

Succession Planning

Introduction

Succession planning is a process for identifying and developing officers within the Ministry, Department and Agency (MDA) to fill key positions. “Key positions” might include leadership positions or specialised positions and roles that may be technical, content-specific, or otherwise hard to replace. They may require particular training, licensing, or background that is difficult to replicate. Succession plans should therefore NOT be used for all positions in an MDA.

Planning for the day a key role becomes vacant, either through deployment, retirement or for other reasons is a valuable investment. These key roles make or break the successful delivery of services and operations in an MDA, so a plan to replace an officer in a key role should be drawn up well in advance, before an officer has been deployed out of a key role.

(See also ‘Deployment Template’ document for further information and ‘Workforce Planning’ document, both included in this PSM Suite)

A good succession plan, based on required skills and competencies, can help ensure the correct officers are developed to reach their full potential and be able to step into these key roles. It is not just about simply picking someone of the correct cadre and grade level.

STEP 1 - Review the job descriptions in the MDA and identify the top 10 key roles in the MDA. This might include Permanent Secretaries, Heads of Dept or Heads of Unit. However, some Heads of Dept or Unit may be easier to replace than others, depending on the specialist nature of these roles and strategic importance, so not all 'senior' positions will necessarily require advance succession planning. There may also be other seemingly less obvious and less senior key roles without which the MDA could not function so these also need to be identified and added to the list.

STEP 2 - For each of the key roles identified, a separate succession plan needs to be prepared. This is NOT simply about identifying those from the nominal roll who are the same cadre and grade level below. This is about identifying: 1) those with the skills and experience to step into a key role now, 2) those who might have the skills and experience to step into a key role in 6-12 months' time, given the right support and exposure to additional developmental tasks, and 3) those who might have the skills and experience to step into a key role in 1-2 years' time. Consideration must also be given to when each officer is due for deployment, their individual preferences and commitment to the MDA and ensure that a number of different officers are considered, rather than identifying just one potential successor for each post.

STEP 3 - Once key successors have been identified, the HR Officer and manager need to plan and agree a tailored development plan to help these officers reach their full potential and equip them for the additional responsibilities and skills required of them in the new post.

STEP 4 - The HR officer should work with the manager to implement the agreed and required HR actions once a succession plan has been developed e.g. does the potential successor require more stretching performance objectives, do they need to be given more experience in managing others, do they require specific change management experience etc. etc.

STEP 5 - Circumstances may change so any succession plan needs to be updated at least twice a year to ensure it is always pertinent.

STEP 6 - The succession plan should be used to inform the workforce plan, deployment of individual officers and talent management strategy.

Part 1: Identification of Key/Critical Positions

MDA Name:

Date Approved:

Position Title	Dept Name	Unit/Team Name	Cadre	GL	Required Skills and Competences	Manager Name	Reasons this is Key Position		
							Critical Factors	External Factors	Internal Factors

Reasons a position may be key / critical:

- Mission: Position is a key contributor to the MDA's strategic goals and objectives;
- Critical Function: Position performs task critical to vital functions. Leaving it vacant would hinder or prevent delivery of MDA's services;
- Specialisation: Position provides specialised leadership or skills that are difficult to replace;
- Location: Position fills a unique and important capacity at a particular location that would be difficult for another position, or the same position in another location, to take over;
- High Turnover: Position is one in a class or occupational group vulnerable to high turnover.
- External Factors: Position is one that is likely to be affected by interference or determined by interests or 'equitable spread'
- Internal Factors: Position is likely to affect internal culture, systems and processes of the organisation

Part 2: Individual Position Analysis (complete a separate template for EACH key position)

Key Position Name:

External MDA factors affecting this position	Internal MDA factors affecting this position	How this position will be used in the future

How many of these key positions will be needed going forward (capacity needs)? Explain/justify the need.

What competencies or skill sets will be required in the future for this position? (Use job description and modify according to future needs, interviews with senior management and other relevant sources.)

Detail the risks to the succession and any contingencies. For example: what can go wrong while the succession plan is being implemented? What is the likelihood of this happening? What is the potential impact to the MDA? What is your contingency/alternative plan in the event that this risk happens?

Gaps – what competencies or skill-sets not possessed by current staff:

Part 3: Individual Succession Plan (complete a separate template for EACH key position)

Key Position Name:						
Name of Potential Successors (e.g. if none of the current officers are suitable then put 'Unknown')	Succession Type (e.g. ready to step into this position now, ready in 6-12 months' time, ready in 1-2 years)	Risks (e.g. level of commitment to MDA, anticipated retirement or deployment)	Skills Development Action Required	Line Manager Responsible	HR Officer Responsible	Progress Review Date

Example Development Actions:

- **Objectives:** An officer may be believed to have the potential to perform in the key position but requires more stretching and challenging performance objectives to test this assumption and see how the potential successor deals with the additional pressure/responsibility;
- **Management Experience:** Officers being considered for a management position with no management experience should be given the opportunity to supervise, mentor or coach others;
- **Technical Skills:** If the officer does not have the required technical experience, do they require specialised training, shadowing or a work rotation?
- **Change Management Experience:** No officer should be considered ready for a leadership position without proven understanding of the MDA's strategic goals and direct involvement in a change management or reform programme