



Public Service Commission
of Canada

Commission de la fonction publique
du Canada

Staffing Management Accountability Framework (SMAF)

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Introduction

The *Public Service Employment Act* (PSEA) 2003 provides an opportunity for the federal Public Service appointment system to become more flexible and efficient. The system is to be less rules-driven, while providing greater scope for delegated organizations to customize their appointment processes to meet their respective current and future human resources requirements.

While providing more flexibility, the legislation also requires that those delegated to make appointment decisions use their authority within a framework that ensures that they are accountable to the Public Service Commission (PSC) for its proper use. The PSC, in turn, is accountable to Parliament.

Strengthened accountability is central to the government's management reform initiatives. Accountability is an essential element of the Treasury Board Secretariat's Management Accountability Framework (MAF). The MAF sets out the overall expectations for modern Public Service management. Among these are expectations for good human resources management, which includes staffing.

To clarify expectations for good human resources management in the Public Service, two supporting management accountability frameworks have been developed. The People Component of the MAF was developed by the Public Service Human Resource Management Agency of Canada to set expectations that apply to all areas of human resources management. The SMAF, developed by the PSC, focuses specifically on staffing.

The SMAF is one of a continuum of mechanisms supporting the Accountability Policy developed by the PSC to hold deputy heads accountable for the way they exercise their delegated authorities. Other mechanisms include the requirement for performance and accountability reporting by delegated deputy heads, the monitoring and analysis by the PSC of appointment patterns, PSC audits and studies of staffing practices, and remedial measures for unsatisfactory staffing performance.

Purpose

The SMAF sets out the expectations for a well managed appointment system that respects the PSEA 2003. It clarifies the roles and responsibilities of the PSC and delegated Public Service departments and agencies.

Along with other mechanisms, the SMAF enables the PSC to review and evaluate staffing performance, and to provide feedback to delegated Public Service organizations. It also enables the PSC to report to Parliament on the elements of the appointment system that are more at risk, while providing an overview of the health of the appointment system.

The SMAF requires deputy heads to review how they manage their staffing systems and to make adjustments, as required. It requires them, as well, to establish their monitoring and reporting strategies.

The SMAF may also be used, by both the PSC and delegated organizations, as a guide in developing criteria for conducting staffing audits.

Context

PSEA 2003 has given the PSC the authority to establish policy on the manner of making and revoking appointments and taking corrective action. The PSC has developed a broad appointment policy that is binding for deputy heads in exercising their authorities under the PSEA 2003. The SMAF, together with other PSC oversight mechanisms such as policy, delegation, reporting and audit, is used to determine whether deputy heads are exercising their authorities in conformity with legislative requirements, the PSC's appointment policies, and the appointment values of PSEA 2003.

The PSC is responsible for providing to delegated Public Service organizations guidance that may be required to effectively implement and report on the SMAF. The PSC also has a responsibility to provide feedback to organizations so they can take action to improve their staffing systems and, ultimately, protect the integrity of the appointment system.

Deputy heads are expected to put in place their own management frameworks based on the SMAF, and to monitor and adjust their organizational staffing performance to meet their staffing objectives. They are to manage risk factors to ensure good management and compliance with the PSC's policy and delegation requirements, with the core appointment values and with other statutes.

Elements of the Staffing Management Accountability Framework

The SMAF provides expectations for the PSC and deputy heads related to the following five elements:

- Governance;
- Planning;
- Policy;
- Communication; and
- Control.

These elements cover the infrastructure and practices to be in place to ensure that staffing is carried out effectively, and in conformity with the PSC's policy and delegation requirements, with the core appointment values, and with other statutes.

In the following section, a definition, expectations and indicators are provided for each element. Deputy heads are required to report on the indicators in the manner prescribed by the PSC. The PSC may, from time to time, add indicators to the SMAF. These would be based on a risk analysis and reflect either a systemic issue or a particular departmental challenge.

Element 1 - Governance

Governance is defined here as the process of exercising authority and establishing a well-defined structure and administration in order to support the achievement of desired results.

In this regard, the PSC will ensure that it provides advice and tools that will assist organizations in establishing the appropriate governance structure to effectively manage staffing.

Deputy heads are expected to implement an infrastructure and practices in their organization that are conducive to effective management of staffing, as well as continuous learning and change.

The indicators for governance are:

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| GOV-1 | Roles and responsibilities in staffing are clearly defined through a sub-delegation structure or pattern communicated throughout the organization. |
| GOV-2 | The organization is resourced to deliver on its staffing priorities. |
| GOV-3 | The organization has implemented practices that ensure continuous learning in staffing. |
| GOV-4 | A structure and/or mechanisms are in place to facilitate decision-making by senior management on staffing issues, and enable the collaboration of all stakeholders, including bargaining agents. |

Element 2 - Planning

PSEA 2003 shifts the basis for appointment from solely the individual's qualifications to consideration of the current and future needs of the organization.

Human resources (HR) planning is a process that identifies the current and future HR needs of an organization if it is to achieve its goals. Planning is to be an integral part of HR management, which is to be integral to the overall strategic and business plans. Therefore, HR planning should have a direct impact on the management of staffing. It enables staffing to be conducted to support the organization's business priorities so that competence is maintained, skill shortages are minimized, renewal of staff is assured

and other HR priorities are supported. Consequently, the PSC requires information from departments/agencies and comments on HR planning issues as they relate to staffing.

Deputy heads are expected to ensure that staffing decisions made in their respective organizations are strategic and in line with current and future HR requirements, to achieve their business objectives.

The indicators for planning are:

- PLN-1 Senior management gives clear direction and sets priorities that enable values-based staffing.
- PLN-2 HR planning, integrated with business planning, enables the organization to identify its current and future human resources needs.
- PLN-3 Staffing is consistent with HR planning; variances can be explained.

Element 3 - Policy

Appointment decisions must first and foremost adhere to PSEA 2003 and other pertinent statutory instruments (*Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Canadian Human Rights Act, Official Languages Act, Employment Equity Act*). These instruments are supported by policy, including regulations, to ensure the quality of appointment decisions.

The Commission has developed an appointment policy to guide deputy heads in decision-making. This includes directing deputy heads to develop policy in specific areas where the Commission is of the opinion that the Public Service will benefit from the development of such organization-specific policies.

Deputy heads have the flexibility to establish appointment processes and programs tailored to their own organizational needs. When establishing these processes and programs, they are expected to establish policies that respect the values of transparency, fairness and equity of access, and ensure that statutory and central agency requirements are respected, even when service providers are used.

The indicators for policy are:

- POL-1 Departments have implemented and maintain policies that help the delegated organization address significant issues in its appointment processes.
- POL-2 Departmental policies respect PSEA 2003, the PSC's policy and delegation requirements, the core appointment values, and other statutes.

POL-3 Appointment processes and decisions respect statutory as well as departmental and PSC policy requirements

Element 4 - Communication

Communications ensure the integrity of the appointment process by being transparent, easy to understand, timely, and accessible, and by including the relevant stakeholders.

The PSC ensures that there is an active, ongoing dialogue and consultation with and among organizations on key matters related to the staffing process, including reporting.

Deputy heads are expected to establish communication practices that assure transparency, clarity and ready access to staffing information in their own organizations.

The indicator for communication is:

COM-1 Stakeholders have access to timely staffing information, including information about staffing strategies and decisions.

Element 5 - Control

In a staffing context, control means the on-going monitoring of information, the assessment of actual performance in relation to planned results, the correction of deviations, and the reporting of results.

As noted earlier, the PSC is accountable to Parliament for the overall integrity of the appointment system and the exercise of delegated staffing authorities by deputy heads. Where problems exist in individual organizations, the PSC provides direct and rigorous feedback, and if necessary, intervenes quickly to remedy the problems. The PSC is using, and encourages delegated organizations to use, a risk management approach for this element.

Deputy heads must ensure that accurate information is maintained in their organization, in relation to their appointment system as a whole and in relation to individual appointment actions. This is necessary for them to provide a fair and reliable representation of their activities, in accordance with the PSEA and with the Commission's policy, delegation and accountability requirements,

Deputy heads are also expected to establish active monitoring practices and to adjust their staffing processes, programs and practices as required. They are expected to comply with the PSC's reporting requirements, to collaborate with other PSC's oversight requirements such as audits, investigations and studies, and to make improvements where deficiencies are identified.

The indicators for control are:

- CTL-1 Quality and timely human resources information is available to support staffing strategies and decisions.
- CTL-2 Staffing monitoring is done by the delegated organization on an on-going basis.
- CTL-3 Identified staffing performance deficiencies are corrected in a timely fashion.
- CTL-4 Delegated organizations comply with the PSC's reporting requirements.

Measures for monitoring and reporting on the indicators

The SMAF describes expectations of the PSC and of deputy heads, and indicators that these expectations are met. The indicators are mandatory for all delegated organizations.

Deputy heads are expected to report on the indicators in the manner prescribed by the PSC. They are required to implement measures in their respective organizations to demonstrate that they meet the indicators. Although departments/agencies may establish their own measures, the PSC may make a few measures mandatory for some or for all organizations. This will be based on risk areas identified for the Public Service as a whole, and risk areas identified specifically for certain organizations.

The PSC will provide guidelines to delegated organizations on implementing the SMAF, including proposed measures for each indicator, how to evaluate risks, etc. In establishing their measures in their respective organizations, deputy heads must be able to demonstrate, as a minimum, that these measures respect the requirements of PSEA 2003 and of other statutes, as well as the PSC appointment policy and the conditions of delegation of staffing authorities.