the public service.



It emerged from this chapter that the senior public servants play a major role in the establishment and achievement of the strategic functions and objectives of government. These are: raising and spending resources efficiently in the lowest costs and highest benefits fashion; raising and spending resources equitably; maintaining a healthy financial condition to meet their financial obligations; and responding to the needs of society in an open, informative, involving and accountable fashion, among others. These strategic objectives and functions are at the heart of the Constitution (1996), and serve as principles of good governance. Hence, leadership is identified as the flesh on the bones of the Constitution and must be effectively exercised by, among others, senior public servants. In fact, this is the only way in which the government's multifaceted objectives for the public sector can be achieved. Therefore, the development of managerial and leadership competencies for the senior public servants is a fundamental to flesh out the SMS competency framework and encourage systematic organisational performance management and development system (PMDS) within the public service. Thus, the public service must ensure that there is sufficient capability by institutionalising the strategies, policies, processes, systems and resources that develop and leverage new knowledge at individual and organisational levels.

Moreover, a framework for managerial capacity building in the public service was established in Chapter Three. The framework evolved



around three main themes: the induction, management development and training as well as the diagnostic techniques to evaluate the support for managerial capacity building. Induction is a vital process for the successful placement and the subsequent processes of training and development training of senior public servants. An effective induction programme ensures the integration of newly appointed senior public servants into the public service, thereby creating a sense of security, confidence and belonging for them. A successful induction programme leads to better motivated senior public servants and productivity within the public service.

However, it is important that the HR department provide feedback to the newcomers, monitor and evaluate the induction process with a view to ensuring that the expectations of the public service and the newcomers are fulfilled effectively and in a balanced and cost-effective fashion. The approaches to management development and training require effective, coherent and sustainable support in terms of policies, strategies, systems, and resources. These elements are important to build a culture of learning and ensure that public service performance is a sum of the capacities of the individual senior public servants. The diagnostic mechanisms provide the means for a rigorous analysis of information relating to the structure, administration, interaction, procedures, interfaces and other essential elements of the public service. These should not be neglected if the public service desires successful



transformation and a culture of constant service delivery improvements. Above all, the chapter argued, that while individual capacity building is desirable; the public service too must build its own capacity in order to leverage the new knowledge and thinking that are being brought to the workplace.

In Chapter Four, a case study dealing with the institutional support for managerial capacity building of the senior public servants allied to the Department of Health, Department of Education and the Department of Social Development in the North West province was presented. Based on the information largely gathered through the structured interviews with the senior HRD staff, the chapter presented the prevailing state of institutional support, particularly regarding the strategies and plans; policies and guidelines; programmes and approaches; processes and systems; communication and feedback; resources; monitoring and evaluation; quality assessment and assurance mechanisms.

Some of the challenges that the departments articulated in their strategic plans have been established, and in fact there are no particular linkages between strategic planning and HR planning, as there are no written HR plans in place. Equally, there are no HR plans specifically for the senior public servants. The importance of the required linkages and the need for HR plans was explained. With regard to the preparation of the senior public servants, the chapter established that the induction process



lacks a written plan which specifically guides the design, implementation and evaluation and generally aligns the process to their visions and HR strategic purposes. Without ensuring that the induction is systematic and evaluated it is impossible to indicate whether the departments are spending their money wisely and achieving positive results, or whether the methods used to assist new employees to integrate and become effective in the department are the most suitable. The consequences of ineffective induction have been outlined, as well as the need to ensure that the induction is effective, efficient and sustainable.

The chapter also established the absence of a linkage between the departments' objectives, goals and business strategies with their approaches to management development and training. In fact, they do not have training and development strategies for their senior public servants. Moreover, the needs assessment methods only apply to the needs of the senior public servants at individual level, with no evidence of organisational and operational needs identification methods. The departments, however, referred to the usage of in house-training, workshops and seminars, external providers, mentoring and coaching. Yet, there are no formalised mentoring or coaching programmes and no secondments or formal network exchanges in the category of senior public servants in these departments. Again, there are no formalised arrangements for the senior public servants to read and network within



and between the departments with a view to keeping abreast of research and best practices.

Most, if not all, training and development needs for senior public servants are undertaken and supported by external service providers. But there are no electronic databases listing current accredited service providers to promote and support sound institutional public private partnership in the light of the challenges and needs of these departments. The departments do not ensure that the new skills and knowledge learned or acquired by the senior public servants are effectively applied, as there are no systems for information sharing, reporting and recording in place. Moreover, there are no systems to transfer the skills and knowledge learned or acquired by the senior public servants. Additionally, there are no systems in place to transform individual knowledge into public service results.

The chapter also considered the implementation and assessment of the SMS competency framework. At the outset, there is no record of how the SMS competency framework was introduced and used to support the development of competencies for senior public servants in the North West Province. In fact, there are no follow-ups and proper monitoring of the implementation of the SMS competency framework. Interestingly, there is no information in place regarding how the SMS



competency framework supports the individual and collective performance of the senior public servants in these departments.

The last section of the chapter focused on the diagnostic mechanisms in the public service to support the development and performance of the senior public servants. In fact, it was argued that the diagnostic mechanisms systematically enable public service to understand and describe the structure, administration, interaction, procedures, interfaces and other essential elements of the organisation. In this regard, the case study departments equally stressed that the Performance and Management Development System is applicable. In the process of organisational diagnosis, however, there are no explicit measures within the HR Directorates of these departments to support the development and performance of their senior public servants. Moreover, the departments were unable to indicate how well the output of their senior public servants compares to the output of the public service's best performers or even how well their public servants' performance matches the public service and service delivery requirements essential to the achievement of *Batho Pele White Paper*. Furthermore, the departments confirmed that there are no HR systems in place to support their functions towards a competency-based approach.

The case study departments have commonalities and differences in areas that relate to how they support their senior public servants for effective



capacity building. These, however, vary from superior to extremely lax practices in institutional support areas such as policies, strategies, plans, systems, processes, approaches and resources. This affects the effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability of the capacity building initiatives on the SMS and the capability of the North West Province, as a mandated constitutional structure.

In Chapter Five, the case study presented in Chapter Four was analysed and interpreted. The views of the senior public servants were also incorporated into the analysis and interpretation. The analysis was supported with further literature where necessary. Basically, the analysis concentrated on the three main themes of managerial capacity building for the senior public servants, as premised in Chapter One. These are preparation, development and diagnostic mechanisms for effective institutional support of senior public servants.

The linkage between the HR functions and the strategic planning within a department is essential to create a focus, consistency and purpose. These, in turn, are crucial for plans, ploys, patterns and perspectives that guide strategic actions and facilitate effective organisational and public management. Yet, the views of the senior public servants do not reflect this understanding and knowledge about their departments. Therefore, the chapter argued that HR systems and organisational structure must be managed in a way that is congruent with the department's strategy and,



by and large, the North West provincial strategy. Further, without an HR plan for senior public servants, the chapter argued that it is difficult to develop and foster current and future leaders who can manage the challenges inherent in a changing environment. For this reason, an urgent need for HR plans to address the changing business of government, the evolving employment relationship and the shifting demographics of the SMS group was identified. Indeed, such plans are vital to establish human resources management strategies and programme to support and develop leadership capabilities within the public service, and they should contribute to important processes such as succession planning and performance management.

With regard to the induction of the senior public servants, the views of the senior public servants are consistent with the information provided in Chapter Four. They confirm the fact that induction is a much-neglected area of human resource management in the public service. Indeed, an ineffective induction programme increases the adjustment problems for the public servants by creating a sense of insecurity, a lack of confidence and belonging for them; hence many respondents presented either no or not sure responses. The implications of the lack of proper induction are also serious at the strategic public service level, because the senior public servants are not only expected to adhere to the organisational practices and procedures but also to show loyalty and



commitment to the promotion of good governance and effective public management.

The views of the senior public servants about training and development were also analysed. It became evident that the respondents do not have common understanding of the internal training arrangements and organisation in their departments. This may be attributable to a lack of effective induction and policy communication in the departments. It was consistently maintained that, in the absence of HR plan, specifically plans for senior public servants, it is unlikely that the departments can establish their training and development strategies that accommodate their training and development needs at organisational and operational levels. Furthermore, without a training and development strategy, the departments are unable to measure the impact of training and development on the performance of the senior public servants and how new knowledge and skills are affecting their goals, objectives and mission. This highlights the concern about the lack of knowledge and understanding about what senior public servants really expect from their department and similarly what they think their employer expects from them.

With reference to the approaches to management development and training (both on-the-job and off-the-job), the chapter argued that, without long-term strategic direction, integration, and alignment, the



training and development needs may be achieved only at personal level. This principally raises concerns about the learning assumptions, priorities and focus of these approaches, especially bearing in mind that they are offered by the external providers (where there is uncertainty as to whether these are accredited or not accredited). Therefore, it can be accepted that these approaches to management development and training must occur in a public service culture that is aware of what they are and prepared to resource them so that they can prosper. Moreover, these approaches to management development and training require investment in planning, time and money to demonstrate that there is a real commitment to growing management and leadership capability at SMS level, or even across the public service.

With regard to the management of performance in the public service, the views of the public servants reveal little value for, or commitment to, the Performance and Management Development System (PMDS) in the public service. By and large, when the senior public servants are unable to trust or value the performance appraisal system, and when opportunities for growth and development are circumvented, then direct links between the motivation in the department and the senior public servant cannot be established. Rather than mere compliance with systemic requirements in the public service, the chapter argued that a performance management system requires the commitment of the departments to the ideal of integrating accountability and



developmental purposes to serve both the senior public servants and the North West public service.

With regard to the introduction and the implementation of the SMS competency framework, the chapter revealed that the framework lacks HR ownership in the public service; hence its relevance, significance and impact are dubious, especially when incorporating the views of the senior public servants. The SMS competency framework should be used in the recruitment and selection of the senior public servants and their personal and career development in the public service. Furthermore, the SMS competency framework is also an instrument which can be used by the HR to determine the strengths and weaknesses of the senior public servants. This information can be used in constructing personal development plans. Coaching, training and learning by experience are the most important elements of the personal development plans. Above all, the competency framework can be used in the context of career development. Senior public servants can discuss their future careers, starting from an appreciation for, and an evaluation of, the different competencies in the framework. The chapter has accurately reported the capacity gaps which affect the effective support for managerial capacity building and how these gaps generally influence the performance in the public service of the North West Province. It concluded that there is an urgent need for a major paradigm shift from functional to a



competency-based approach within the HR divisions in the North West Province.

6.3 Findings of the study

The study was aimed at achieving three objectives which are reported below:

With regard to objective 1, to determine how the North West Province prepares its senior public servants, the findings are as follows:

- (a) The common approach used to prepare staff, and which is applicable to the senior public servants in the North West public service is induction or socialisation or orientation.
- (b) However, the induction for the senior public servants lacks institutional support in terms of policy, specific budget, plan and evaluation and feedback methods.
- (c) As a result, the induction programmes for the senior public servants lack a careful, systematic and ongoing attention.
- (d) The shortcomings concerning the induction of the senior public servants negatively affect the capacity of the senior public servants to be integrated with loyalty and commitment to the culture of the public service. Thus, the knowledge and understanding of the senior public servants about some of the processes, policies, practices and programmes are inconsistent and vague.



- (e) An ineffective induction of the senior public servants negatively affects their sense of security, confidence and belonging which is necessary for proper relationships, effective communication and improved capacity in the public service.
- (f) An ineffective induction presents serious strategic, policy and operational shortcomings, which ultimately contribute to and support a culture of non performance at SMS level and public service incapability.

The second objective of the study was to determine how the North West Province develops its senior public servants and the issues which emerged are reported as follows:

- (a) Both on-the-job and off-the-job management development and training approaches are used to support the development of the senior public servants. However, they cannot occur in a public service culture that is unaware of what they are and unprepared to resource them.
- (b) Nevertheless, the management development and training approaches are not linked to the departments' objectives, goals and business strategies. The absence of HR plan and HR plans for the senior public servants creates gaps in the needs assessment process. Consequently, the departments are only able to address the



management development and training needs at a personal level with no strategic direction, purpose and focus.

- (c) Furthermore, the management development and training approaches lacks a long-term planning approach with a clear focus on, and development of, the current core competencies which are associated with the SMS competency framework in the public service.
- (d) In addition, the management development and training for the SMS is in most cases handled by the external service providers with no effective and sustainable arrangements for learning partnerships. As a result, the departments are unable to influence the learning focus, priorities and assumptions in view of the changing needs and expectations in the public service environment. Furthermore, the absence of databases makes it difficult for the departments to indicate which service providers are accredited and which ones are not; hence there is no record about the quality, effectiveness and the impact of learning, as well as the contribution of learning towards building the competencies of the senior public servants.
- (e) The departments do not evaluate the impact of management training and development on the performance of the senior public servants and how new knowledge and skills affect their goals, objectives and missions.
- (f) The senior public servants lack knowledge and understanding about what they expect from their departments and similarly what they



think the public service expects from them. In particular, the experience of the senior public servants with regard to planning and facilitation tend to support their lack of confidence in the relevance, significance and impact of their departments' approach to management development and training.

- (g) The absence of effective management development and training challenges the relevance, significance and vigour of the SMS competency framework in the public service.
- (h) The senior public servants do not trust or value the performance appraisal system because they do not perceive development and career growth opportunities.
- (i) Above all, the approaches to management development and training in the public service are not integrated and holistic, and consequently lack a coherent framework for building competencies that fit in with the SMS competency framework and the general performance of the senior public servants.

With regard to objective three, that is, to determine and evaluate the diagnostic mechanisms to support the capacity of senior public servants the issues which emerged are presented as follows:

- (a) The SMS competency framework and Performance and Management Development System (PMDS) are the mechanisms that are used in the North West Province to support the capacity of the



senior public servants. However, neither system is integrated from recruitment to performance evaluation of the senior public servants in the public service.

- (b) The senior public servants are not being informed about the application of the SMS competency framework and the departments do not use this framework during recruitment and selection. Moreover, it is not being used to determine the strengths and weaknesses of individual senior public servants in the public service. Furthermore, the SMS competency framework is not being used in the context of the career development of senior public servants.
- (c) Consequently, the PMDS has not gained senior public servants' commitment and is undervalued in the public service. Rather than mere compliance with systemic requirements in the public service, the PMDS must be approached holistically and requires the commitment of the departments to the ideal of integrating accountability and developmental purposes, to serve both the senior public servants and the North West public service.
- (d) Finally, there are no diagnostic mechanisms for a systematic understanding, description and evaluation of the core administrative elements of the North West public service, such as its structure, administration, interactions, policies, procedures and interfaces. A tradition of systematic monitoring and evaluation of actions, activities, processes, practices and programmes must be institutionalised to support the quest for public service capability.



The evaluation mainly concluded that, in the absence of effective induction, coherent capacity building framework and appreciation of the PMDS as well SMS competency framework (effective diagnostic mechanisms) within the North West Province, the institutional support for capacity building of the senior public servants is ineffective, and is unsustainable as well as not being holistic. Therefore, the research successfully analysed the question: *“to what degree have governance and leadership impacted on the capacity building of the senior public servants in the North West Province of South Africa?”* The internal management and organisation within the public service must be strengthened to support the current public service vision of the Republic of South Africa and promote effective public management and administration in line with Chapter 10 of the Constitution of 1996. This requires the adoption of the principles of governance as set out in Chapter One and a sense of political leadership and effective management as well as a culture of good governance.

Strategic and holistic capacity building support can be achieved in the North West by doing the following:

- (1) building provincial ownership and reliance;
- (2) creating a common vision;
- (3) practising genuine partnership;
- (4) maintaining healthy, but team-based relationships;



- (5) appreciating the transformation from functional to competency based public service;
- (6) developing administrative and technical systems;
- (7) mobilising resources for sustainability;
- (8) understanding the context specificity of capacity and its building; and
- (9) exercising the process thinking in all phases of capacity building (developing policies, setting objectives, planning strategies, monitoring systems, taking actions and evaluating results).

6.4 Discussion of the findings

Systematic and effective institutional support for capacity building is a fundamental requirement for stability and consistency in the effective implementation of public policy. For this reason, the public service must ensure that the right senior public servants are allocated in the right place for the right tasks and at the right time. For this altitude to be reached, effective induction training and holistic senior leadership development initiatives must be adopted for the senior public servants.

In Chapter Four, the study exposed the traditional gap between policy making and policy communication on the one hand, and operational management practices on the other hand, and in particular the disorganised nature of induction training, management development and training and the lack of appreciation for the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) and SMS competency



framework in the public service. From the perspective of public management, it was necessary to appreciate the institutional support for capacity building within the system of governance and leadership.

Thus, numerous barriers to systematic and holistic institutional support for the capacity building support of the senior public servants have been identified. These barriers are:

- (1) lack of alignment between the strategic planning and HR planning, HR plans, HR plans for senior public servants, and HR strategies;
- (2) lack of induction policy and effective induction training;
- (3) lack of proper needs assessments at organisational, operational and individual levels;
- (4) lack of proper awareness, formalisation and utilisation of the approaches to management development and training;
- (5) lack of effective systems for monitoring and evaluation of development and performance, and impact analysis;
- (6) lack of long-term approach to management development training and support;
- (7) lack of databases for development and training (including external accredited service providers), and
- (8) lack of access to best practices through institutional networks and quality management as well as assurance in the public service.



These barriers somehow impact negatively on the capacity, development, motivation and performance of the senior public servants and the public service in general. As a result, the lack of a coherent support framework for capacity building of the senior public servants has resulted in a number of weaknesses in capacity building support. The main weakness being that the public service cannot guarantee value for money, time, skills and success of the current human resource developmental approaches for its senior management service as well as the direct contribution and impact of these approaches and initiatives to the achievement of its vision. Therefore, these require immediate attention of the North West provincial government.

In this respect, however, Smith (1982:91) concluded that the lack of understanding and acceptance of HR management is a major reason for current problems in governance. Indeed, systematic HRM integration into strategic management and planning is essential for effective capacity building support in the public service. The integration is important for three reasons: an integration of HRM with the strategy of each department within the public service, a coherent HRM policy across policy areas, and the adjustment and acceptance and use of strategic HR practices by line managers and employees as part of their everyday work.



Evidently, the adoption of the SMS competency framework (indicative of competency management) by the Department of Public Service and Administration is a step in the right direction towards leveraging the public service to transform its bureaucracies into flexible and efficient divisions. Rightly put, a competency-based approach to HR focuses attention on senior public servants and underlines the importance of human resources in reaching the objectives of the public service. Therefore, competency management can be a tool to change the bureaucratic culture in the public service into a more professional and responsive public service culture. Vertically, for example, competency management might be a tool to define SMS competencies from the mission and strategy. Horizontally, for instance, competency framework might be used for real purposes in HR including selection, appraisal, development and reward. Thus, an integrated human resource management is a primary condition for the introduction of competency management in the South African public service. The structures and systems of the department need to be integrated and the focus placed on the development of the senior public servants as key executive resources of the public service.

Consequently, there is a need for a tradition and culture of systematic monitoring and evaluation of the actions, activities, programmes or projects, with evidence that this is informing policy and practice. Since each department in the North West Province can be viewed as a



number of interrelated, interdependent parts, each of which contributes to the total public service functioning and to the achievement of the goals and objectives, Harvey and Brown (1996:36) argue that the public service must always be system. A system is a set of interrelated parts unified by design to achieve some purpose or goals. Its qualities are listed below (Harvey and Brown, 1996:36).

- (1) A system must be designed to accomplish an objective.
- (2) The elements of a system must have an established arrangement.
- (3) Interrelationships must exist between the individual elements of a system.
- (4) The basic ingredients of the process (the flows of information, energy and materials) are more vital than the basic elements of a system.
- (5) Finally, organisational objectives are more important than the objectives of its elements and thus there is a less emphasis on the parochial objectives of the elements of a system.

The system approach is found effective for institutionalising the support for the managerial capacity of the senior public servants because of the lack of proper arrangements, flow, co-ordination, and grand purpose in the current situation in the public service. In this way, capacity gaps that hinder the performance of the public service at individual and collective levels could be diagnosed and be addressed within a framework of



managing change and successful transformation in the public service, thus maintaining explicit but sustainable linkages between learning, leadership and organisational change. However, the engine that drives organisational change is leadership, leadership and still more leadership (Kotter, 1996: 32). Clearly, it remains within the political ambit of the North West provincial legislature and executive council incessantly to create, shape and develop a public service culture that is in harmony with the constitutional principles and values of the current order in South Africa.

6.5 Conclusions and implications

At this point, the objectives of this study should be reiterated. The basic purpose was to assess the institutional support for capacity building of the senior public servants in the North West provincial government. It has been argued that the legal instruments have jointly introduced a paradigm shift in the public service, and the 1994 South African public institutions and senior public officials are required to be more democratic, accountable, effective, efficient, capable and ethical in discharging their services to the South African population. It has also been argued that the public service in the North West faces unprecedented challenges of meeting the needs and wishes of customers, higher expectations on the part of the general public and pressures to harness new technology and deliver government services in more sophisticated ways.



Therefore, to live up to these expectations, senior public servants that function in today's public administration have been required to be prepared and developed with a view to embracing change and strategically meeting the challenges of managing current Public Service. At the same time, there have been growing expectations for senior public servants to have a clearer and stronger sense of vision, mission and focus in their departments. Thus, effective support for capacity building is vital for a degree of order and consistency in the effective and coherent implementation of public policy. Simply, the North West Province should strengthen the leadership capabilities of its senior public servants and foster new leaders from time to time in order to confront the challenges that face its communities.

Yet, the present political and administrative system of governance in the North West has many weaknesses that relate to its inability to holistically and effectively create a levelled and supportive institutional platform for preparing and developing its senior public servants. Evidence suggests that some senior public servants enter and function within the public service without being inducted. In cases where there is induction training evidence shows that it is very difficult for the departments and their senior public servants to report its coherence, efficiency, effectiveness and impact. In the main, lack of induction evaluation and feedback denies the public service opportunity about the needs and expectations of the senior public servants and those of the



North West Province. Improving the HR environment in the public service with a view to supporting the senior public servants and enabling them to operate as leaders with clear lines of performance and accountability should be a priority in the North West Province.

With regard to how the senior public servants are being developed in the public service of the North West Province, the study reveals that there is much that is nebulous or negative: leadership is ill-defined, there is a shortage of leadership skills, methods of developing senior public servants are hazy and fraught with difficulties linked to lack of framework, lack of strategic direction and guarantees for success and development interventions tend to be reactive, misaligned and somehow untested as there is no evaluation of their impact and their consequences in the public service. The public service needs to approach leadership by setting clear goals that relate to what kind of leadership qualities are needed at SMS level, ensuring that leadership development programmes are linked to the vision for public service leadership, clearing links between the appraisal and its development, allocation of resources for management or leadership development that is planned (strategically) and pertinent (institutionally) rather than merely reactions to external direction and availability of funds opportunities.

The SMS competency framework must be used to sieve, attract and retain the best senior public servants and the public service must



develop sufficiently robust strategies for ensuring that the framework is used during recruitment, selection, placement, development and appraisal. Simply, the SMS competency framework and the PDMS are vital public service tools which must be used jointly and effectively to enable senior public servants to understand their own effectiveness in the public service and ensure that they are supported with appropriate and effective development initiatives in order to grow the importance of leadership across organizational boundaries or to learn between direct sectors and departments of the public service.

Given this account and based on the results of this study, a number of conclusions can be drawn. First, the current state of internal management and organisation is not satisfactory and is likely to weaken considerably the vision of the public service, ruin the image of the province and lead to a decline in the standard of employment and service delivery in the public service of the North West Province.

Second, and closely related to the first conclusion is the fact that there are grave HR support system problems in the public service of the North West Province. The level of support, with no policies, programmes, processes, systems and appreciation of the current public service tools, is a threat to the transformation and the institutional capability of the North West province. Given the current challenges of the public services which generally exceed its contributions, the public service cannot and



should not afford a functional HR department in the era of competency based HR. There is an urgent need to transform the current HR situation with a view to ensuring that the core public service policies and practices are competently undertaken and the high-quality results are achieved. This is imperative, since proper induction and sustainable training and development of the senior public servants contribute to their performance and also improve the attainment of results in the public service.

The third conclusion which can be drawn from the results of the study is that the public service requires long-term committed partners who can promote effective institutional public-private partnerships in capacity building. The need for a database of external service providers has been identified. The North West Province should have internal and external service providers who, according to established criteria, are accredited, committed to the vision of the province, are willing to transfer skills and knowledge, and are also willing to ensure that there is ownership and capability within the public service. The approval and engagement of professional consultants must be evaluated against these criteria, if accountability, effectiveness, efficiency and value for money are to be the guiding principles for public management and administration.

A fourth conclusion that can be drawn from the results is that there is lack of integration and alignment within, and between, the



departments. This raises governance and managerial concerns about the reality and impact of transformation in the public service of the North West Province, and requires immediate attention. Indeed, the views of the departments and the senior public servants confirm that there is no unity of purpose or sense of ownership or a common understanding. These deficiencies defeat the culture of public service performance and capability. There is a need to evaluate the impact of transformation on the integration and alignment of the departments, structures and employment conditions. Indeed, the public service is an open system which requires proper design, integration and alignment of its political and administrative structures, systems and personnel, with a view to confronting consistently, holistically and effectively the internal and external challenges that face the North West Province.

Finally, it can be concluded that all the elements of institutional support for capacity building for this study are important for the performance of the senior public servants and the general capability of the North West Province. The North West public service needs to adopt a holistic approach to the problem of induction and management development and training in relation to all the employees. For this reason, a post-induction training programme, and a comprehensive needs assessment, as well as tailored-made leadership executive programmes, must be considered for the senior public servants.



6.6 Recommendations

Guided by the findings of this study, the conclusions drawn by it and notwithstanding the recommendations that have already been made, further policy recommendations are offered and these are as follows:

(a) Political leadership and commitment

A system of political accountability is required by any government, so that it acts in ways which are broadly approved by the community. Certainly, being democratic requires a suitable system of political and managerial accountability (not necessarily excluding other forms of accountability). In the same vein, efficiency, economy and effectiveness (the three E's) are three related, interdependent and dynamic concepts that should guide what government does, and how it goes about achieving its objectives (State of the Public Report, 2004: 14).

Indeed, political leadership is vital to the facilitation of a paradigm shift that allows a balance between democracy, effectiveness and efficiency in the public service. Within the context of public management, political and administrative reforms are very indispensable with a view to appreciating the fact that the bureaucratic model with its tendencies to impose definitions of public needs and delivery, organisational rigidity and unresponsiveness, and centralisation are no longer possible. They should not be repeated after 1994 in the Republic of South Africa and North West Province, in particular. Modestly, this study sets a political



agenda for the leaders in the province seriously to adopt principles of good governance and confront the challenges that face the public service. Within the perspective of the current Public Administration dispensation, the findings of the study challenge the current status and integrity of the province as a constitutional agent for the advancement of socio economic rights in South Africa and its capacity to achieve the concurrent and exclusive functions. In fact, reforms are undertaken with the aim of improvements, but it could be argued that there has been so much reforms, so much changes, that effective public management has deteriorated. In brief, unless and until the transformation agenda is successfully completed; the current organisational culture will counteract the legitimacy and sustainability of the province. Another part of the challenge is to hold the Executive Council accountable for the results that are associated with effective organization and management of the public service (effective public management in general) in the public service.

The departments, structures, systems and processes in the public service must be properly integrated and aligned to promote effective public management practices. Effective public management represents a transformation of the public service and its sustainable relationship with government and society. Therefore, political durability and will of the North West provincial legislature and executive council are still essential to



drive public service reforms successfully through the post-apartheid dispensation.

Succinctly put, without effective policy planning and analysis, the goals of effective management and good governance in the public service cannot be achieved. Therefore, this main recommendation broadly encompasses all aspects of accountable public service leadership development and succession in the public service. Within the same perspective, it also guarantees full ownership of the internal and external public affairs by the North West provincial legislature and executive council. In particular, it ensures that certain subsidiary recommendations are achieved. These are discussed below.

(b) The realisation of the vision for transformation of the public service

It was apparent from the strategic documents of the case study departments, structured interviews with the departments and the responses of the senior public servants that the songs are being sung from absolutely different song sheets. This clearly reveals that there is no proper integration and communication within and between the departments of the North West public service. By the same token, it was also clear from Chapter Five that the external challenges that face the departments surpass their strategies, objectives and approaches, especially in the light of the incoherent internal organisation and management of the departments within the public service. Incidentally,



the 'silo approach' has found expression in the departments' strategic plans; hence, the study identified this approach as being the main reason for the existing accountability gaps in the North West Province. Moreover, the problems that have been uncovered in the study paint a picture of a lack of systematic and holistic approaches to policy planning and implementation as well as communication.

The birth of the new constitutional democracy in 1994 calls for a transformation of the public services and its relationship with government and society. Given the findings of this study, there is an urgent need to review the successes and/or the failures of the transformation of the public service in the North West Province and ensure that the public service realise the achievement of the transformation vision within a system of good governance and effective public management that is effectively consolidated, well co-ordinated and vision critical.

Clearly, the North West Province needs to conduct an organizational analysis that identifies the current situation, problems, and the forces that are possible causes of these problems. The analysis is important to measure transformation results since 1994 and specify the kinds of changes that are generally needed. Critical to the success of this process, is the political support of the Provincial Legislature and the Provincial Executive Council as well as a coherent transformation plan with a view



to promoting and enhancing the values of the public service generally and public administration in terms of the Constitution (1996). In fact, by creating a transformation vision with systematic, but target-specific strategies and outcomes, a comprehensive transformation process may produce a single well-coordinated, flexible and effective public service in the North West Province.

(c) Need for strategic HR with a competency approach

It is evident that the present HR approach in the public service does not only suffer from the lack of strategic management, but is also unable to function within a competency-based environment, and indeed promote competency management in the public service. It is also evident that the HR function in the public service is generally understaffed and lacks a vision, integration and alignment with other core functions within and between the departments. However, HR is a core driver of transformation and a custodian of organisational culture.

Therefore, there is an urgent need to transform the HR departments in the North West Province. As part of the HR transformation, the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) must extend the current definition of the competencies to include HR, and eventually establish an HR competency framework for HR professionals in the public service.



The HR competency framework is useful for clarifying and describing the standards and expectations which relate to excellent HR performance in the public service. The HR competencies may include: HR job knowledge/competency, understanding of the mandates of the public service, knowledge of best practices, ability to manage culture, personal creativity, teamwork and co-operation, interpersonal skills, communication, and trust.

(d) Induction training

The public service has changed since the birth of a new democracy in 1994 in South Africa. Indeed, the policy changes, notwithstanding the complexity associated with the nature and scope of governmental activities as well the multiplicity of the actors in the policy process, make the public service operations and functions more managerial and strategic. This requires that those who perform public administration at SMS level be properly inducted so that their role and place can be realised by the society. Indeed, it needs to be emphasised that the senior public servants are vital to economic success and to social cohesion and therefore they must be properly inducted about the public service and the role the public service plays in the public life of every one in the Republic of South Africa.

There is a need to develop an induction policy with elements such as: a vision, purpose, objectives, scope and category of



staff and planning, monitoring and evaluation, to name but a few. The induction programme and training should be guided by the induction policy and should ensure that all staff who are appointed, promoted, transfers and demoted are inducted. The induction training is also necessary during major change process in the public service.

Obviously, the HR must develop a cohesive approach and supporting guidelines and documentation to ensure that appointees joining the public service are given clear, detailed and early guidance on their role, their key relationships and the expected standards of work and procedures relating to their post.

(e) Effective implementation of the SMS competency framework

The study revealed serious problems with regard to the introduction, implementation, utilisation, monitoring and evaluation of the SMS competency framework. These problems dismiss the value of the SMS competency framework in terms of its relevance, significance and impact and its contribution towards ensuring the combined performance of senior public servants and the capability of the public service.

Therefore, the Department of Public Service and Administration should ensure that there is sufficient managerial capacity within



the public service to successfully own and promote the implementation of the SMS competency framework.

Fundamentally, the applicability of competency management in the HR departments must be expedited with a view to ensuring that the SMS competency framework finds proper accommodation in the public service. The SMS framework is an innovative HR tool crucial in appointing the right people at the right place for the right work at the right time. The value of the SMS competency starts with the competency assessments during the selection of the senior public servants in the public service and continuously facilitates the measurement of their capacities. Consequently, the framework should be used in conjunction with other HR tools such as the PMDS in the public service.

(f) Strategic development and training plan

It is very evident from this study that the public service lacks a coherent and strategic training plan that can serve the needs and expectations of its environment and personnel and ensure that training is effective, strategic and brings about sustainable results. The public service must effectively prepare its senior public servants to provide the best possible public services. This requires that strategic training and developmental initiatives be planned, implemented and evaluated according to their contribution to its strategic direction and business needs.



There is a need for a strategic management and development and training plan, which should set out the departmental development and development needs and how the different approaches and methods, as well as programmes, support the vision of the department and yield the required competencies.

There is an urgent need to formalise the mentoring and coaching within the public service by developing programmes that support the senior, middle and the junior public servants.

Providing development opportunities and communicating them to senior public servants is important to ensure that they believe that they have opportunities to grow and learn new skills. Such opportunities are important for attracting and retaining talented senior public servants. As part of this initiative, the public service would be creating an environment that allows the senior public servants to share knowledge about how best to improve public services and quality. Indeed aligning training and development with the strategic direction of the public service ensures that training contributes to its needs and expectations (challenges mentioned in Chapter Four). Above all, a supportive public service environment must be guaranteed for the senior public servants to be motivated to participate in training and learning activities, use what they learn on the job and share their knowledge with others. As part of this recommendation, the public service should develop tailor-made leadership programmes that squarely support the development of



competencies which the departments require in line with their institutional and legislative mandates. The linkages between development and performance must be maintained with support systems and programmes that lead to growth opportunities and successions planning.

(g) Improving communication and feedback

Arising from this study, the importance of communication from policy to practice cannot be disputed. Indeed, strategic communication is vital to direct the conduct of public servants effectively and to foster their motivation by clarifying what is to be done, how well they are doing and what can be done to improve public service performance, among others.

Therefore, there is a need to develop strategies, processes and systems with a view to improving communication within and between the departments in the North West Province.

In this regard, there is a need to ensure that feedback methods are more integrated and systematic with a view to allowing possible adjustment and control, thereby enabling improvements relative to the strategic goals, objectives and vision of the North West Province. Finally, it is important to ensure that there is systematic and effective



communication and feedback both internally and externally within the public service.

(h) Effective knowledge management

According to Robbins (2005:147), knowledge management is a process of organising and distributing an organisation's collective wisdom so that the right information gets to the right people at the right time.

In context, the public service needs an integrated knowledge management strategy and system in order to tap the collective experience and wisdom of the SMS during employment (before retiring or resigning), preserving the current wealth of knowledge and accessing what previous public servants have learned (successes or failures). Indeed, a knowledge management strategy must be developed with a view to enabling the public service to formulate an electronic document system that codifies, stores, disseminates and allows reuse of knowledge.

However, a culture of information sharing is a prerequisite for the success of knowledge management in the public service.



(i) Holistic quality assurance and management

The North West Province must develop a comprehensive quality assurance and management system with a view to ensuring that its strategies, policies, processes and personnel best focus on and accelerate the achievement of the vision of the public service. This is vital in order to ensure that the public service excellently attain customer satisfaction through the continuous improvement of its core processes and builds capacity reserves for future demands.

A successful quality management strategically supports the quest of the public service to achieve consistent improvement in service delivery, and to monitor and evaluate the processes and outputs of each component along the lines of expected quality standards and expectations. With this system, the departments will be able to determine the degree of internal capacity, to tap capacity within other departments and ensure that there is excess capacity required to translate the collective performance of the senior public servants into public service capability.

(j) Flexible monitoring and evaluation systems

Clearly, it is essential for the public service to estimate the results, to measure these results and learn from them. For this reason, the developmental approach to public management and administration



requires a plan for achieving progress and building greater capacity to bring about change in the future. The vision of the public service in South Africa requires the production of specific outcomes that contribute to achieving the institution's strategy underpinned by clear values and principles.

Therefore, the North West Province must institutionalise comprehensive and monitoring and evaluation systems that holistically support and report the current practices and performance of the public service with a view to identifying both where improvements are required, and where policies, structures, systems and institutions are working well.

In this regard, and through networked public institutional partnerships, the Constitutional role of the Public Service Commission (PSC) regarding the monitoring and evaluation of the public service must be promoted and strengthened. Above all, it increases the legitimacy and integrity of the public service to change those attitudes, roles, systems, structures, processes, procedures and policies which do not fit into the new vision of the public service in South Africa.

These recommendations are well-informed by the analysis and interpretation provided in Chapter Five. Notwithstanding their consistency with the findings and the results of the study, they offer



some policy and practice improvement solutions to the current organizational and management challenges facing the public service of the North West Province.

6.7 Suggestions for further research

Generally, the study argued that the institutional support for capacity building of the senior public servants must be effective and sustainable, with a view to contributing to superior performance and the capability of the public service.

One of the major limitations of this study was lack of resources, both in terms of money and time. The researcher had very little time and financial resources to facilitate the completion of this study and this affected the size of the sample analysed as well as the number of departments covered. Given this, it is imperative for more comprehensive studies to be conducted in the future, possibly incorporating all the public employees of the North West Province.

Furthermore, this research sets the groundwork for future empirical studies that may seek to apply its independent and dependent variables to other political and administrative employment categories of the provincial government in South Africa. Indeed, a comprehensive research approach that includes other levels of employment, as well as other provincial governments, must be adopted with a view to



scientifically seeking comparative provincial perspectives and prudently directing research on governance and leadership to the current policy debates about the need, significance and relevance of the provincial government as a constitutional sphere after a decade of democratic government in the Republic of South Africa. Naturally, it is worth considering international comparative approach in such studies.