

**ASSESSMENT OF HUMAN RESOURCES RECORDS MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES IN THE LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE**

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Declaration

By submitting this mini-thesis electronically, I declare that the entirety of the work contained therein is my own, original work, that I am the authorship owner thereof (unless to the extent explicitly otherwise stated) and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it for obtaining any qualification.

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Abstract

The research study assessed records management practices in the Limpopo Department of Agriculture (LDA), with the focus being on human resources records. Human resources records management practices were assessed in four key performance areas, namely: policy and regulatory framework, storage requirements, integrity of paper-based and electronic records, and efficiency and effectiveness of the registry system. The assessment tool, as prescribed in the *Best Practice Model for Keeping and Managing Paper-Based Employee Records*, was used. Research findings showed that LDA's performance in terms of records management practices do not comply with the set policies and regulatory framework and that the storage conditions are insecure. Research findings were evaluated and possible strategies for improving the management of human resources records are recommended. The adoption of awareness campaigns for staff, a coordinated training programme as well as the provision of support of top management, are some of the strategies recommended.

Opsomming

In hierdie navorsingstudie is rekords van bestuurpraktyke in die Limpopo Departement van Landbou (LDL) geassesseer, met die fokus op menslikehulpbronrekords. Die menslikehulpbronrekords is geassesseer op grond van vier kernprestasië-areas, naamlik die beleids- en regulatoriese raamwerk, bergingsvereistes, integriteit van papiergebaseerde en elektroniese rekords, en doeltreffendheid en effektiwiteit van die registerstelsel. Die assesseringstelsel soos voorgeskryf deur die *Best Practice Model for Keeping and Managing Paper-Based Employee Records* is gebruik. Navorsingsbevindings het getoon dat die LDL se prestasie ten opsigte van rekordbestuurpraktyke nie voldoen aan beleide nie en dat 'n regulatoriese raamwerk en veilige bergingstoestande nie bestaan nie. Navorsingsbevindings is geëvalueer en moontlike strategieë om die bestuur van menslikehulpbronrekords te verbeter, is aanbeveel. Die ingebruikneming van bewusmakingsveldtogte vir personeel, 'n gekoördineerde opleidingsprogram en ook die verskaffing van steun deur topbestuur is van die strategieë wat aanbeveel word.

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List of acronyms and abbreviations

DPSA	Department of Public Service and Administration
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LDA	Limpopo Department of Agriculture
NMIR	National Minimum Information Requirements
PERSAL	Personnel and Salary Administration System
RIM	Records and Information Management

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND RESEARCH PROBLEM

1.1 Introduction

Public and private organisations generate records in conducting their daily activities. Records can be in different formats and on different media. Maps, photographs, plans, minutes and electronic records on magnetic media, including tapes and diskettes, are examples of records that exist in organisations (South Africa, 2003:27–34). Records document and support decision-making and accountability, as well as help to establish the extent to which organisations comply with laws (Wallace, 2004:23–29; Yusuf & Chell, 2005:19–22). Organisations have to recognise the need to manage records, as such documentation is regarded as a resource and an asset to the organisations concerned (Shepherd, 2006:6; Yusuf & Chell, 2005:19–22). One of the basic values of public administration, as enshrined in Chapter 10 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), is that public administration must be fair, transparent and equitable. The realisation of a transparent public administration is, to a large extent, dependent on the availability of public records (Willis, 2005:86–89).

The focus of the research study is on human resources records as public records. The study assesses human resources records management practices within the Limpopo Department of Agriculture (LDA). The assessment of practices within the Department is in terms of its policy and institutional framework, the integrity of human resources data, the record-keeping system, and storage requirements (South Africa, 2002:45). The assessment tool, as prescribed in the *Best Practice Model for Keeping and Managing Paper-based Employee Records* (hereinafter referred to as the Model; South Africa, 2002:48–59), is used.

1.2 A brief description of the literature study

A brief description of the benefits of sound records management in an organisation and views on records management are explained.

1.2.1 Benefits of records management

Records are essential at operational, tactical and strategic level for the conducting of organisational activities (Ngoepe, 2003:18–19; Shepherd, 2006:6–7). Records, for example, form the basis upon which strategic plans, management plans and the budgets of an organisation are compiled. They are kept to support decisions and actions that are taken by an organisation, and to provide evidence of what an organisation has achieved, as well as of its dealings with its customers and other organisations (Kemoni et al., 2007:6–16; Ngoepe, 2003:20; Shepherd, 2006:6–7), thus promoting transparency of processes in governance (Shepherd, 2006:6; Willis, 2005:89–91). If a candidate, who participated in interviews for a particular post, requires access to records in accordance with the Promotion of Access to Information Act (PAIA) 2000 (Act No. 2 of 2000), such records must be made available. The records in such a case should explain why the candidate in question was not selected, and should enable an organisation to respond amicably to the request. In this way, records can help to promote transparency and integrity regarding the appointment process in such an organisation (South Africa, 2002:20).

Records keeping help to ensure that organisations are held accountable for their actions (Willis, 2005:91). Organisations, both public and private, are expected to act in accordance with set policies and regulations. There are mechanisms established for monitoring organisational performance in terms of the policies and regulations. Auditing constitutes one such mechanism and all organisations having more than fifty employees, for example, are required by law to submit Employment Equity reports to the Department of Labour on an annual basis. Departmental decisions can also be challenged by employees, regulators and citizens. The success or failure of litigation cases depends on the availability of evidence in the form of records. Records support processes within an

organisation, offer explanation as to how and why the processes were undertaken, offer an opportunity to review and challenge processes, and provide the basis for appeals (Shepherd, 2006:6; Willis, 2005:93).

Good record keeping is critical for the efficient operation of an organisation (King, 1997:7; Mnjama, 2004:45–47; Shepherd, 2006:6; South Africa, 2002:12). Knowing what records to create, and the information that they must contain, ensuring that they are created consistently and to a high standard, capturing records in record-keeping systems, maintaining records appropriately, and ensuring the accessibility and retrievability of records offer benefits (Ngoepe, 2003:18–20; Ngulube, 2004:25; Shepherd, 2006:6–7; South Africa, 2002:13–16). Staff in registries tend to spend most of their time looking for records, which constitute the major source of information (Mnjama, 2004:47–49; Wamukoya, 2000:24).

Other benefits of effective record keeping include the promotion of efficiency, and the protection of rights and obligations of employees and the public (Gunnlaugsdottir, 2002:231). They contribute towards the reduction of fraud and corruption (Gunnlaugsdottir, 2002:231). Records are also kept for historical value and posterity (Wamukoya, 2000:26). An employee or researcher interested in, say, “how the organisational structure within the Department changed as a result of the implementation of the strategic plan from 1994” has to consult records to establish that relationship. Records constitute a crucial resource in an organisation and require proper management (King, 1997:656–659; Shepherd, 2006:6–12).

1.2.2 Views on records management

Records go through various stages in their life cycle. They are created, stored, used until they are no longer needed, or permanently retained due to their value (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:5; Ngoepe, 2003:19; South Africa, 2003:4–5). They have to be taken care of and managed properly throughout all the relevant stages. Records management trends have been investigated, with a wide range of findings being found to exist, with some of

the findings being that the current practice is contrary to that stipulated in terms of the regulatory framework (Gibbons & Shenton, 2003:144; Ngoepe, 2003:18). Gibbons and Shenton's study (2003:143–144), for example, found that, despite the regulatory framework in existence, the records managements practices of the UK Parliament were not in line with the practices prescribed by regulation.

Different theoretical views of records management exist (Yusof & Chell, 2002:57). The traditional view regards records management as originating from archival studies (Gill, 2005:239). There are also views that records management derives its theoretical basis from the integration of three areas, namely archives, records information management and information technology (Yusof & Chell, 2002:57). A detailed discussion of the theoretical framework that forms the basis for records management will be discussed in Chapter Two. The Model incorporates both paper-based and electronic records, as opposed to the more traditional view (Yusof & Chell, 2002:58–63), which focuses on paper records alone. The use of technology gives rise to various challenges to the latter view to records management, amongst which is that of the dispersed responsibility of records in an institution (King, 1997:658). For a theoretical model to be viable during the current information age, it has both to incorporate and to accommodate the influence of information and communication technology (ICT) on records management (Yusof & Chell, 2002:60–62).

1.3 Historical background/rationale

Studies show that sound records management is the foundation for good governance in a democratic society (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:2; King, 1997:656; Mullon, 2004:1; Ngulube, 2004:3; Shepherd, 2006:6; Willis, 2005:86–89). Good governance is characterised by transparency, accountability, due process, compliance with the set statutory framework, and information security (Wallace, 2004:23–29; Willis, 2005:90–95). Certain bodies are charged with responsibilities regarding the conducting of audits in order to check how organisations are performing and also to establish the extent of compliance obtained. The Auditor General, for example, conducts inspections to establish

the extent to which departments perform in accordance with various regulations. In this way, the management of various departments is held accountable, by way of their records, regarding the conduct of the processes, the procedures and the delivery of outcomes in terms of the regulations. According to the National Minimum Information Requirements (NMIR), for example, records of the selection and recruitment process should be kept in personnel files (South Africa, 2002:4), with the audits of such processes being used to establish the extent to which the processes comply with the set standards.

The fulfilment of the mandates of government departments is challenged in several different ways. They are exposed to extremely costly litigation risks (King, 1997:656; Shepherd, 2006:6), which are associated with various functionalities and failures by the departments concerned to prove (by means of the use of records) that they have met their obligations or have acted in accordance with the principles of best practice in line with the appropriate policies. Departments with sound records management practices should be in a position to deliver transparency and due process to an aggrieved employee or party, for example, indicating that it acted in accordance with the set regulations (King, 1997:657–658; Willis, 2005:90–94). The LDA, like other public organisations, experiences challenges in human resources records management. The Department has human resources records that have accumulated from the former homelands to date. Provincial Auditor General reports have also raised records-related issues in the Department. Information is not made available when it is needed (Ngoepe, 2003:19), and incomplete documents have been submitted for auditing purposes (Department of Agriculture, 2007). Example of cases quoted include leave forms missing from an employee's file, but that have been captured on the Personnel and Salary Administration System ([PERSAL], a management information system that is used in the public sector for the keeping of personnel and salary administration data), lack of documents to support employee promotions, and leave forms that are available on file, but that have not been captured on PERSAL.

Operation Head Count was initiated by Limpopo's Office of the Premier in 2006 (Limpopo, 2006: 5-6). Government officials, during the month of September 2006, were paid through cheques in order to establish the actual number of government employees in the province. The operation established that the Provincial Government payroll included number of ghost workers, which both had implications for the keeping of personnel records (Limpopo, 2007: 6-9). Some of the findings of the operation included the inability to establish the whereabouts of some employees in departments; the receipt of salaries by some employees whose services had already been terminated, and a delay in pension payments due either to the unavailability or to the incompleteness of the pension records concerned. The findings were similar to those of other related studies conducted (Wamukoya, 2000:23-28; Mnjama, 2004:46).

Proper management of records should be in place to ensure that valuable information is neither lost nor misplaced (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:2; Ngulube, 2004:10). Organisations, for example, tend to provide regular skills training in various identified disciplines for their employees. If the related records are lost, the organisations concerned would be unable to keep track of their employee capacity. Records, unlike other resources such as finances and human resources, are irreplaceable (King, 1997:658-659). Financial assistance can be given to a department that experiences a deficit and if an employee with critical skills decides to leave an organisation, arrangements can be made to the employee concerned replaced. However, if records are lost, they can neither be replaced nor re-created (Yusof & Chell, 2005:19-22).

The records management of the Department of Agriculture in Limpopo is subject to various perceptions. The perceptions range from the viewing of record registries as dumping grounds for all documents no longer needed (King, 1997:658; Mazikana, 1998:79; Ngoepe, 2003:18-20), through the viewing of records management as a filing function (King, 1997:656), to the view of records as belonging to their creators, as opposed to such records being a corporate resource (Barata et al., 2001:38; Gibbons & Shenton, 2003:142). In terms of the latter perception, in those cases in which both paper

and electronic records are kept in offices, the records are not viewed as a resource (Gibbons & Shenton, 2003:141; Willis, 2005:90–95). The registry officers concerned are also not trusted to manage the departmental records involved (Barata et al., 2001:38). The perceptions described so far in the current mini-thesis do not foster a belief in the sound records management of either paper or electronic records by the organisations concerned regarding their rendering of efficient and functional services to those citizens whom they serve. Organisational transactions tend to be finalised by means of email. If emails are not managed to ensure the effective use, or to provide an understanding, of why certain decisions were taken, such an organisation can be exposed to threats and unnecessary risks. The availability of information, when needed, provides a proper support mechanism for the healthy functioning of an organisation.

1.4 Statement of the research problem and questions

The focus of the current study is on paper-based and electronic human resources records management. Electronic human resources records are captured, stored and maintained on an information management system called PERSAL. Different officers within the human resources management divisions are responsible for the collection, capturing, management and monitoring of data. Those officers processing claims made in terms of service benefits; those capturing data relating to performance contracts, reviews and annual evaluations; those processing probationary appointments; and those capturing employee and leave details all work on PERSAL. PERSAL transactions are created, approved and authorised in all human resources divisions. Applications for leave that are completed by employees on the prescribed forms are captured by a human resources officer, with the application then being approved of, or rejected by, the supervisor concerned. The entire process should be recorded on the PERSAL system. In those cases where transactions, especially those that involve payments, require authorisation, the employee concerned has to submit the necessary data, with the human resources officer capturing and updating the relevant records, in order to ensure the proper management of the employee's records, of which hard copies have to be kept in the employee's file.

The management of paper-based employee records, according to the *Records Management Policy Manual* (South Africa, 2003:7), should currently be receiving more attention than they used to in the past, as departments are changing over to an e-government and control system. The regulatory framework in the public sector requires that departments, among their other activities, assess the records management practices of their human resources divisions. The LDA has not yet conducted an assessment of its human resources records management practices using the assessment tool, as prescribed in the Model, despite its 2003 implementation in Limpopo province. The experiences of the researcher as a practitioner in human resources records management have helped make possible the current study.

The study is guided by the asking of the following research questions:

- Are paper-based and electronic employee records kept in accordance with the policy directives and the institutional framework concerned?
- Do paper-based and electronic employee records provide records of all the human resources transactions conducted in the LDA?
- Are the above-mentioned records stored in conditions that ensure that they are protected, accessible on demand, and properly managed?
- How is the current system used for managing paper-based and electronic human resources records?

The objectives of the current study are as follows:

- to ascertain how departmental records are classified and stored;
- to determine whether there is a storage plan in place for the keeping of physical records and digital information;
- to establish what policies are used in the creation, use, storage and disposal of records;
- to find out how records are accessed and distributed both within and outside the organisation; and
- to find out how records are archived and disposed of.

1.5 The aim of the study

The current study aimed to assess the records management practices employed, especially with regard to human resources records in the LDA. The assessment established the extent to which employee records were managed in accordance with set policy directives and institutional framework at the time of the study, as well as the conditions under which the records were stored so as to ensure that they were both effectively protected and made accessible on demand. The study also assessed the extent to which the employee records kept in the Department provided accountable records of all human resources transactions conducted in the Department (South Africa, 2003:52).

The assessment findings of the study established, by means of the use of the Assessment Tool (see Chapter Four for a description of the Tool), whether the keeping and management of human resources records in the Department was effective, efficient and accountable in terms of the stipulations of the Department of Public Service and Administration (2002:48). The gaps and trends that were found to exist in records management practices were identified, and the organisation's performance regarding human resources records management was measured (An & Fiao, 2004:33–35). Available information formed the basis for the taking of measures regarding the improvement of records management practices within the organisation (An & Fiao, 2004:33). If, for example, it could be established that most districts of the Department of Agriculture are experiencing challenges in respect of the keeping of records in accordance with the set regulations, the findings could be used by the Department to develop an intervention strategy or a training programme that would address its identified needs, or outsource training for the personnel concerned. The latter, however, does not form part of the considerations of the current investigation.

1.6 Limitations of the study

The following are some of the limitations of the current study:

- Accessing elements of the study posed a challenge, as certain of them, especially those in the districts and municipalities of the LDA, were involved with other

human resources programmes than human resources records management. The other programmes with which they were involved included the processing of employee service benefits, the performance management system, transformation matters and recruitment. During the data collection for the study, the officers attached to the Human Resources Management (Department) were also engaged in paying out performance awards and in implementing aspects of the PERSAL pay increase component for deserving employees. At the time of the study, the performance of officers was assessed throughout the year, with the officers' scores being determined on a rating scale of 1 to 5 at the end of each financial year. In terms of the existing system, all officers with a score of between 3 and 5 were awarded pecuniary incentives for performing well.

- The focus of the study was on the assessment of paper-based and electronic human resources records management practices within the Department. The assessment excluded other electronic records, such as email, with only the human resources records on PERSAL being considered.

Despite all the challenges encountered, possible ways of remedying the situation were explored, so that the data collected would truly reflect the records management practices in the Department at the time of the study.

1.7 Chapter outlay

In the current research study, an attempt was made to consider the vital facets of the assessment of records management in the LDA in perspective. The present mini-thesis consists of six chapters, as is outlined below.

Chapter One

After a brief reflection on the background and orientation of the study, the problem statement, other related research questions and the aim of the study are discussed. Other issues covered in the chapter include chapter demarcation and the limitations of the study.

Chapter Two

The chapter contains a detailed review of the literature concerned. All relevant studies that were consulted are discussed. The chapter described how the relevant literature was used to develop a theoretical framework for the study.

Chapter Three

The focus of the chapter is on outlining the records management practices within the LDA. The outline includes the discussion of the records management processes used, the policies and procedures followed, and the management practices adhered to.

Chapter Four

The focus of the chapter is on the use of a questionnaire to assess the human resources records management practices in the LDA. Sampling procedures, analysis and interpretation of collected data are also discussed in the chapter.

Chapter Five

The research findings are evaluated in the chapter in respect of the literature review, the records management practices employed within the Department, and the research design and instruments that were used to collect the data.

Chapter Six

Recommendations for the improvement of records management practices are made on the basis of the findings and evaluation of the study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY

2.1 Introduction

Paper-based and electronic human resources records are created and used as evidence of the activities conducted and the decisions made in the LDA. Everyday use of the concept 'records' and various ways in which the concept is used by various scholars will be discussed in the course of this chapter. Other concepts to be used in the study, namely 'documents', 'archives' and 'records management', are also defined. Records management evolved being viewed from an archival perspective, through being viewed from a management perspective, to where it is currently reviewed from an information technology perspective (Yusof & Chell, 2005:42–48). The implementation of technology in records management practice posed challenges for the life cycle theory, which formed the conceptual framework for the paper-based records management environment (Borglund & Oberg, 2007:7; Yusof & Chell, 1998:104). Although the life cycle concept is central to paper-based records management, it fails to explain records management practices in an electronic environment (Borglund & Oberg, 2007:7; Flynn, 2001:80–85). The theoretical framework for an environment in which both paper-based and electronic human resources records exist, as in the Department, is established in the present chapter.

2.2 Definition of concepts

The concepts of 'records', 'documents', 'transactions' or 'activities', and 'records management' are all used in the current study. There are various ways in which the concepts can be used in scholarly writings.

2.2.1 The 'record' concept

In addition to South Africans' daily use of the term 'record', it is also used in scholarly writing, with the term clearly meaning different things to different people. According to the *Reader's Digest Oxford Complete Wordfinder Dictionary* (Tulloch, 1993:1280), the

concept 'record' refers to a "piece of evidence or information constituting an official account of something that has occurred". The use of the term to refer to a disc that is played on a record-player is irrelevant to the subject of the current mini-thesis, so will be omitted from the discussion.

In scholarly writing, the concept is defined in a number of different ways, with there being no generally acceptable definition (Kemoni et al., 2007:6–8; Yusuf & Chell, 2005:29–41). In some studies, the concept 'record' is defined from a functional perspective, whereas others define the concept as referring to a "physical object for posterity" (Yusof & Chell, 1998:97; 2005:36). The definition of the concept also evolved subject to the influence on records management of other disciplines (Yusof & Chell, 1998:98–99). The inadequacy in the definition of the concept 'records' can be traced back to its original, relatively narrow, meaning, being that of "writings preserved in courts of law for authentic testimony of a completed action" (Bilotto & Guercio, 2003:137; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:2). Some of the scholarly definitions of the term 'record' include "any information captured in reproducible form that is required for conducting business" and a "document or object that is or has been kept by reason of any information or matter that can be obtained from it or by reason of its connection with any event, person, circumstance or thing" (Yusof & Chell, 1998:104–105).

In the current study, the concept 'record' is used to refer to "any recorded information regardless of form or medium or any evidence of a transaction, preserved for the evidential information it contains" (Gunnlaugsdottir, 2002:232; Shepherd, 2006:6; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:2; South Africa, 1996:25; 2003:viii). The medium in which a record is stored or presented is not what determines whether something is a record or not (Gill, 2005:238; Shepherd, 2006:6; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:2; South Africa, 2001:15), but rather it is the fact that the record provides evidence of a certain transaction or activity (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:2). The evidential nature of a record is that which is of key importance to the current study. Records generated in organisations can be in paper and/or electronic form.

The focus of this study is on human resources records, which are defined as “recorded information of employees in the service of an organisation which arise from transactions or events to meet legislative and regulatory obligations” (South Africa, Department of Public Service and Administration, 2002:12). The records contain the details of “appointment and salary matters, transfers, translations and promotions, education and qualifications, disciplinary matters, performance management reviews and evaluations, medical records and other administrative records such as leave matters” (Mnjama, 2001:113–114) of employees. Human resources records, like any other records, document organisational activities, and provide evidence of transactions and compliance with set procedures (Yusof & Chell, 1998:98).

2.2.2 The ‘document’ concept

The term ‘document’ was sometimes used interchangeably with the term ‘record’. In the current study, the former term is defined as “the smallest unit of filing” (Gunnlaugsdottir, 2002:232; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:13) or “any form of recorded information regardless of the purpose for which...[it was]...originally created or used” (Fimerson, 2002:22). The smallest unit might refer to a single letter, form, or report, or other item that is filed in a filing system (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:13). Although all records are documents, not all documents are records (Fimerson, 2002:22), meaning that there are instances where documents can be referred to as records and other instances where documents are not called records.

Documents that are created as part of organisational activities or transactions are referred to as records (Fimerson, 2002:22). Completed application forms (Z83s) for recruitment by the South African public service and attendance registers are examples of documents that are records, as they are created as part of departmental activities (Fimerson, 2002:22; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:13). The source of such documentation also explains why such records are sometimes called ‘official documents’ (Fimerson, 2002:22). Blank application forms, departmental performance management review forms, Z102 forms and registers

are documents, but they are not records (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:13–14). The concepts ‘documents’ and ‘records’ are not used interchangeably in the current study.

2.2.3 The ‘archive’ concept

The concept ‘archive’ has different meanings depending on how it is used. It can be used to refer to semi-current or non-current records (An & Fiao, 2004:34; Kemoni et al., 2007:12). The concept can also be used to describe a repository or storage space where records with cultural and historical value are kept (Fimerson, 2002:22–23; Kemoni et al., 2007:12; Wamukoya, 2000:24). The former description of archives was used in the study.

2.2.4 The ‘transaction’ and ‘activity’ concept

A ‘transaction’, in the context of the current study, means an action or set of actions undertaken by an individual employee or by a group of employees acting on behalf of a department, with the actions concerned resulting in a definable outcome (Shepherd, 2003:2–3).

2.2.5 The ‘records management’ concept

The concept ‘records management’, just like that of a record, has various definitions, which are based on different views (Yusof & Chell, 1999:10–12). In the current study, records management is defined as the field of management that is responsible for the proper creation, receipt, maintenance, use, and disposal of records to achieve efficient, transparent and accountable governance (Gunlaugsdottir, 2002:232; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:1–2; South Africa, 2001:14; 2003:2; Yusof & Chell, 1999:10–12). The two concepts ‘records management’ and ‘human resources records management’ are used interchangeably in the present study.

2.3 Theoretical framework for records management

Different studies present various debates as to the theoretical basis of records management and its practices (Yusof & Chell, 1998:97–106; 2002:57). Some of the researchers concerned argue that records management is not based on a concrete body of

theory, whereas certain researchers, in other disciplines, argue that there is a theoretical framework for records management (Yusof & Chell, 2002:58). Despite the different views concerned, various studies have shown that records management principles are shared across the disciplines (Yusof & Chell, 2002:56–58). The range of views available also results in various ways of defining the concepts ‘record’ and ‘records management’ (Yusof & Chell, 1998:55). In the current study, the theoretical framework for records management is established on the basis of the view that the principles governing records management emanate from a range of disciplines.

2.3.1 Disciplines that form the basis for records management

Records management practices have been, and still remain, associated with other disciplines, including those of archives, information science, records information management and information management (Yusof & Chell, 2002:56–57).

2.3.1.1 Archival management

Some studies have found that records management has its origin in archival management (Gill, 2005:239; Yusof & Chell, 1998:97–99; 2002:156), with such a finding being diagrammatically represented in Figure 2.1 below. Originally, archival institutions were used to store vital documents and titles of state for use and dissemination to the nation (Atherton, 1985–1986:45; Borglund & Oberg, 2007:6; Wamukoya, 2000:24). Archival management can be distinguished from records management in that the latter refers to the management of active records (An & Fiao, 2004:34; Yusof & Chell, 2002:56). Even though archival management concerns itself with non-current records, the records stored still have ongoing value (Atherton, 1985–1986:44–47). The practice of archival management is characterised by the principle of provenance, which forms the basis for archival theory and practices (Fimerson, 2002:22; Yusof & Chell, 2002:56). The term ‘provenance’ refers to the management of non-current records by means of the identification and the retention of the origin of records and the purpose for which they were originally created (Yusof & Chell, 2002:57).

Records management, unlike archival management, serves as a management tool (see Figure 2.1; Yusof & Chell, 2002:56). As a tool, records management is used to promote the effectiveness and efficiency of management within an organisation (Yusof & Chell, 2003:56). The South African Department of Public Service and Administration expects other government departments to report on their equity status continuously. If a department had the ratio of 25 female officers to 100 male officers at middle management level, it had to develop strategies for reaching the target required 50:50 ratio by 2010, as per Cabinet Resolution of March 2006. Accordingly, the records kept regarding recruited employees were considered as an aid in the development of strategies ensuring compliance with such a requirement.

Records management and archival management are both concerned with records and with information management (Yusof & Chell, 2002:56). According to archival management principles, the preservation of records is regarded as the sole purpose for records management (Atherton, 1985–1986:43–47). The concepts ‘archival management’ and ‘records management’ are mutually dependent. For records to become archives, they must first be withdrawn from their status as current records, and then handled appropriately, so that they can become stored and evaluated in order to form archives. The principles that are applied in archives still underlie current records management practices (Yusof & Chell, 2002:58).

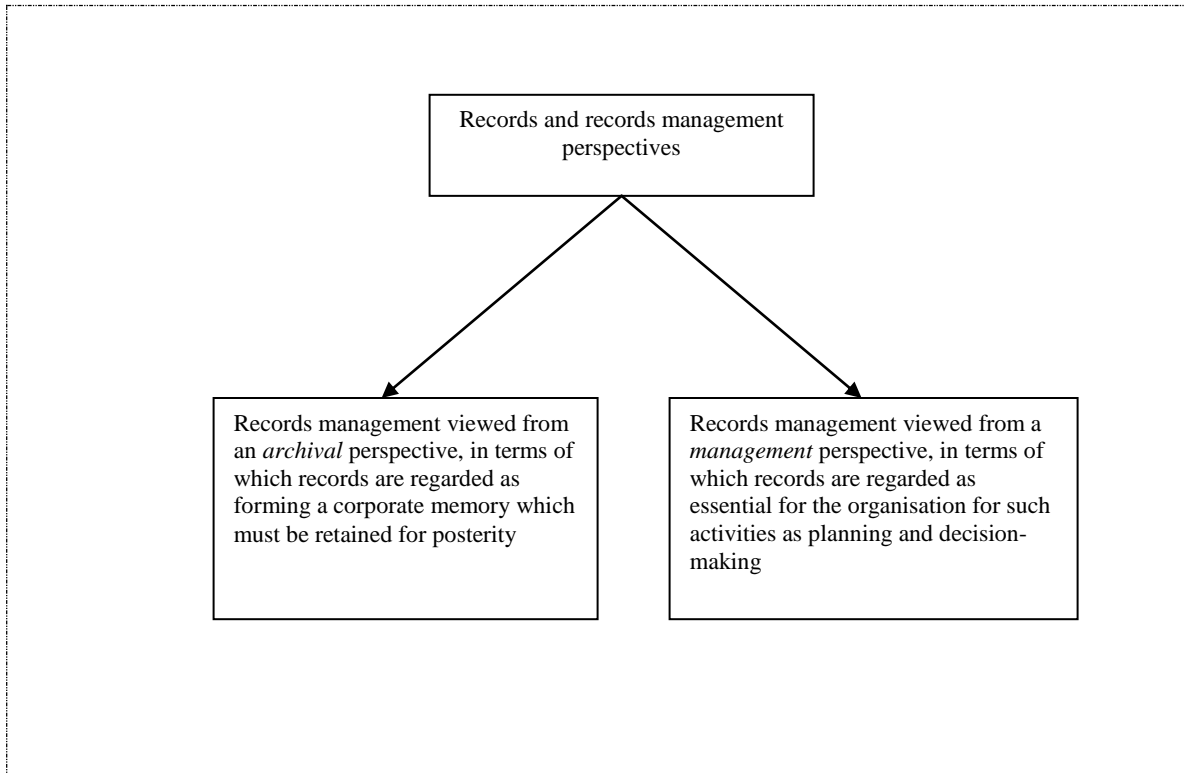


Figure 2.1: Conceptual framework for records management (Yusof & Chell, 1998:99)

2.3.1.2 Records information management, information science and information management

The development of records management theory has also been influenced by other disciplines than archival science (Yusof & Chell, 1998: 99–100; 2002:56). Examples of such disciplines are records and information management (RIM), information science, and general management, which are collectively referred to as ‘management’. Management principles used in records management pertain to the generation, the storage, the organisation, the indexing, and the making accessible of information for utilisation (Yusof & Chell, 2002:56). Such principles are employed to promote the storage and retrieval of information in records management (Yusof & Chell, 2002:56–57). According to the Model, employee files can either be arranged alphabetically, according to surname, or numerically, according to PERSAL number (South Africa, 2002:35). A PERSAL number is a unique number that identifies a specific employee. The

Model favours the use of PERSAL numbers for the easy retrieval and use of information (South Africa, 2002:35). In an organisation, records are only useful when they can be retrieved with ease on demand.

The introduction and implementation of the stipulations of PAIA in the LDA has also emphasised the importance of records accessibility in a public institution. Provisions in the Act give the public and employees, on request, the right of access to records held by both public and private organisations. According to the Model, access to employee records should be granted to authorised officers (Mnjama, 2001:117; South Africa, 2002:38). Those who are authorised to access the personal file of an employee are the relevant line manager and the employees in the human resources and in the internal and external audit units (South Africa, 2002:38). Such a file can, however, not be accessed by officers from the salary section. Different types of employee files can be accessed by different groups of people (South Africa, 2002:38). The influence of RIM, information science and general management on records management is diagrammatically represented in Figure 2.2 below (Yusof & Chell, 1998:99; 2002:58).

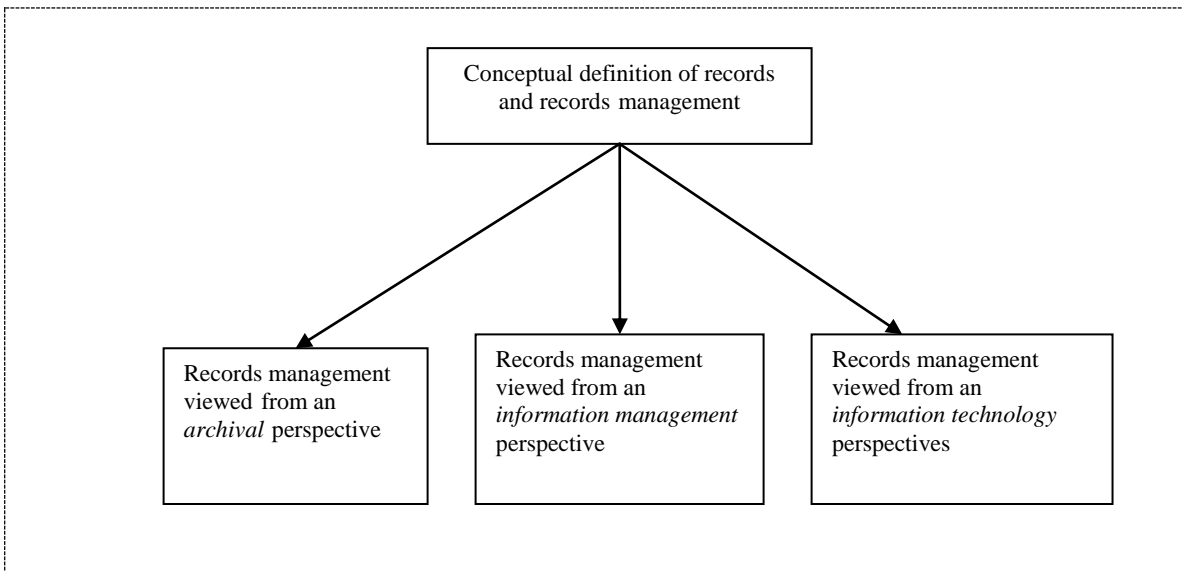


Figure 2.2: Conceptual framework for records management (Yusof & Chell, 1998:103; 2002:58)

Information, according to the management view, plays an essential role in planning and decision-making (Shepherd, 2006:6). South African government departments, for example, are required to develop retention policies, as stipulated in *Managing staff retention: An information guide for government departments* (South Africa, 2006:17–24). Departments will not be able to develop such policies if their employee records are not kept in accordance with the NMIR. Data regarding employee attrition rates, for example, must be collected by means of exit interviews, and then analysed. Trends established through the analysis of such data could then form the basis for the development of suitable intervention strategies.

Records management practices, just as the practices of other disciplines, are influenced by information technology (Wamukoya, 2000:28; Yusof & Chell, 2002:57). Information technology, including the use of ICTs, is concerned with the management of information to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of organisational performance (Bilotto & Guercio, 2003:136). Information about every organisation's workforce is crucial and must be managed. Employee information needs to be updated on a continuous basis, which can either be done manually or online.

2.3.2 Records life cycle versus continuum theories regarding records management

The life cycle theory (Figure 2.3 below) views records as resembling living organisms that are born and which go through various stages until they cease to exist (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:9–11; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:5; Wamukoya, 2000:27). Different scholars use a linear progression, a loop, or a circle to represent the life cycle of records (Borglund & Oberg, 2007:6; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:5). The number of stages or phases in the records' life cycle also differs, according to the perspective of the researcher concerned (Yusuf & Chell, 2005:52–55). The three-stage view is used in the current study, with the stages of records (including those of human resources) taken as consisting of the current or existing stage, the semi-current, or semi-existing, stage, and the non-current stage (Borglund & Oberg, 2007:6–8; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:5; South Africa, 2002: 14-15; Yusuf & Chell, 2005:52–54). In other studies, the three phases are regarded as pertaining

to active, semi-active and inactive records (Borglund & Oberg, 2007:1; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:7).

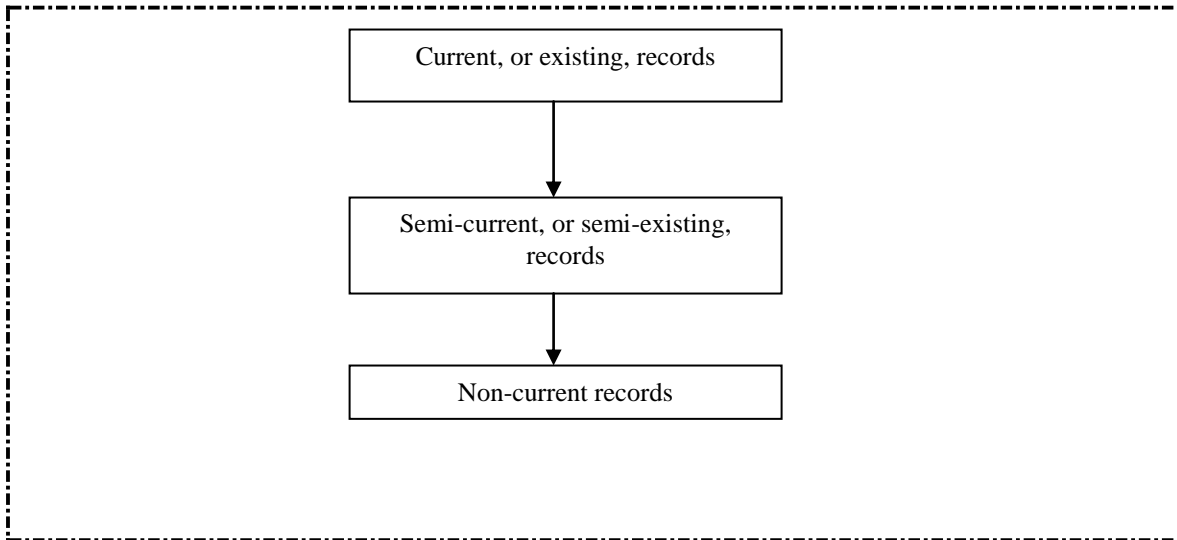


Figure 2.3: Three phases of the life cycle model (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:6)

Current records are those records that are regularly used, semi-current records are those that are still in use, though such use is infrequent, and non-current records are records that are no longer necessary for the conducting of current business (An & Fiao, 2004:33–34; Borglund & Oberg, 2007:6; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:6; South Africa, 2002:14). The records of those employees who are currently in the service of the LDA are regarded as current (South Africa, 2002:14). Records of employees who are no longer in the service of the Department are regarded as semi-current or non-current, depending on how frequently they are used. The records of those employees who have just terminated their service are occasionally used by auditors to establish the extent of compliance in processing terminations, in terms of the established standards and the extent to which the records were used in determining pension payouts.

According to the life cycle view, organisations create and keep records for their historical value (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:7). As the organisational value of the records diminishes, they are destroyed or transferred to the archival repository for storage (Atherton, 1985–1986:44–47; Borglund & Oberg, 2007:13; Wamukoya, 2000:27). The limitation of the

life cycle view for records management is that it neither provides a way of differentiating between the various stages in the life cycle of records (Wamukoya, 2000:27; Yusuf & Chell, 2002:58), nor does it offer the possibility that records can repeat stages. The life cycle view of records management has also been criticised for failing to answer all the concerns expressed (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:7–8).

The records continuum model (see Figure 2.4) offers an alternative view of records management (Atherton, 1985–1986:43–48; Borglund & Oberg, 2007:2–8; Yusuf & Chell, 2005:55–61). It views records management as a continuous process, which consists of the following four dimensions (Atherton, 1985–1986:48; Borglund & Oberg, 2007:2-8; Yusuf & Chell, 2005:61–68):

- The creation of records, or the receipt of records by post;
- The capturing and classification of records, using the records classification system;
- The organisation or scheduling of records; and
- Pluralisation, which includes the maintenance and use of information.

Focusing on one dimension of the continuum might also imply the presence of the other three dimensions (Borglund & Oberg, 2007:7–8; Flynn, 2001:81–83). For example, the creation of records as an ongoing process means that a created record can be altered several times in the system during its administrative use (Atherton, 1985–1986:47), meaning that reclassification and reorganisation of the record can occur at any stage during its life cycle (Flynn, 2001:81). The four above-mentioned dimensions (see Figure 2.4) are interrelated and form a continuum.

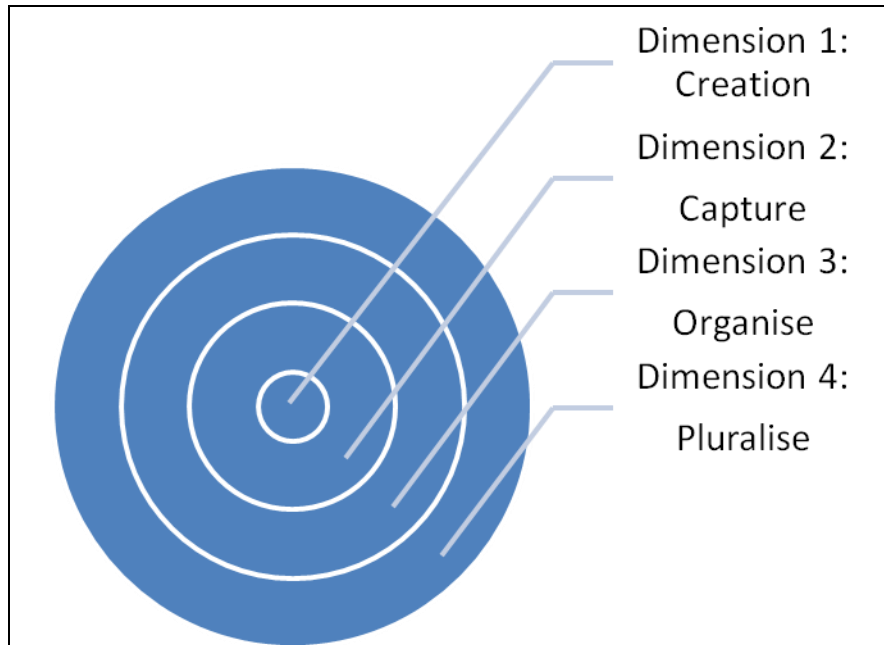


Figure 2.4: Records continuum model (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:9; Yusof & Chell, 2005:60)

Records created electronically are processed differently from paper-based records. In a paper-based environment, records are kept authentic by maintaining them in the same form and state in which they were created or received (Duranti, 1999:154; Yusof & Chell, 2002:58–61). In contrast, an electronic record can be altered and migrated from one form to another (Borglund, 2007:45–47; Yusof & Chell, 2002:58–61). In the records continuum model, the creation of a record is regarded as an ongoing process, unlike in the life cycle view, in which the creation of a record is an event (Atherton, 1985–1986:47).

According to the above-mentioned view, records are not regarded as going through the various stages that are envisaged in terms of the life cycle theory (see Figure 2.4), but are seen as remaining active until they are destroyed (Borglund & Oberg, 2007:2–3; Mnjama, 2003:98; Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:9–10; Wamukoya, 2000:27; Yusof & Chell, 2002:57). The records continuum model challenges the view that records fall into three distinct phases (active, semi-active, and non-active). For example, the management of current and non-current records is integrated, as compared to forming discrete phases in the life cycle

concept (Yusof & Chell, 2002:60–61; 2005:59–61). Inactive records can become active at any time, according to the records continuum model (Atherton, 1985–1986:48). The use of technology in records management requires the ability of records managers to anticipate changes in technology (Yusof & Chell, 2002:61). Paper-based records, when created, go through various stages, until they are either destroyed or transferred to an archival repository. In contrast, electronic records, once created, are manipulated, stored, transacted and migrated due to dependence on software and hardware (Yusof & Chell, 2002:58–59). Records managers need to be able to make decisions regarding hardware, software and storage media in order that they might preserve accessible records (Yusof & Chell, 2002:61).

2.4 Theoretical framework for the study

The theoretical framework that forms the basis for the current study consists of the view that records management has its basis in other areas of knowledge, namely in archival management, in management (i.e. records information management, information science and information management), and in information technology (Yusof & Chell, 2002:57). The framework is diagrammatically represented in Figure 2.5 below.

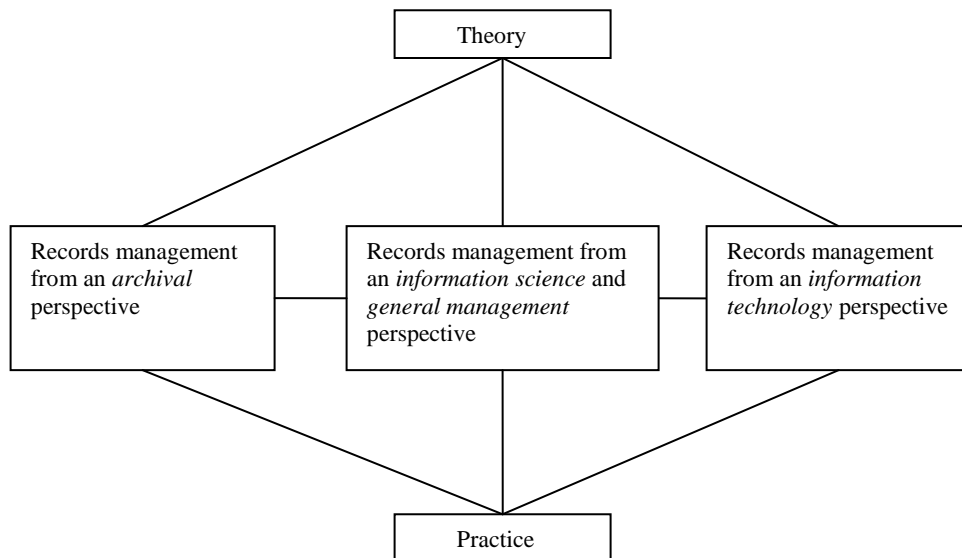


Figure 2.5: Three areas of knowledge underlying records management (Yusof & Chell, 2002:59)

Principles in the three areas of knowledge underlying records management serve to shape and best support records management practices in a hybrid environment in which both paper and electronic records exist. Employee records kept in organisations are in paper and electronic form, as in most governments in East and Southern Africa (Mnjama, 2001:111). Both the life cycle and the records continuum models are used in the current study due to the hybrid environment that exists in relation to the management of employee records. Despite the shortcomings of the life cycle theory, it provides the basic framework for paper-based records management, as well as being central to the management of electronic records (Yusof & Chell, 1998:104; 2002:62). The records continuum model also provides a multidimensional view of the electronic records management environment (Yusof & Chell, 2002:61–62). The model also offers the opportunity to integrate record keeping into systems and processes (Yusof & Chell, 2005:67).

2.5 Conclusion

Records management has its theoretical basis in such disciplines as archival, records information, information science and information management. In addition to archival principles and information science techniques being used in the management of records, records management is also influenced by developments in ICT. Although the records continuum model is closely associated with the keeping of electronic records, and the life cycle theory with the keeping of paper-based records, records management incorporates aspects of both the records continuum and the life cycle models, as both electronic and paper records exist in the environment concerned.

CHAPTER THREE

RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES WITHIN THE LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

3.1 Introduction

LDA is faced with the challenge of improving and promoting sound records management practices, as required by recent legislative developments. However, the latter does not constitute the only motive for the Department to improve its records management; other benefits that are associated with proper records management were discussed in Chapter One. The current chapter will first focus on the structural organisation of the LDA, records classification systems used, and then on the current records management procedures and processes within the Department.

3.2 Structural organisation of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture

The structural organisation of the LDA will be outlined (see Figure 3.1) to provide a basic understanding of how human resources records and information flow within the Department (see Figure 3.2). LDA has its headquarters in Polokwane, with five agricultural districts (which were previously referred to as regional offices). The agricultural districts were named according to the districts in which they were established, with the same naming being used for the municipalities concerned. The five districts are situated in different geographical regions, namely in the Vhembe, Mopani, Capricorn, Waterberg and Sekhukhune areas. Each agricultural district has municipalities that are attached to it. The structure of LDA is represented in Figure 3.1. The central office (the Head Office) of the LDA has eight branches, consisting of the following: Financial Management; Corporate Services; Land and Agrarian Reform; Farmer Support and Development; Projects and Infrastructure; Human Resources Management Services; District Services; and Agribusiness. Two research stations and two centres of agricultural excellence (formerly known as colleges of agriculture) are attached to the branch Farmer Support and Development. Each agricultural district consists of sub-districts, which are referred to as agricultural municipalities. The number of agricultural municipalities in each district varies: Mopani has six; Vhembe, Waterberg, and Sekhukhune have five; and

Capricorn has four. Whereas an agricultural district is headed by a senior manager, an agricultural municipality is headed by a manager, who reports to the former. A senior manager is responsible for administration and agriculture-related functions in a district, whereas a manager oversees the administration and agriculture-related functions in a municipality. District senior managers also serve as district deputy information officers, in accordance with the requirements set out in the *Departmental manual* developed in terms of Section 14 of PAIA.

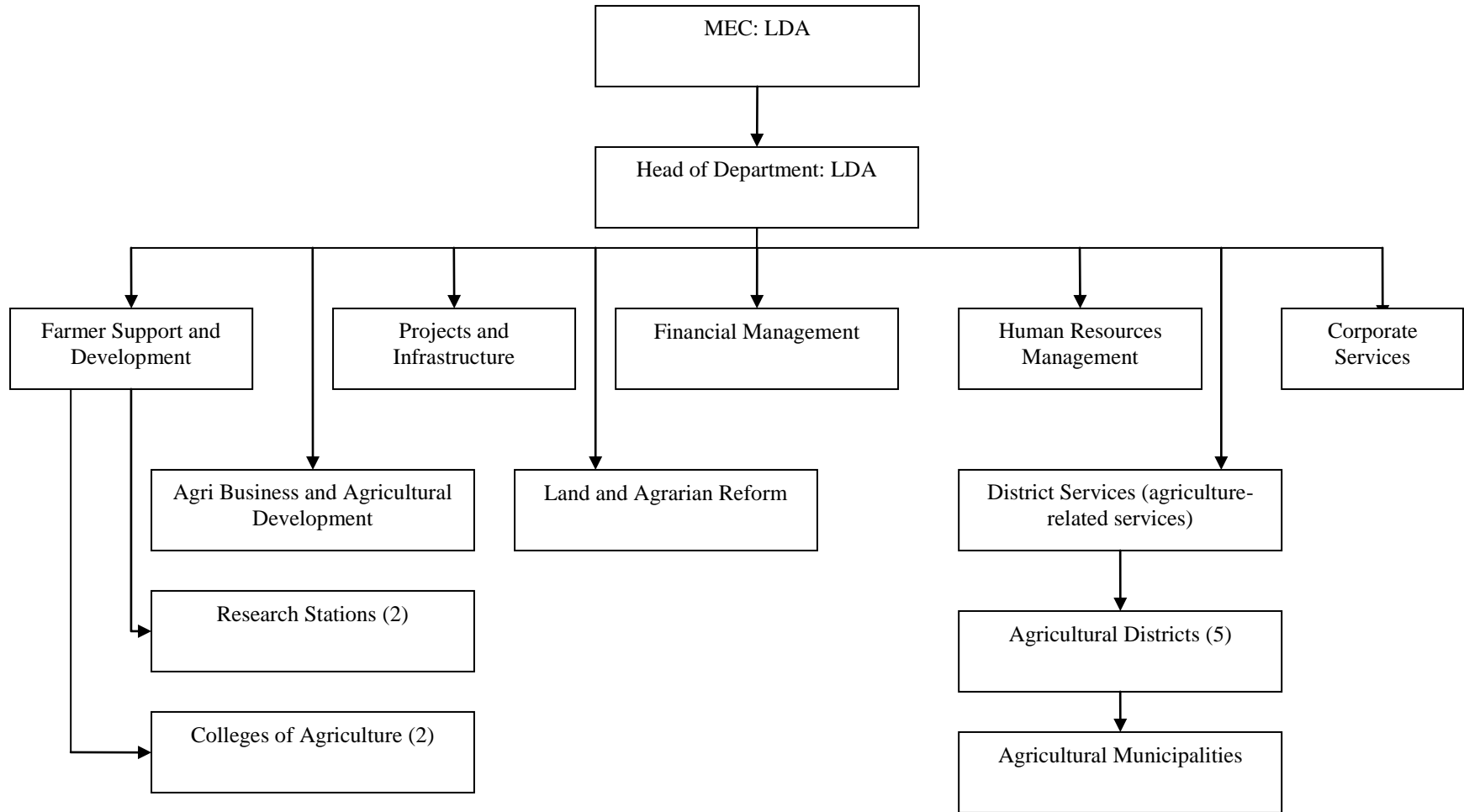


Figure 3.1: A structural representation of the Limpopo Department of Agriculture (Department of Agriculture, 2006:25)

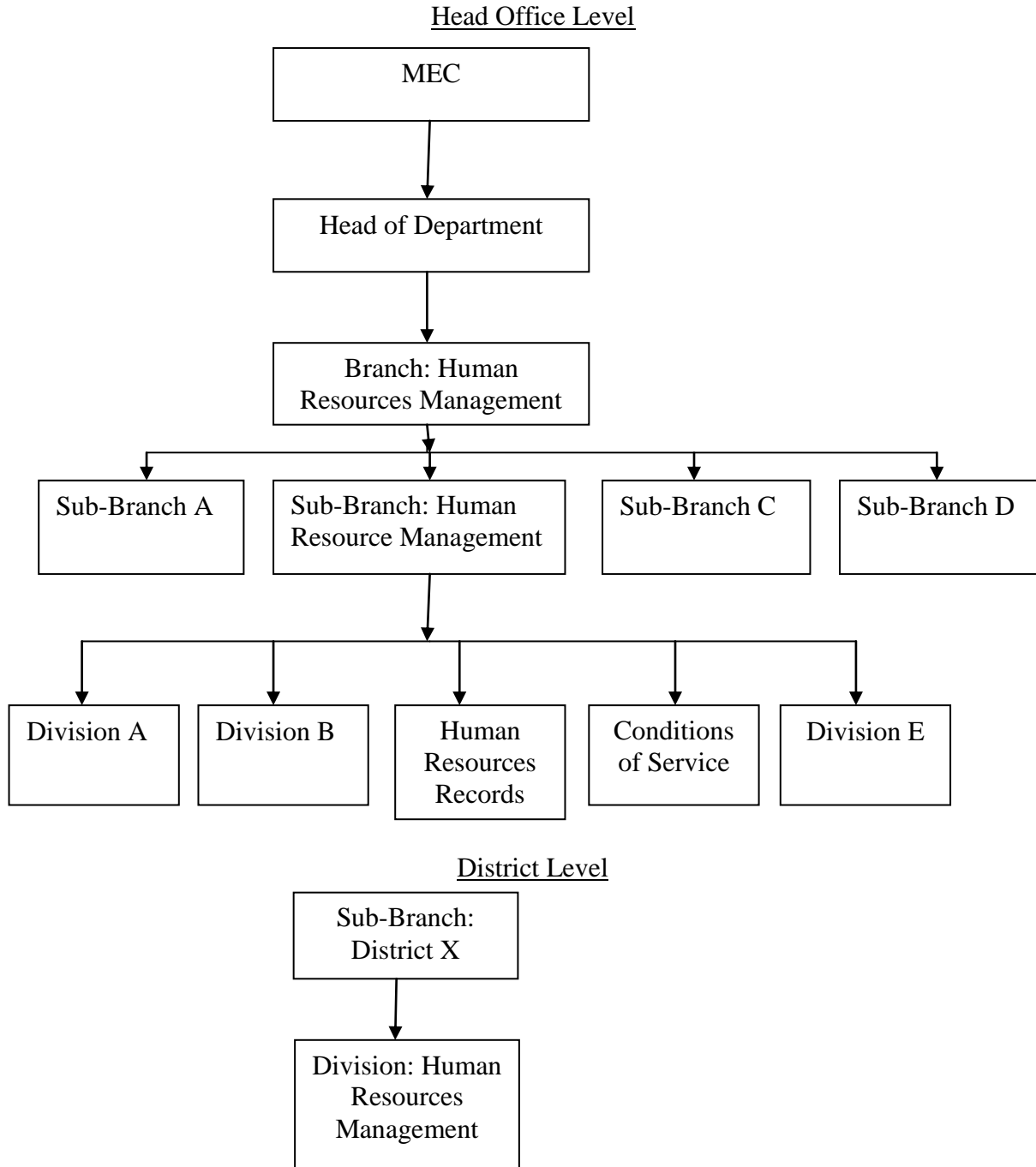


Figure 3.2 Representation of the human resources records flow within the Limpopo Department of Agriculture

Municipality Level

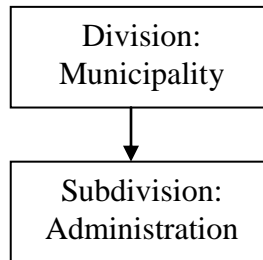


Figure 3.2 Representation of the human resources records flow within the Limpopo Department of Agriculture (continued)

MEC = Member of the Executive Committee

Each district is a sub-branch that is attached to the branch District Services. Though there are six subdivisions in the municipality concerned, the focus will be on the subdivision Administration, in which the records management unit is based.

3.3 Records classification systems

The Department of Agriculture in the Limpopo province has approved manual file plans (classification systems) that are used both at Head Office and in the different districts and municipalities. According to the *Records Management Policy Manual* (2003:70), a file plan is referred to as a “pre-determined logical and systematic structure into which records are arranged and intellectually stored according to subject groups and subjects to facilitate efficient retrieval and disposal of records”. A file plan consists of general instructions on how the file should be used, a list of the main series files, a subject classification (i.e. a list of different individual main series files in the file plan), and a list of series of separate case files. Each individual main series file consists of the reference number, the description and the disposal authority of files in an organisation (South Africa, 2003:70).

The Department has two file plans, namely the General File Plan, which is designed for the management of records generated in the pursuance of core or line functions (referred to as general records), and the Staff File Plan, which is designed for the management of records related to functions that help the Department to accomplish its line functions (i.e. a supportive function). All offices in the Department of Agriculture in different geographical locations and at different levels use the same file plans, which were approved by the National Archivists in November 2004 (Department of Agriculture, 2004:1).

The management of records in accordance with the Staff File Plan pertains to the management of records created in terms of both the main series files and the personnel case files. The Department recruits and appoints staff, develops human resources, and conducts job evaluations, in compliance with the set regulations. Records of all the processes are kept in relevant main series files and/or in employee files, depending on the process concerned. If an employee applies for resettlement as a result of a transfer from another department, and the terms of the transfer require that the individual concerned relocates, approval has to be granted by the Head of Department or by the General Manager: Human Resources Management, depending on the job level of the employee involved. The departmental response informing the employee of the outcome of the application for resettlement is filed in both the employee's file and in the relevant main series file. If such an employee is transferred to another department (requiring that the records of resettlement in the employee file also be transferred to the other department), the Department of Agriculture then still has a record of such a transaction that it keeps in the relevant main series file. The receiving department in such a case would also have the same records as are in the employee's file, which would provide evidence of such a transaction having taken place (South Africa, 2001: 1-5).

Records in accordance with the Staff File Plan are generated in all branches for all departmental activities. Applications and requests related to human resources matters are processed and approved by human resources units in the municipalities and districts, as

well as in the Head Office. The Head of Department, as an accounting officer, delegates some of the human resources functions to various other posts, with the delegations being reviewed on an annual basis. Some of the functions that are solely the competence of Head Office are delegated to the heads of districts, to the General Manager: Human Resources Management (Head of the branch Human Resources Management); to the Senior Manager: Human Resources Management (Head of the sub-branch Human Resources Management); and to heads of the various divisions. A resettlement application by an employee attached to a district or municipality is finalised at Head Office. The leave matters pertaining to district and municipal staff are captured, approved and filed at district level, apart from applications for incapacity leave, which are referred to Head Office for finalisation (LDA, 2003: 4-5).

3.4 Records management practices within the Limpopo Department of Agriculture

Records management practices within the Department will be explained in terms of the following aspects: the statutory and regulatory framework; records management processes; and records control measures.

3.4.1 The statutory and regulatory framework for records management

Certain statutory requirements have accentuated the need for sound record keeping in various forms within the public sector. The broader constitutional and related archival regulatory framework involves the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996 (Act No. 108 of 1996), as amended. Sections 32 and 195 of the Constitution provide the basis for sound, effective, economic and efficient delivery of services in the public service. The enacted legislation that gives effect to the provisions of the Constitution includes the following:

- The Public Finance Management Act, 1999 (Act No. 1 of 1999) has, as its objectives, the promotion of sound financial management in order to maximise service delivery through the efficient and effective use of limited resources.

- The Labour Relations Act, 1995 (Act No. 42 of 1995) gives labour unions, according to Section 16, the right to access information regarding employees, unless the information concerned is legally privileged, may cause harm to an employee, or is of a private nature (South Africa, 2002: 21).
- The Promotion of Administrative Justice Act, 2000 (Act No. 3 of 2000) stipulates that any administrative action taken should be lawful, reasonable and fair. Administrative actions must also be properly documented.
- The Basic Conditions of Employment Act, 1997 (Act No. 75 of 1997), the Public Service Act, 1994 (Act No. 103 of 1994 as amended), and the Public Service Regulations provide details of, and specify which, records heads of departments must keep about each employee in their department. The records kept must also be in accordance with the NMIR, Circular No. 1 of 2001, as issued by the Minister of Public Service and Administration.
- The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act, 1996 (Act No. 43 of 1996 as amended) promotes the preservation of public records for use by citizens. Provisions in the regulatory framework promote transparency, accountability, effective governance, access to information, and the protection of privacy and confidentiality. In addition to the above, effective and efficient records management practices are also promoted by the Act.

The specific legislation and regulatory framework for the management of human resources records is underpinned by such values as accessibility, transparency and accountability, as described in the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act No. 108 of 1996), NMIR, as stipulated in the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) Circular 4 of 2001 and in the Model. The above-mentioned pieces of legislation and policies prescribe the kind of employee records that employers should keep, as well as the procedures and processes followed in managing human resources records. The Model provides guidelines for the identification, classification, storage, maintenance, and disposal of records. If, for example, a file is approximately 3cm thick or approximately 150 folios long, such a file must be closed, following a

procedure specified in the Model (DPSA, 2002: 33). The specific legislation and regulatory framework guides daily functioning in the human resources records management units.

The introduction and implementation of PAIA by the South African government is aimed at promoting transparency (Wallace, 2004:23–29) and proper corporate governance (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:1; Willis, 2005:86). The Act provides citizens with rights of access to records held by organisations. If an employee has been interviewed for a post, and has been unsuccessful in securing the post, in accordance with Subsection 1.2.1 of the Act the records kept by the Department should serve to explain why the individual concerned was unsuccessful. All organisations (both public and private) are expected to develop a manual in terms of Section 14 of PAIA. Such a manual should indicate, among other issues, the types of records that are held by the organisation, the records that are readily available, and those that should be requested through PAIA. The LDA departmental manual was developed, in terms of PAIA, in March 2006 and is currently being implemented.

3.4.2 Records management processes and records control measures

Records management processes include processes from the point of creation, including those pertaining to classification and capturing, use, storage and access, tracking, transfer, and disposal (An & Fiao, 2004:36; Shepherd, 2003:102–268).

3.4.2.1 Creation, classification, capturing and tracking of records

Records are created in various formats in the LDA, with such formats ranging from email messages, memorandums, and reports, to certificates (Shepherd, 2003:105). The structure and content of the records are composed at the discretion of the creator (Shepherd, 2003:104), even though there are initiatives for the control and standardisation of such documentation. Such standard aspects as the allocation of reference numbers and the classification of a record according to Minimum Information Security Standards (MISS) should be reflected in all records created. However, although all created human resources

records should have reference numbers in accordance with the staff file plan (the classification system), not all of them do. In certain instances, the allocated reference numbers used belong to the terminated staff file plan (the file plan that is no longer in use). In some cases, although the current file plan is used, the allocated reference number is incorrect. No common practice currently prevails in the LDA, as different formats and styles can be observed in records created at Head Office, or in the districts and the municipalities.

Once records are created, they need to be approved by the delegated officer. Some of the records generated at district or municipal level have to be approved at Head Office (in Polokwane), in accordance with the delegation of certain human resources functions. For example, an application for resettlement from an officer who is attached to a municipality or district will be forwarded from the municipality or district, as is shown in Figures 3.2 and 3.3. An application from an employee in a municipality will be forwarded to the district, with a covering letter from the municipality manager attached. The district then submits the application to Head Office, with the appropriate recommendation. At Head Office, the Human Resources registry receives the application, places it in the relevant main series file, then forwards it to officers in the Division: Conditions of Service.

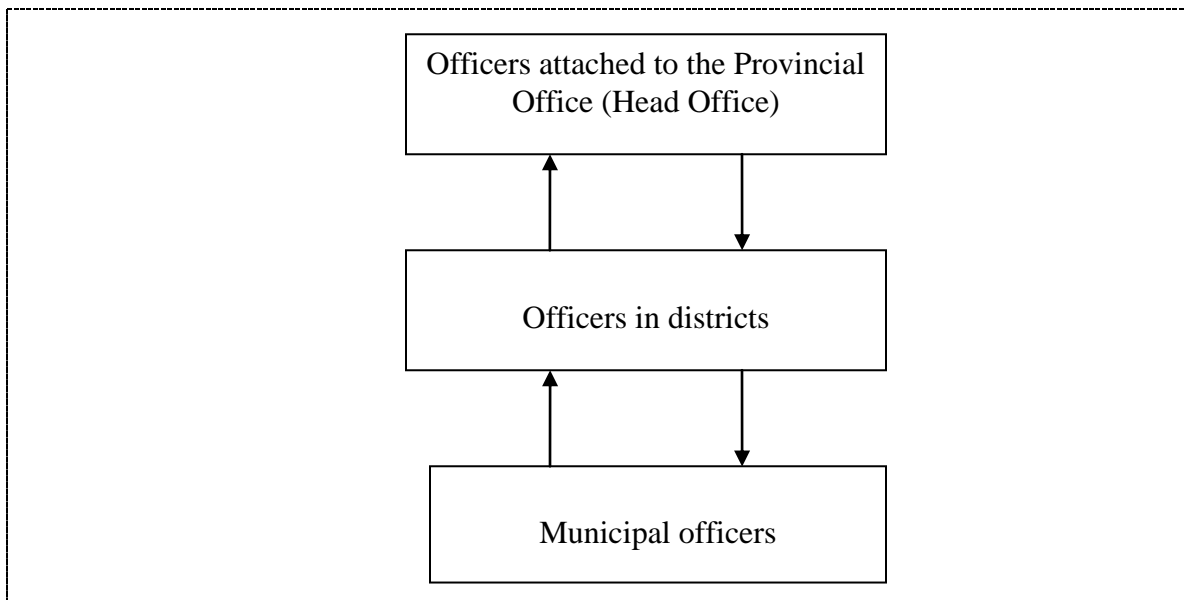


Figure 3.3: Flow of documents between a Municipality or District and Head Office

Conditions of Service officers then analyse and request the approval of resettlement payment from either the Head of Department or from the General Manager: Human Resources Management, depending on the officer's level, through the Office of the Senior Manager: Human Resources Management. The officer processing the request at Head Office then has to establish whether the applicant qualifies in terms of the regulations. If the applicant does qualify, a memorandum is generated, requesting that the General Manager: Human Resources Management or the Head of Department (depending on the delegation) approve the payment of resettlement for the officer. The General Manager: Human Resources Management (stationed at Head Office) has been delegated by the Head of Department to approve payment of resettlement requests for officers from level 8 to level 1.

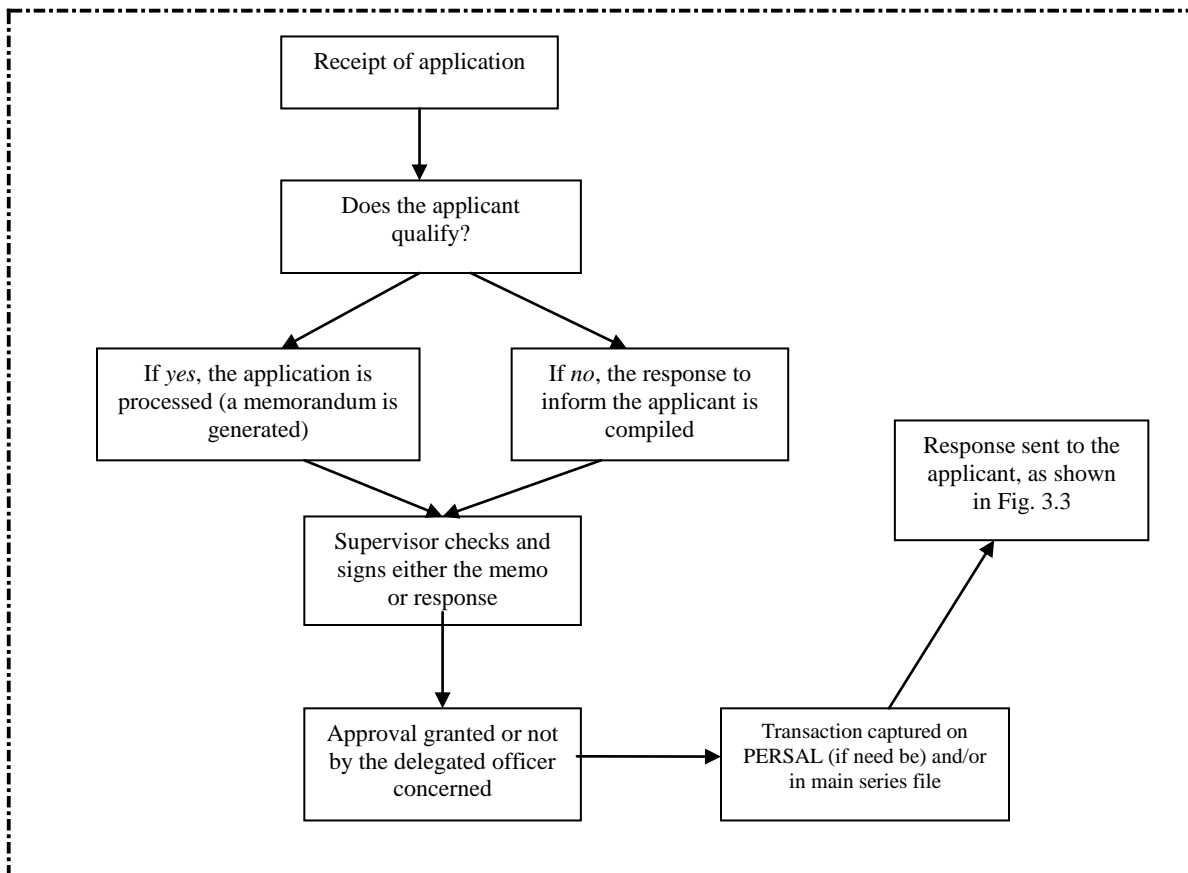


Figure 3.4: Movement of documents from processing to approval at Head Office

Once approval for a resettlement application has been granted, the officer processing the request informs the applicant in writing, and also makes a submission to the Finance Section for payment. Details of the response are sent back to the district or municipality concerned (represented by the arrows pointing downwards in Figure 3.4) in writing. The district or municipality involved keeps a copy of the response in an employee file, with an original copy of the document concerned being sent to the employee. The main series file for resettlement is then returned to the registry housing the file. Supervisors and delegated officials are expected, in the course of the process concerned, to check the correctness of the allocated reference numbers. Figure 3.4 represents the movement of the document from processing to approval at Head Office and/or in the districts, depending on the human resources delegation of authority involved.

The concept ‘capture’ can be defined as the “actions that are taken to secure a record into an effective records management system, where the record can be maintained and made accessible when a need arises” (Shepherd, 2003:4). Records should be captured in such a way that their authenticity, integrity, usability and reliability (i.e. context, content and structure) are maintained. The capturing of records should take the internal needs of the organisation and the needs of employees and customers into consideration (Shepherd, 2003:108). If an employee has been promoted, a memory of such a transaction needs to be captured, with the assumption being made that, once a record has been created, it will be filed. However, the reality currently is that documents are not filed as expected, which is evident in the Auditor General’s Report of 2007 (Department of Agriculture, 2007). For example, the details of a leave form might be captured, but not filed in an employee’s leave file. According to the Model and to the NMIR, proof of such a transaction should be kept in writing in the file, as well as in electronic form on PERSAL. If an employee submits a copy of a marriage certificate to the LDA, the information must be captured and approved on the PERSAL system, and the hard copy must be kept on file. As has already been indicated, there are two systems in use: the paper-based record-keeping system and the electronic PERSAL system.

Capturing transactions or retrieving certain information relating to human resources records management processes in the LDA is both manual and electronic (especially in terms of PERSAL) . The management of the flow of documents from the registry (where records in terms of the staff file plan and personnel files are kept) to other officers (who have been assigned to process requests or applications) in various divisions attached to Human Resources Management and back is performed manually. Incoming mail (correspondence) is sorted, placed in relevant files (consisting of either a personnel or a main series file, depending on the nature of the correspondence concerned), recorded, and referred to the relevant officers for processing. Different kinds of registers are used for location tracking. All files requested are recorded in a register (that is normally called the control register), and requesters sign for the files that they request. Information is also entered onto the audit trail form, which is attached to the inner part of the Z20 file cover, in accordance with the Model (South Africa, 2002:40–41).

Officers can forward files to their supervisors in paper form, or for approval or the authorisation of PERSAL transactions, using a relevant file. Files are returned to the registry within five working days in accordance with the Model, even though the set standard is not adhered to at all times. An extended period for the keeping of such a file must be arranged with registry personnel (South Africa, 2003:45). Registry officers have to physically check which files have not been returned on time using control registers. In the case of outstanding files, written notices are issued to remind the officers concerned to return such files to the registry. The whereabouts of a file is sometimes not known, as the movement of files between offices is not monitored. Any file that has been misplaced is difficult to locate, due to the manual method used for tracking files and documents.

3.4.2.2 Role of registry personnel

In addition to the need for some of the control mechanisms, such as tracking mechanisms, that have already been alluded to in the previous subsection of the current mini-thesis, another challenge to effective record keeping relates to the accessibility of records. Main series files and different types of personnel files are kept in the registry. The following

files are kept for an individual employee: personal; leave; injury on duty; remuneration; discipline; performance management; bursary; and development (South Africa, 2002:37). Some of the files are opened when a need arises; for example, an injury on duty file is only opened for an employee when he/she sustains an injury on the job. Access to personnel and main series files is subject to the control and guidance of applicable regulations (South Africa, 2002:35). Registry personnel also have to ensure that the right employees have access to the right files. Once the files are taken out of the registry, the registry officers cannot monitor what happens to the file. They are expected to ensure the completeness of the information kept in the file at all times in terms of the Model (South Africa, 2002:42). Mechanisms should be put in place to ensure information security. Human resources officers using employee files have to ensure the confidentiality of information kept in the files.

3.4.2.3 Handling, storage and accessing of records

Storage facilities should protect records from unauthorised access, theft, damage, loss, destruction, and natural disaster (South Africa, 2003:26). As explained in Subsection 2.3.2, different types of records exist within an organisation, namely current or active, semi-current, and non-current records (An & Fiao, 2004:33). Current records, which are sometimes referred to as current archives (Bilotto & Guercio, 2003:138), are those records that have been created for a specific purpose and which are regularly used. Examples of such records are the application letter, the memorandum, and all correspondence related to an employee's application for resettlement.

Semi-current records are those records that are still being used, but only at certain intervals, and non-current records are records that are no longer required (South Africa, 2002:14). Current records become semi-current after a certain period. Those semi-current and non-current records that have historical value, and that have met their creator's purposes (An & Fiao, 2004:33–34), are normally kept separately from current records. Non-current records, which are also called terminated or archival records, belong to a file plan that is no longer in use. Semi-current and non-current records of historical value

should be kept in the departmental archives for at least 20 years before being transferred to the provincial archives for permanent storage. The LDA stores its human resources records in a room that also serves as an office for all human resources records officers, due to inadequate storage space (Mnjama, 2003:94).

3.4.2.4 Authority for the retention and disposal of records

The LDA has had to develop and implement a retention schedule, which indicates the storage time of records (i.e. how long specific records should be kept), as not all records can be retained indefinitely (Shepherd, 2003:146). The retention period for records is determined by their nature and value for the organisation. With the exception of records of historical value, which must be permanently kept, the destruction of other records should be authorised and controlled, in order to preserve the confidentiality of such records. Subsection 13 (2) of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act (Act No. 43 of 1996) states that no public records under the control of any governmental body may be transferred to an archive repository, destroyed, erased, or otherwise disposed of without a written disposal authority issued by the National Archivist.

The National Archivist issues three types of disposal authorities, namely standing, limited and general disposal authority (South Africa, 2003:18). *Standing disposal authority* refers to the authority issued for current records (South Africa, 2003:18), which are generated in accordance with the current staff file plan. The authority concerned specifies when records are to be transferred or disposed of. *Limited disposal authority* refers to the authority issued for records that belong to a file plan that is no longer in use, with examples of such records being those that belonged to the former Lebowa and Gazankulu governments. *General disposal authority* refers to the authority that is issued for records common to all South African government departments (South Africa, 2003:18), of which financial and personnel records are pertinent examples.

The LDA lacks an approved retention and disposal programme. Voluminous employee records from the former homelands of Lebowa, Gazankulu and Venda are still kept in the Department, at great expense. Files are stacked along the corridors, and some offices are used as mini-registries. A retention and disposal programme promotes easy retrieval of records, helps to avoid their inadvertent destruction, and helps to eliminate costs associated with the storage and maintenance of unwanted records (Shepherd, 2003:147). At the moment, in the LDA there is no guarantee that records are not being destroyed.

3.5 Conclusion

The LDA consists of headquarters in Polokwane, five district offices that are situated in different geographical regions, and 25 municipalities. Records created as a result of departmental activities in all the institutions are generated in accordance with approved records classification systems, namely the General and Staff File Plans. Records, and the information that they contain, flow within the departmental institutions, and from municipalities, through districts, to Head Office and back. Delegations of human resources functions by the Head of Department determine the extent to which human resources information and records flow throughout the system. Electronic and paper-based human resources records are created, classified, used, captured and stored in all the institutions concerned.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH BY QUESTIONNAIRE INTO HUMAN RESOURCES RECORDS MANAGEMENT PRACTICES: A CASE STUDY

4.1 Introduction

A questionnaire, observations and documentation were used to collect data to determine the extent to which human resources records management practices in the LDA comply with the Model. A questionnaire compiled by DPSA and amended by the researcher was used as the main data collection strategy for gathering data. Observations and documentation were used to complement the data collected by means of the administration of the questionnaire (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:5). The necessary data were collected from records management practitioners, who provided in-depth information on human resources records management practices in the Department.

The current chapter focuses on the presentation and analysis of data collected from various institutions in the Department on human resources records management practices. Records management practices in terms of the key performance areas were scored, and the determined score was compared with the scores obtained on the assessment scorecard for the classification of practices. The research findings were explained and interpreted on the basis of analysed data on four key performance areas. Properly kept and managed human resources records generated as a result of departmental activities promote transparency and accountability, which are the basis for good governance (Shepherd, 2006:6–7; Willis, 2005:90–94). Records management practices, procedures and processes must comply with the regulatory framework for them to support and promote good governance.

4.2 Data collection strategies

The questionnaire (as shown in Table 4.1) constitutes the main data collection instrument that was used to determine whether the effective, efficient and accountable keeping and management of human resources records is being practised in the Department. The

questionnaire was developed by DPSA as a result of pilot projects undertaken in the Northern Province (now known as Limpopo), and in the Eastern Cape, with the assistance of consultants and the National Archives of South Africa in an effort to “restore integrity of human resource records keeping and management” (Northern Province, 2001:1–3; South Africa, 2002:3). The Northern Province was faced with the task of amalgamating the former Gazankulu, Lebowa, Venda and Transvaal Provincial Administration into a single administration. Although officers from various administrations were transferred from one region to another during the restructuring and formation of the new provincial departments in 1994, employee records were not transferred to new stations at the time (South Africa, 2002:8).

No proper management and maintenance of records took place, which resulted in a backlog of piled-up, loose documents that needed to be filed in employee files and in a manual personnel record system that was neither properly updated nor maintained (Northern Province, 2001:2; South Africa, 2002:8–9). Following the introduction of PERSAL, there was also a tendency for departments not to manage paper-based employee records properly (South Africa, 2002:9). For example, leave days granted to officers were captured on PERSAL, but the paper records of such leave days were not filed. A project of restoring adequate record-keeping practices, especially manual employee records, was then undertaken by the DPSA, the Office of the Premier in the Northern Province, various consultants, and the National Archives of South Africa. The questionnaire used in the current study was developed as a diagnostic tool for helping to review the effectiveness and efficiency of the keeping and management of employee records (South Africa, 2002:9).

The questionnaire consists of key performance areas against which human resources records management practices were assessed, namely the policy and institutional framework (see Subsection 4.1.1 of Table 4.1), the integrity of human resources data information (see Subsection 4.1.2 of Table 4.1), the record-keeping system (see Subsection 4.1.3 of Table 4.1), and the storage requirements (see Subsection 4.1.4 of

Table 4.1; South Africa, 2002:48). Each key performance area consists of a number of questions to assess the extent to which human resources records are kept in line with the requirements for that specific key performance area. Most of the questions concerned were objective, requiring either a simple 'yes' or 'no' response regarding an assessment of the conditions prevailing in the offices of the respondents concerned. In subsection 4.1.1 of the questionnaire and in questions B8 to B16 of subsections 4.1.2 to 4.1.4 of the questionnaire, a 'no' meant noncompliance. If a 'no' was chosen as the most appropriate response that described the situation prevailing in an office, a mark was allocated to the response. For example, a 'no' to Question D1 would be allocated a 1, whereas a 'no' to Question C would be allocated a score of 3. A high value for the total score for each key performance area showed a high level of noncompliance with the keeping and management of records in line with the key performance area.

In Subsection 4.1.2 of the questionnaire, a score was allocated for responses to questions B1 to B7, on the basis of findings relating to the auditing of employee files. If, upon audit, it was discovered that 21% to 40% of the files contained certified copies of formal qualifications, a score of 4 was allocated, but if none (0%) of the files contained such documents, a higher score of 6 was allocated to the answer. The allocation of a high score to each answer showed a high degree of noncompliance in terms of the key performance area. The structured questionnaire ensured that the same questions were presented and interpreted in the same way by all the participants in the study, thus providing consistency in data collection (Welman & Kruger, 2001:160). Although the questionnaire was developed by DPSA, with the aim of determining the effectiveness of paper-based human resources records management practices (South Africa, 2002:48–57), it has been amended by the researcher to include collections of data on electronic human resources records as well (see Questions B8 to B16 in Subsection 4.1.2 in Table 4.1 below). A literature review reveals that no study has yet been conducted in which the questionnaire was used to assess records management practices. The Model was found, through discussions held with one of the project participants in Limpopo, to have been developed by consultants and human resources managers who participated in the project. The audit

tool used in the Limpopo province to assess records management practices included a few questions from the Model.

Table 4.1: Assessment tool (Amended from South Africa: 2002: 50-56)

Subsection 4.1.1 Policy Assessment:					
To ensure that the keeping and management of paper-based and electronic employee records are in line with the policy directives and institutional framework.					
Ref.	Assessment Criteria	Yes	No	Limited	Score
A1	Do you have a specific written policy for the keeping and management of all employee paper-based and electronic records?	0	2	N/A	
A2	Is the policy referred to in A1, in line with and/or does it make provision for indicators, as included in the following legislation, regulations and policies:				
	A2/1 Constitution of the Republic	0	2	N/A	
	A2/2 Promotion of Access to Information	0	2	N/A	
	A2/3 National Archives of South Africa	0	2	N/A	
	A2/4 National Archives Instructions	0	2	N/A	
	A2/5 White Paper on Human Resource Management	0	2	N/A	
	A2/6 Public Service Act	0	2	N/A	
	A2/7 Public Service Regulations	0	2	N/A	
	A2/8 National Minimum Information Requirements	0	2	N/A	
	A2/9 Integrity of the appointment Process	0	2	N/A	
	A2/10 Labour Relations Act	0	2	N/A	
	A2/11 Basic Conditions of Employment Act	0	2	N/A	
	A2/12 Resolutions of the Public Service Bargaining Council	0	2	N/A	
A3	Is there a dedicated records manager (a sub-record manager) who takes specific responsibility for the keeping and management of paper-based employee records?	0	2	N/A	
A4	Do you have a written procedure manual for the keeping and management of all employee paper-based and electronic records?	0	2	N/A	
A5	Is the policy clear on the roles of the following role-players:				
	A5/1 National Departments (Archives, DPSA, National Treasury)	0	2	N/A	
	A5/2 Provincial Treasury	0	2	N/A	
	A5/3 Office of the Premier	0	2	N/A	
	A5/4 Human Resource Units in the Department	0	2	N/A	
	A5/5 Line managers in the Department	0	2	N/A	
	A5/6 Employees	0	2	N/A	
	A5/7 Internal audits units	0	2	N/A	
A6	Are delegations in place to support sound keeping and management of employee paper-based and electronic records?	0	2	N/A	
A7	Do the procedures for paper-based employee records include clarity on the flow of documents between employer, line	0	2	N/A	

	manager and human resources units?				
Ref.	Assessment Criteria	0	2	N/A	Score
A8	Are line managers fully aware of the human resources paper-based and electronic record-keeping policy and procedures?	0	2	N/A	
A9	Do you, on a regular basis, inform line managers and employees of their roles, and share the policy document with them?	0	2	N/A	
A10	Do line managers fulfil their responsibilities in terms of orientating employees to their obligations regarding paper-based and electronic human resources records?	0	2	1	
A11	Are employees keeping to their obligations in terms of the completion and submission of paper-based and electronic human resources records?	0	2	1	
A12	Do the policy statement and supportive processes include information on the appointment of staff that is validated?	0	2	N/A	
A13	Do you have guidelines in the policy on the kind of information/documents to be kept on each file?	0	2	N/A	
A14	If yes, are these in line with the NMIR?	0	2	1	
A15	Are there any service standards for the keeping and management of paper-based and electronic employee records?	0	2	N/A	
A16	If you answered 'yes' to A15, are the service standards monitored?	0	2	1	
A17	If you answered 'yes' to A16, do you take corrective actions if standards are not adhered to?	0	2	1	
A18	If you answered 'yes' to A17, do the corrective measures include training?	0	2	1	
A19	If you answered 'yes' to A18, do corrective actions include disciplinary actions?	0	2	1	
A20	Is there a service-level agreement between line managers and the human resources unit in terms of roles and responsibilities regarding the keeping and management of paper-based and electronic employee records?	0	2	N/A	

Total Score

Subsection 4.1.2 Integrity of paper-based employee records:

To ensure that paper-based employee and electronic records provide accountable records of all human resources transactions.

Name of District/Office:

Number of employees in the District:

Ref.		No.	% of total number of employees	Score
B1	Adherence of personal files to NMIR:			
	B1/1 How many contain application forms (Z83s)?			
	B1/2 How many contain certified copies of identity documents?			

	B1/3	How many contain information regarding union membership?				
	B1/4	How many contain appointment letters?				
	B1/5	For how many of the staff do the details on the appointment letter correspond with the details captured on PERSAL?				
B2	Adherence to training and development requirements (on personal or development files):					
	B2/1	How many contain certified copies of formal qualifications?				
	B2/2	How many contain certified copies of courses attended during the last five years?				
	B2/3	How many of the qualifications have been verified?				
B3	Adherence to leave:					
	B3/1	How many leave files contain certificates and/or documents validating the calculated capped leave?				
	B3/2	How many of the staff who have been employed in the public service for at least five years have less than ten leave forms filed on the file?				
B4	How many employees have personal files, keeping in mind that temporary files cannot be regarded as personal files?					
B5	How many employees have leave files, keeping in mind that temporary files cannot be regarded as leave files?					
B6	How many personal files contain comprehensive appointment documents?					
B7	How many personal files contain certified copies of identity documents?					
Ref.	Assessment Criteria		Yes	No	Limited	Score
B8	Are qualifications in B2/1 and courses in B2/2 captured on PERSAL?		0	2	1	
B9	Is biographical information (i.e. surname, initials, first names, date of birth, marital status, details of spouse and dependants) captured on PERSAL in the same way as it appears on the ID document in the file?		0	2	1	
B10	B10/1	Is there paper-based and electronic record of an approved establishment?	0	2	1	
	B10/2	Does the approved establishment captured on PERSAL the same as the copy kept in file?	0	2	1	
	B10/3	How often is electronic record of establishment updated?	0	2	1	
	B10/4	Are job evaluation results captured on PERSAL?	0	2	1	
B11	Are leave records on PERSAL available from the leave files, and vice versa?		0	2	1	
B12	Is the employee employment history on PERSAL also available from the files, and vice versa?		0	2	1	

Ref.	Assessment Criteria	Days	Weeks	Months	Score	
B13	What is the average time lapse between the approval of an employee's leave and the capturing on PERSAL of the leave details?	0	1	2		
B14	What is the average time lapse between the capturing and approval of leave details on PERSAL?	0	1	2		
B15	What is the average time lapse between the approval of a transfer and capturing of details of the transfer on PERSAL?	0	1	2		
B16	What is the average time lapse between the actual appointment of new staff and the effecting of their salaries on PERSAL?	0	1	2		
Total score¹						
Subsection 4.1.3 Record keeping:						
To ensure effective, efficient and accountable keeping of paper-based employee records.						
Ref.	Assessment Criteria	Yes	Seldom	Often	No	Total
C1	Are there proper arrangements in place regarding who is authorised to request employee files?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C2	Does the record-filing system make it easy to find a file?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C3	Is it easy to retrieve records?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C4	Are shelves visibly numbered?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C5	Are all loose folios on file numbered?	0	1	2	3	
C6	Do you keep records of the number of folios on a file?	0	1	2	3	
C7	Are all loose forms filed on a daily basis?	0	1	2	3	
C8	Are there piles of loose forms (backlogs) not yet filed?	3	2	1	0	
C9	Do you have negative external audit findings indicating that not all the relevant documents were on the file of an employee?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C10	Does the record-keeping system effectively track when documents are removed from a file?	0	1	2	3	
C11	Does the record-keeping system effectively track when files are taken from the registry?	0	1	2	3	
C12	Does the record-keeping system effectively track the number of folios on file?	0	1	2	3	
C13	Does the record-keeping system effectively track the filling of new documents on file?	0	1	2	3	
C14	Does the record-keeping system effectively maintain tracking aids to locate files?	0	1	2	3	
C15	Does the record-keeping system effectively maintain tracking aids to retrieve records?	0	1	2	3	
C16	Is there protection against unauthorised viewing, or the destruction of records?	0	1	2	3	

¹ **Rating Scale to apply:** 0% = 6 points; 1% – 20% = 5 points; 21% – 40% = 4 points; 41% – 60% = 3 points; 61% – 80% = 2 points; 81% – 100% = 1 point.

C17	Are appropriate access controls assigned to users of records?	0	1	2	3	
C18	Does the record system regulate who is permitted to access records, and under what circumstances such records can be accessed?	0	1	2	3	
C19	Does the record-keeping system track when records are transferred to intermediate storage in the Department?	0	1	2	3	
C20	Does the record-keeping system provide audit trails?	0	1	2	3	
C21	Does the record-keeping system provide clear links to the files?	0	1	2	3	
C22	Does the record-keeping system track when documents are removed for destruction?	0	1	2	3	
C23	Does the system record what records have been transferred, as well as when and how?	0	1	2	3	
C24	Do you report missing files?	0	1	2	3	
C25	Do you report missing folios?	0	1	2	3	
C26	Is there compliance with the archival instructions?	0	1	2	3	
C27	Can records be transferred without authorised written approval?	0	1	2	3	
C28	Is there any monitoring system that ensures that record keeping complies with the legislation and regulations related to disposal?	0	1	2	3	
C29	Is the staff aware of transfer requirements?	0	?	N/A	3	
C30	Can the record system easily identify records that are eligible for transfer?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C31	Can the record system easily identify records that are eligible for destruction?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C32	Is there a systematic disposal programme?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C33	Is there a record of files or documents that have been destroyed?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C34	Can records be destroyed without the written approval of an authorised person?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C35	Are there many closed files in the registry of staff whose services were terminated more than three years ago?	0	N/A	N/A	3	

Total Score

Subsection 4.1.4 Storage Facilities:

To ensure appropriate storage conditions for the protection, accessibility and management of files in a cost-effective, but secure, manner.

Ref.	Assessment Criteria	Yes	No	Score	
D1	Is there an adequate (large enough) storage facility for files?	0	1		
D2	Does the storage facility comply with the following minimum standards:				
	D2/1	Adequate shelving	0	1	
	D2/2	Adequate work space	0	1	
	D2/3	Lock-up facilities	0	1	
	D2/4	Smoke detector	0	1	
	D2/5	Fire extinguisher	0	1	
	D2/6	Locks on main doors	0	1	

	D2/7	Air-conditioner	0	1	
	D2/8	Clean and tidy	0	1	
	D2/9	Pest-free	0	1	
	D2/10	Adequate filing cabinets	0	1	
	D2/11	Bars on windows	0	1	
	D2/12	Is there a separating counter to prevent the entry of unauthorised visitors?	0	1	
	D2/13	Are there suitable storage facilities for closed files?	0	1	
	D2/14	Are there suitable storage facilities for archive files?	0	1	
	D2/15	Are paper records identified and protected against disaster?	0	1	
	D2/16	In the event of fire, floods, or other natural disasters, are there procedures for safeguarding records storage areas in the building?	0	1	
	D2/17	Are regular inspections held of the security requirements?	0	1	
	D2/18	Are fire inspections and drill exercises held regularly?	0	1	
	D2/19	Is there sufficient stationery in the registry?	0	1	
Total Score					

Source: Adapted from South Africa, 2002:50–56.

4.3 Procedure for data collection

Questionnaires were distributed to the participants in the study by the researcher, who is also a human resources records practitioner in the Department. The delivery of the questionnaire by the researcher encouraged the respondents to return the questionnaires and also helped to establish rapport (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:6). Time frames for the submission of completely filled questionnaires were negotiated and agreed on with the participants. The participants were given a period of three weeks in which to complete the questionnaire. Three weeks was deemed appropriate for the completion of the questionnaires, since all the participants who were involved in the study were also involved in the keeping and management of human resources records in the Department. Of the questionnaires that were submitted earlier in the study, 70% were returned two months later, with the remaining 8 out of the 28 questionnaires submitted being returned three months later, after several follow-ups were made.

Documents such as relevant departmental policies, procedure manuals, human resources management review reports issued by the Department of Provincial Treasury, audit and inspection reports were also consulted. Observations were also used during the collection

of data on the four key performance areas. Explanations from various participants were requested especially on the interpretation and the extent of implementation of documents collected. Documents and observations complemented the data gathered by means of the questionnaire. The methods concerned have been used in various other studies (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:5–6), even though the difference lies in the way in which the methods were combined. Use of the standardised questionnaires and documents was intended to help cross-validate the data sources and methods employed (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:5–6; Schumacher & Macmillan, 1993:498).

4.4 Participants in the study

Purposeful sampling, a non-probability sampling technique, was used to select participants for the study (Welman & Kruger, 2001:46). Such sampling was used so as to obtain in-depth information about the records management practices followed (Welman & Kruger, 2001:63). Human resources records management personnel from human resources units at all levels (i.e. municipality, district and Head Office) participated in the study, as they had in-depth information about human resources records management practices. The officers of each institution, namely district, municipality and Head Office, completed the questionnaire.

In all, 32 records management practitioners (consisting of 26 records management practitioners, each from a different municipality, as well as 5 from the districts, and 1 from Head Office) took part in the study. Human resources records management practices at different levels in the Department were assessed against the Model (South Africa, 2002:48–59).

4.5 Ethical considerations

In addition to obtaining permission to conduct the study in the LDA (See Appendix 1), the researcher also obtained the consent of each of the participants to participate in the study (See Appendix 2). The researcher informed the participants about the purpose of

the study, how the questionnaire was to be used, the importance of their participation, and the level of confidentiality provided.

4.6 Presentation of collected data

Of the 32 questionnaires that were distributed, 28 were returned, which represented a return rate of 87.5%. Of the 28 returned questionnaires, 4 were not completely filled in, 3 were not filled in at all, so that 21, indicating a 75% response rate, were completely filled in and used in the analysis of data. Of the 21 questionnaires used in the data analysis, 15 questionnaires received from the municipalities showed, in response to Subsection 4.1.2 of the questionnaire, that the records for employees attached to the municipalities were kept in the districts, and also that PERSAL was not available at the municipalities concerned. The response rate attained is at least partly due to the fact that the researcher lacked control over the conditions under which the questionnaire was completed, The response rate was lower than expected, despite the respondents being allowed to complete the questionnaire at their own convenience (Welman & Kruger, 2001:147). All six questionnaires disqualified were from municipalities attached to two districts.

4.7 Analysis of data

Responses to questions in terms of the four key performance areas in each office were analysed by means of completing the different sections of the assessment scorecard (See Table 4.2 below).

4.7.1 Data collected and the use of the assessment scorecard

The completed questionnaires received from 15 municipalities, 5 districts and 1 Head Office provided the main data collected in the study. Also involved in the study were 12 officers working in various record-keeping offices (two from Madzivhandila Agricultural College; two from Mara Research Station; two from Tlokweng Research Station; two from Tompi Seleka Agricultural College; two from the Laboratories; and two from the Provincial Office). Agricultural Colleges, Research Stations and laboratories mentioned formed part of Head Office.

Each of the four key performance areas in the questionnaire were covered by the asking of structured questions. The choice of an answer that best described the situation in the office corresponded to a particular score. All the questions in each key result area were scored, after which a total score was determined by adding all the scores corresponding to the choices made by respondents together. The total scores for all key performance areas for an office were determined using the completed questionnaire from each office (i.e. municipality, district or Head Office). The total scores for the various key performance areas were then indicated in Column 2 of Table 4.2, after the scores from Subsection 4.1.1 to Subsection 4.1.4 of the questionnaire were analysed. The analysed data were filled in Column 2 of the assessment scorecard. All data in columns 3, 4 and 5 of the scorecard formed the basis on which institutional performance in terms of records management practices was analysed.

Table 4.2: Assessment outcomes (taken from South Africa, 2002:57)

Measurement in terms of areas that require interventions	Scores (Column 2)	Compliance	Non-compliance	Partial compliance
Policy		0	8+	2–7
Integrity of data		16	32+	16–32
Effective and efficient registry system		0	24+	1–24
Infrastructure		0	1+	

The procedure described in the preceding paragraphs was used to determine the total scores for each key result area at Head Office, and in the five districts and 15 municipalities, A summary of the results obtained is indicated in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Scores for key performance areas for 1 Head Office, 5 districts and 15 municipalities

Head Office and Districts	Scores for the four different key performance areas			
	Policy	Integrity of data	Effective and efficient registry system	Infrastructure
1. Head Office	16	24	30	3
2. Waterberg	12	26	26	7
3. Vhembe	10	29	24	6
4. Mopani	18	30	16	7
5. Sekhukhune	18	27	24	6
6. Capricorn	17	30	24	7
Municipalities	Policy	Integrity of data	Effective and efficient registry system	Infrastructure
1. Aganang	21		30	8
2. Lepelle-Nkumpi	23		30	11
3. Molemole	25		27	9
4. Polokwane	19		32	8
5. Blouberg	20		25	9
6. Tubatse	24		22	10
7. Fetakgomo	22		29	10
8. Marble Hall	18		31	7
9. Groblersdal	19		33	8
10. Mutale	24		12	9
11. Musina	8		25	6
12. Makhado	18		33	13
13. Ba Phalaborwa	26		36	11
14. Bela-Bela	14		27	8
15. Mogalakwena	12		28	9

Let the following example be made. Suppose the total score for a key result area for a policy was 8, as in the case of Musina Municipality (See Table 4.4). That score meant that all questions, A1 to A20, for Subsection 4.1.1 of the questionnaire were assigned a score corresponding to the response which best described the situation in the office concerned. All the scores were then added up for all the questions, with a total score of eight (8) being found. The number 8 was then written in the column referred to in Table 4.2 (i.e. in column 2 for the scores), which can be represented diagrammatically, as in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.4: Policy assessment outcome for Musina Municipality

Measurement in terms of areas that require interventions	Scores	Compliance	Non-compliance	Partial compliance
Policy	8	0	8+	2–7

All the values shown in Table 4.2 above represent the scores determined from the responses to the questionnaire by Head Office, a district or municipality. The responses related to questions on policy, the integrity of data, the efficiency and effectiveness of the registry system, and the infrastructure.

4.7.2 The use of the scorecard in the analysis of data

The assessment scorecard in Table 4.2 was the main tool used to analyse collected data. According to the assessment scorecard, a score of 8 or more for an assessment of policy meant noncompliance, with a score between 2 and 7 meaning partial compliance. In regards to the integrity of data, a score less than, or equal to, 16 meant compliance, with a score between 16 and 32 meaning partial compliance, and a score from 32 upwards meaning noncompliance. In assessing the efficiency and effectiveness of the registry system, a score of 0 meant compliance, with values from 1 to 24 meaning partial

compliance, and a score of 24 and higher meaning noncompliance. For the assessment of infrastructure, 0 meant compliance, and a score of 1 or higher meant noncompliance.

The example quoted in the preceding paragraphs of Subsection 4.7.1 will be used to illustrate how the scorecard was used in the analysis of the collected data. The value of 8 in Column 2 of Table 4.3, which represented the extent of compliance of records management practices in Musina Municipality with the set policy, was obtained on the basis of responses to all questions in Subsection 4.1.1 of the questionnaire. The value of 8 was then compared to the values indicated in columns 3, 4 and 5 of Table 4.2 in respect of the proper classification of office practice. In general, the determined value, which was filled in column 2 for a key result area, was compared with the values provided in columns 3, 4 and 5 in Table 4.2 to indicate the interpretation and meaning of the determined value, as explained in the previous paragraph. A total score of 8 or more meant noncompliance (see Column 4 of Table 4.1), and a score of 2 to 7 (see Column 5 of Table 4.1) meant partial compliance, whereas a score of 0 meant compliance. In assessing the extent to which the records management practices of Musina Municipality adhered to the set policy, it was established that the office did not comply, in terms of the keeping and management of paper-based employee records, with the set policy directives and institutional framework (South Africa, 2001:50), since the total score was found to be eight.

If the score was 10 on policy, it meant noncompliance with the policy. If the score was 6, then partial compliance had been achieved, but a score of 0 meant that the records management practices in Musina Municipality complied with the set policy. If the same office were assessed on the effectiveness and the efficiency of the registry system (see Subsection 4.1.3 of the questionnaire) and a score of 8 was assigned, the score assigned indicated partial compliance. It meant that the paper-based and electronic records of human resources records did not provide accountable records of all human resources transactions at all times. In terms of Table 4.1, any office that scored 1 to 24 in response to the assessment of the effectiveness and efficiency of the registry system showed partial

compliance. No two scores for different key performance areas meant the same thing. All the records management practices in offices that showed compliance, noncompliance and/or partial compliance on specific key performance areas were identified on the basis of the comparison of the total scores found for each key result area in an office to the values in columns 3, 4 and 5 of the assessment outcome scorecard (see Table 4.1). No score was determined for the integrity of employee records in Musina Municipality, due to its lack of access to PERSAL. A complete representation of the data collected from Musina Municipality is diagrammatically represented in Table 4.4 below.

Table 4.5: Assessment outcomes for Musina Municipality

Measurement in terms of areas requiring intervention	Scores (Column 2)	Compliance	Non-compliance	Partial compliance
Policy	8	0	8+	2–7
Effective and efficient registry system	25	0	24+	1–24
Infrastructure	6	0	1+	

Head Office and all five districts, namely Capricorn, Waterberg, Sekhukhune, Mopani and Vhembe, responded to questions in all the four key performance areas on the questionnaire, whereas the municipalities responded to questions in terms of the three key performance areas, namely policy, effective and efficient registry system, and infrastructure. The municipalities concerned were found to lack access to the electronic human resources records management system, PERSAL. The capturing, approval and authorisation of human resources records for all the officers attached to municipalities, consequently, was and is being done at district level.

4.8 Discussion and interpretation of research findings

The findings of the study are explained and interpreted in terms of the four key performance areas, namely policy, the integrity of records, the effective and efficient registry system, and the storage system. The total scores for each key performance area were determined by adding together all the scores allocated in terms of responses to questions in that key performance area in relation to the Head Office, districts and municipalities, which were then compared against the scores in Table 4.3 for a proper classification of records management practices.

4.8.1 Policy assessment

The study investigated whether the keeping and management of employee records was in line with the policy directives and the institutional framework. In terms of the results, as indicated in column 2 of Table 4.3, Head Office, districts and municipalities offices received scores ranging from 8 to 26, which, in terms of the assessment outcomes scorecard (i.e. Table 4.1), showed noncompliance. A graphical representation of data analysed in terms of policy, as reflected in Table 4.3, is given in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 below.

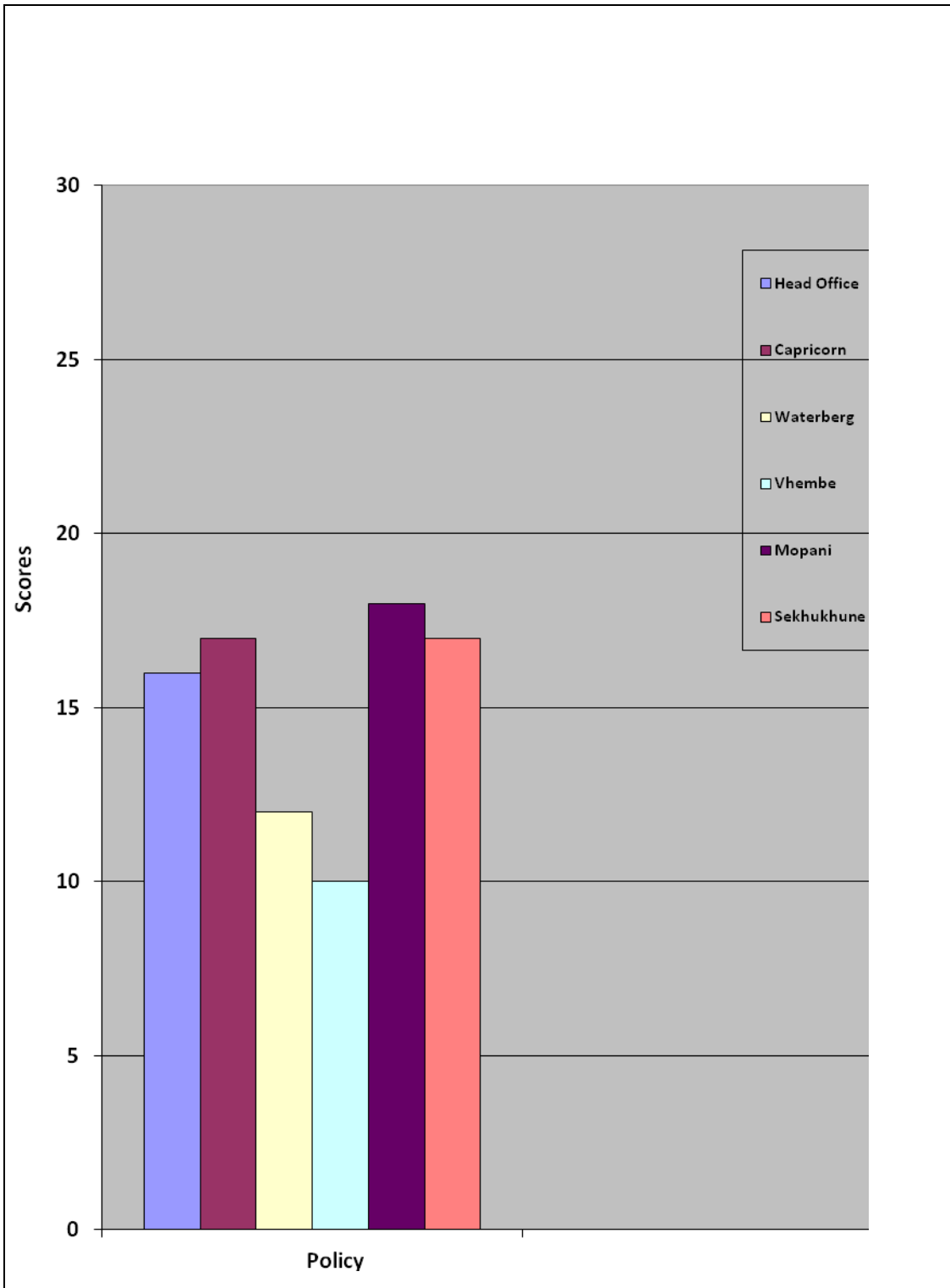


Figure 4.1: Comparison of one Head Office and five districts in terms of policy

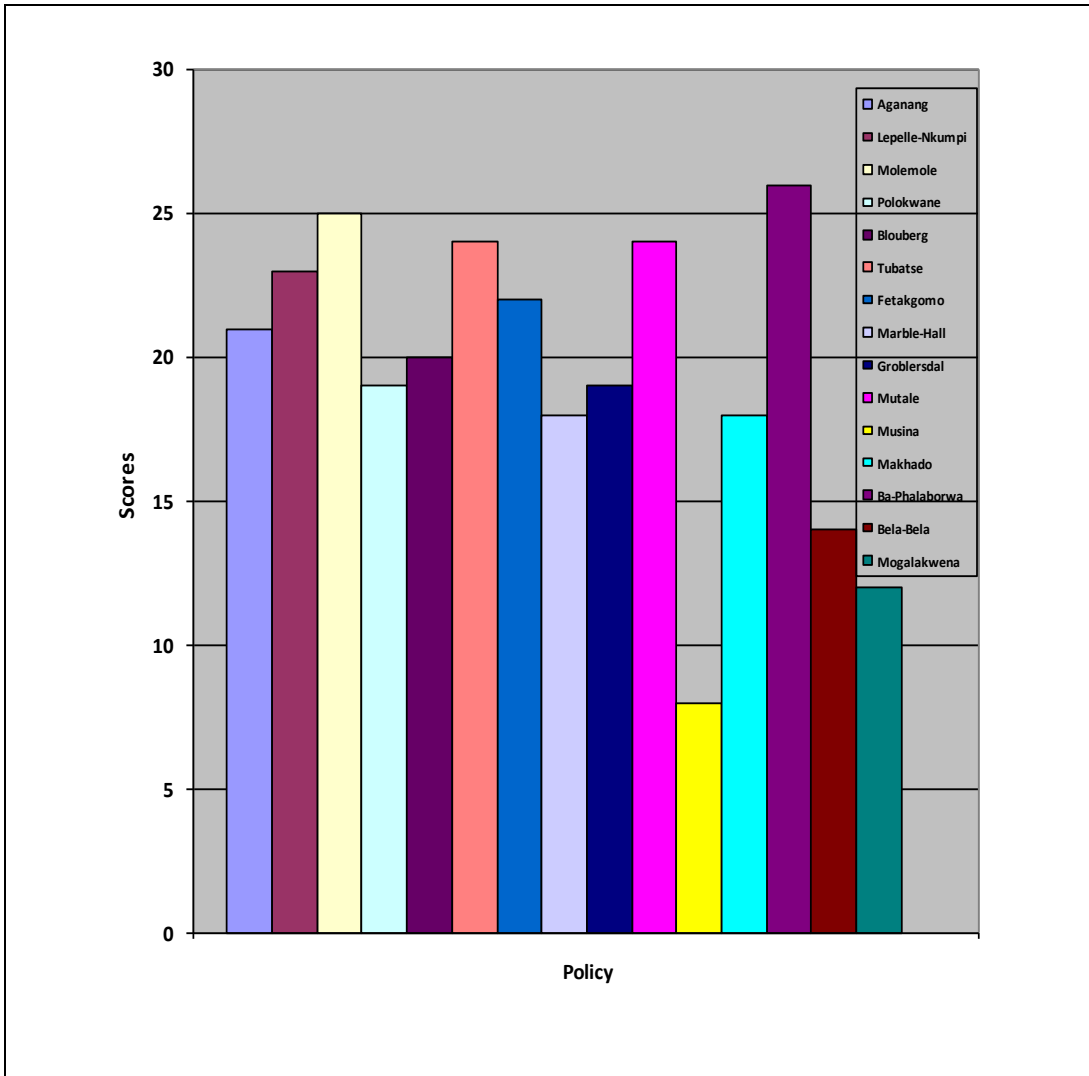


Figure 4.2: Comparison of municipalities in terms of policy

The degree of noncompliance of records management practices with the set policy varied, with the scoring of Head Office and the districts ranging from 10 to 18, whereas the municipalities showed a higher degree of noncompliance, ranging from 8 to 26 (see figures 4.1 and 4.2). Vhembe District performed the best of all districts, as well as better than Head Office. Out of 15 municipalities, 7 obtained scores less than 20, which was the trend for the districts and Head Office. The higher degree of noncompliance noted by the municipalities might have been due to the fact that they were being serviced by the districts, which also showed noncompliance. However, the degree of compliance attained by Musina and Mogalakwena municipalities regarding their records management

practices even surpassed that of the districts and the Head Office. Additional investigation is required into the establishment of records management practices, the capacity of records management staff, and other factors that are responsible for the relatively better performance of the municipalities concerned, in terms of the set policy. The general performance of districts and their municipalities in terms of policy is shown in Figures 4.3 to 4.7.

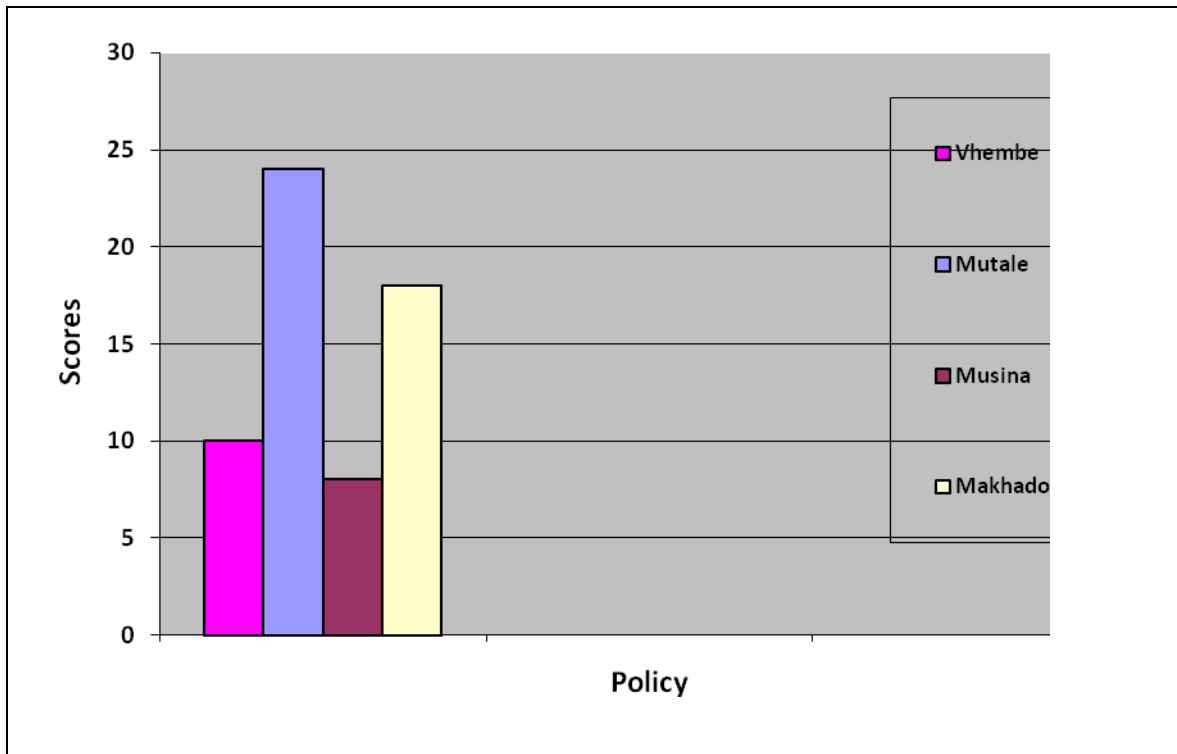


Figure 4.3: Comparison of the performance of Vhembe District and its municipalities in terms of the set policy

The performance of Musina was found to be better than that of Vhembe District and the two municipalities in terms of the set policy.

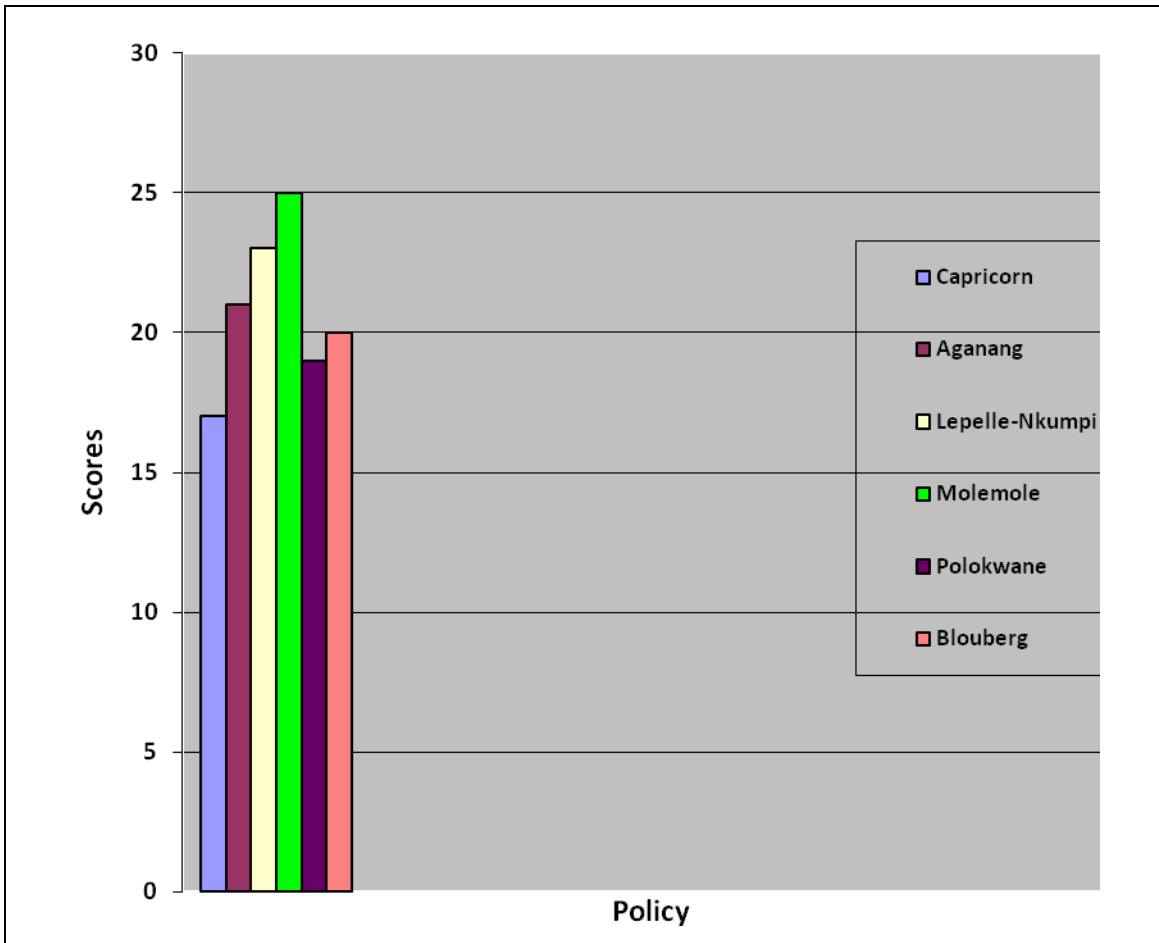


Figure 4.4: Comparison of the performance of Capricorn District and its municipalities in terms of policy

Even though Capricorn District and its municipalities showed noncompliance with policy directives, they were found to perform better than the five municipalities. The assessment is based on the scores assigned, as illustrated in Figure 4.4 above.

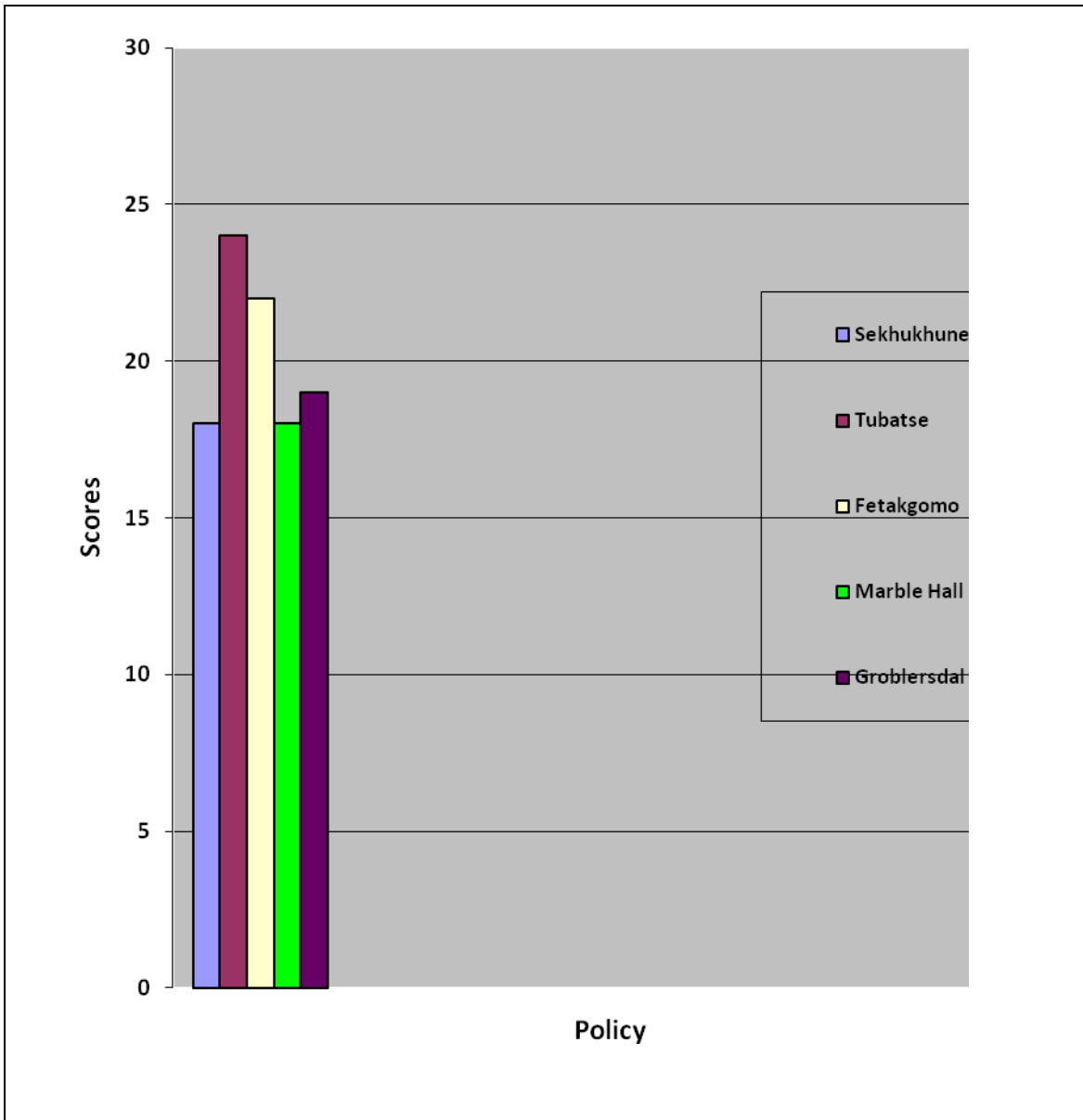


Figure 4.5: Comparison of the performance of Sekhukhune District and its municipalities in terms of the set policy

Sekhukhune District and attached municipalities showed noncompliance with policy, though the District and Marble Hall performed better in terms of the set policy than did the rest of the municipalities.

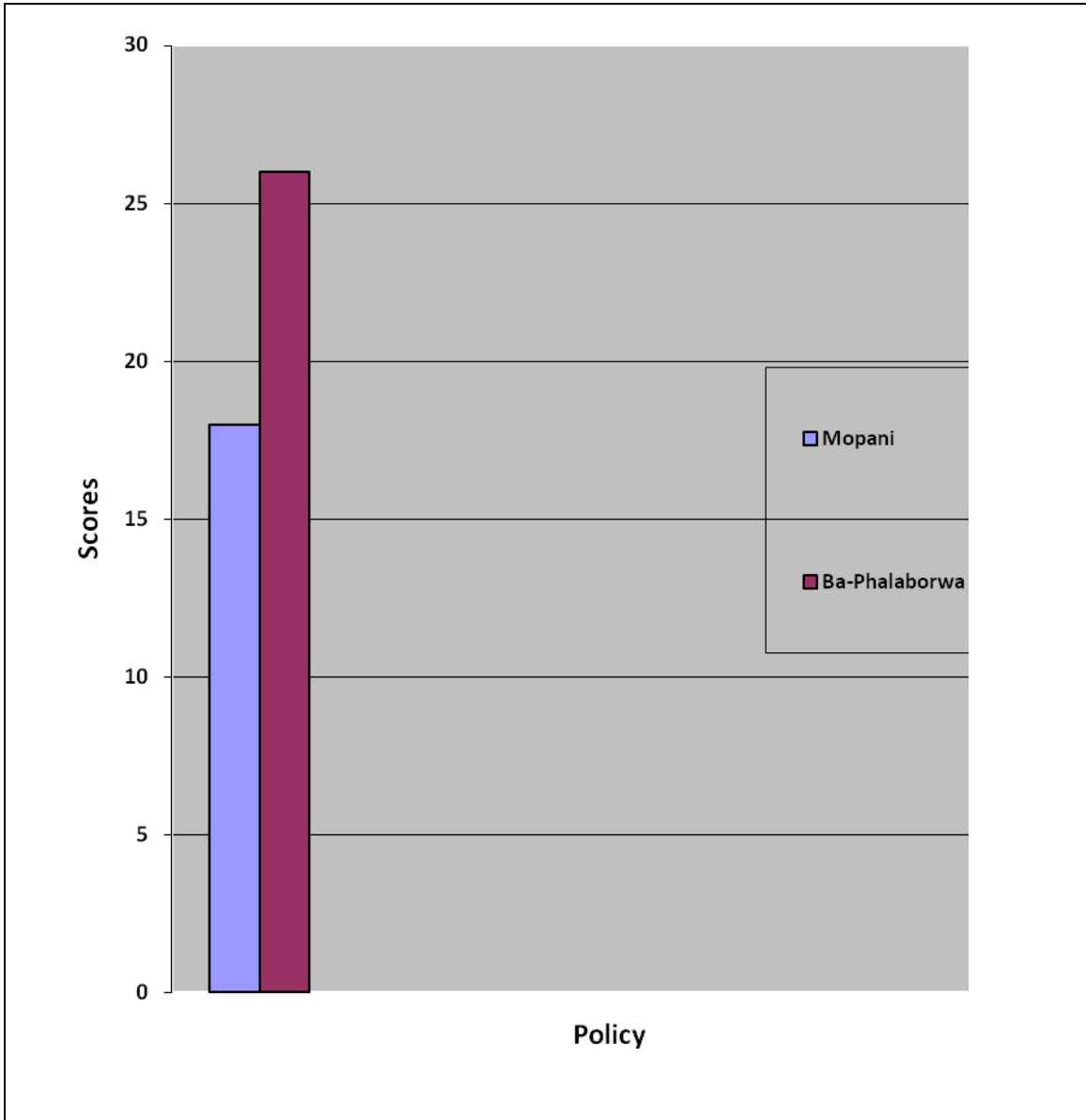


Figure 4.6: Comparison of the performance of Mopani District and its municipality in terms of the set policy

Mopani District performed better than Ba-Phalaborwa Municipality (with the other three municipalities in the District not responding to the questionnaire), even though they both showed a varied degree of noncompliance.

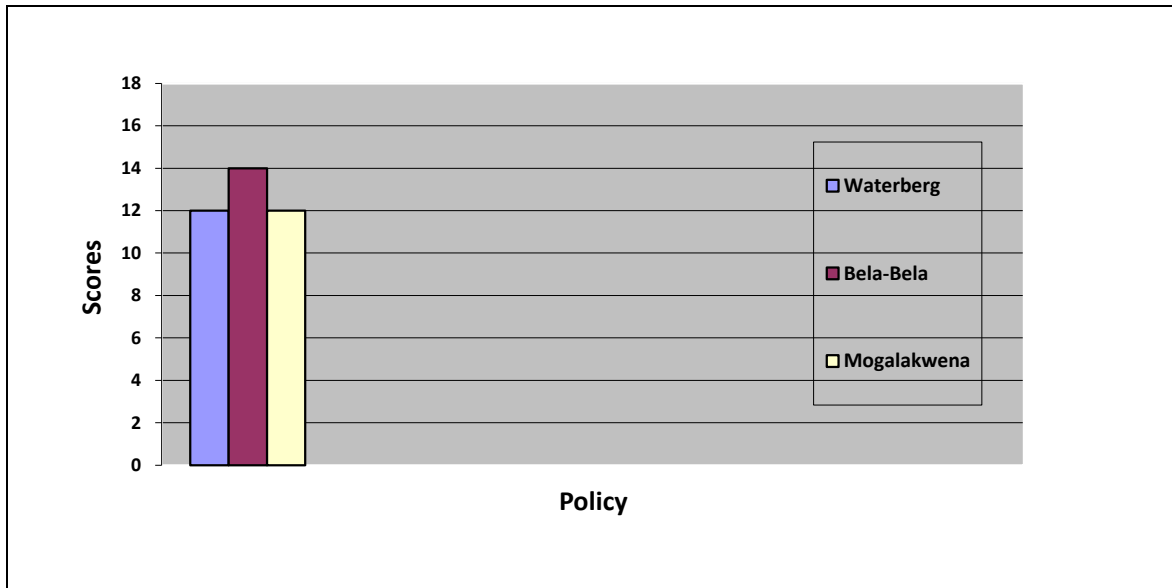


Figure 4.7: Comparison of the performance of Waterberg District and its municipalities in relation to the set policy

Waterberg District and Mogalakwena showed similar performance on policy, whereas Bela-Bela showed a high degree of noncompliance with its records management practices in relation to the set policy.

A comparison of the performance of municipalities in the same district yielded the following results:

- Mopani and Capricorn performed better than the municipalities attached to each district, even though the former showed some degree of noncompliance.
- Two districts, Sekhukhune and Waterberg, showed better performance, which is similar to that of one of the municipalities in the same district.
- Musina Municipality performed better than Vhembe District in terms of policy.

Of the participants, 85.7% (18 out of 21) in the study, with the exception of Head Office and 3 districts, indicated the following:

- No delegations had been made to support the management of human resources records.

- There was no clarity on the flow of documents between employer, line manager and human resources units.
- No provisions had been made with regard to the integrity of the appointment process.
- No service-level agreement existed between the line managers and the human resources units in terms of roles and responsibilities for managing the records.

The research finding that indicates the nonexistence of roles and responsibilities implies that records are not being managed properly from creation, which contravenes Section 3 of the *Departmental Records Management Policy* (Department of Agriculture, 2006:2) that sets the roles and responsibilities of all employees, supervisors, and records management units, heads of districts, the Head of Department, and the managers concerned. The research findings might mean that the records management officers in the LDA are unaware of the existence of a policy or, if aware, do not properly implement it.

4.8.2 Integrity of employee records

An investigation was conducted to establish the extent to which paper-based and electronic employee records provide accountable records of all human resources transactions in the LDA. It was found that employee records for officers attached to municipalities are kept by the district offices that have PERSAL available. Municipalities lacked access to an electronic system for managing records, so that the comparison of study findings includes consideration of Head Office and the districts alone.

The respondents' scores from the districts and Head Office range from 24 to 30 in regards to the integrity of employee records, which, in terms of the Model, shows partial compliance. Although the LDA generally at least partially complies with the terms set for record keeping in respect of the employee files, with Head Office performing slightly better than do all the districts (see Figure 4.8), the updating of data on PERSAL still requires attention.

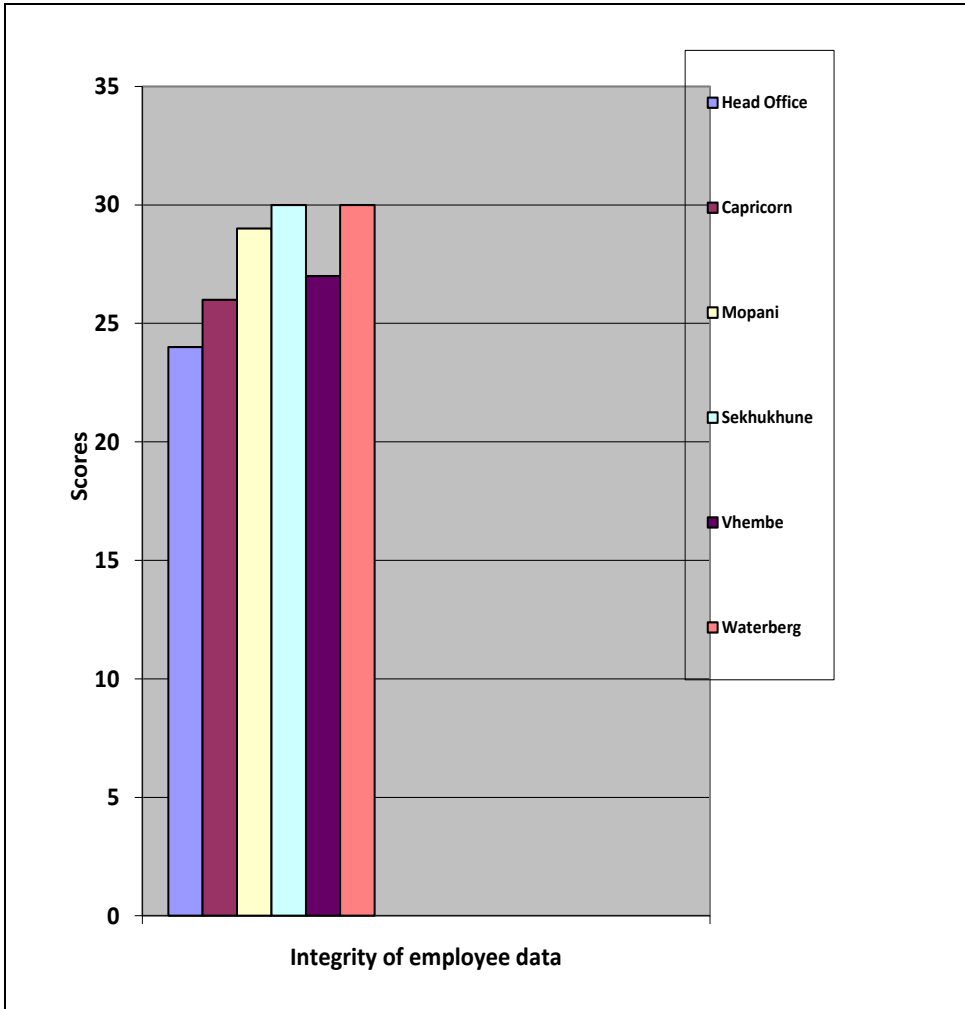


Figure 4.8: Comparison of one Head Office and five Districts in terms of the integrity of employee data

Head Office was found to perform better than did all five districts as regards the comparing of scores on the integrity of employee data. Of the respondents, 66.7% (i.e. four respondents out of the six offices concerned, namely the Head Office and 5 districts) indicated that the details of leave, transfers and appointments were captured and approved within a matter of days on PERSAL, whereas 33.3% indicated that the capturing of such details was done within a matter of weeks. Of the respondents, 66.7% of those attached to Head Office and the districts (i.e. four out of six respondents) indicated that no measures were in place to correct noncompliance with service standards

(i.e. in terms of policy assessment), which explained why their capturing of data on PERSAL did not comply with service standards. For the LDA to rely on the keeping of complete and accurate human resources records, the transactions related to human resources matters must regularly be captured and updated (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:6). The issue of files missing the necessary supporting documents has been raised on a number of occasions in the audit reports. Auditor General (Department of Agriculture, 2007) reports have indicated that, in some instances, leave forms captured on PERSAL have been found not to be available on file, and leave forms found on file have not been captured on PERSAL. Of the respondents, 66.7% (four out of six respondents from the Head Office and districts) indicated that no information regarding union membership was kept in the personal files of the employees concerned.

Of the respondents, 83.3% (i.e. five of six respondents from the districts and Head Office) also indicated that the approved establishment details on PERSAL and on hard copy were not the same, and that it took months to update the establishment and job evaluation results on the electronic system. The poor quality of human resources records on PERSAL was also highlighted by the then Minister of Public Administration, Geraldine Fraser-Moleketi, in a post-Lekgotla media briefing that was held on 5 August 2008 (South Africa, 2008). The above-mentioned respondents also indicated that few employee qualifications had been verified, with such a high percentage showing that the LDA might, as a result, appoint officers based on the incorrect information. The integrity of the appointment process might be undermined, as people without the appropriate qualifications might be appointed to work with the PERSAL system.

4.8.3 An effective and efficient registry system (record keeping)

None of the respondents in the study showed compliance with the set policy, with three (13.6%) of the 21 respondents receiving a score between 1 and 24, which, according to the assessment scorecard (see Table 4.1), showed only partial compliance, whereas 21 respondents showed noncompliance with the set policy (see Figure 4.9).

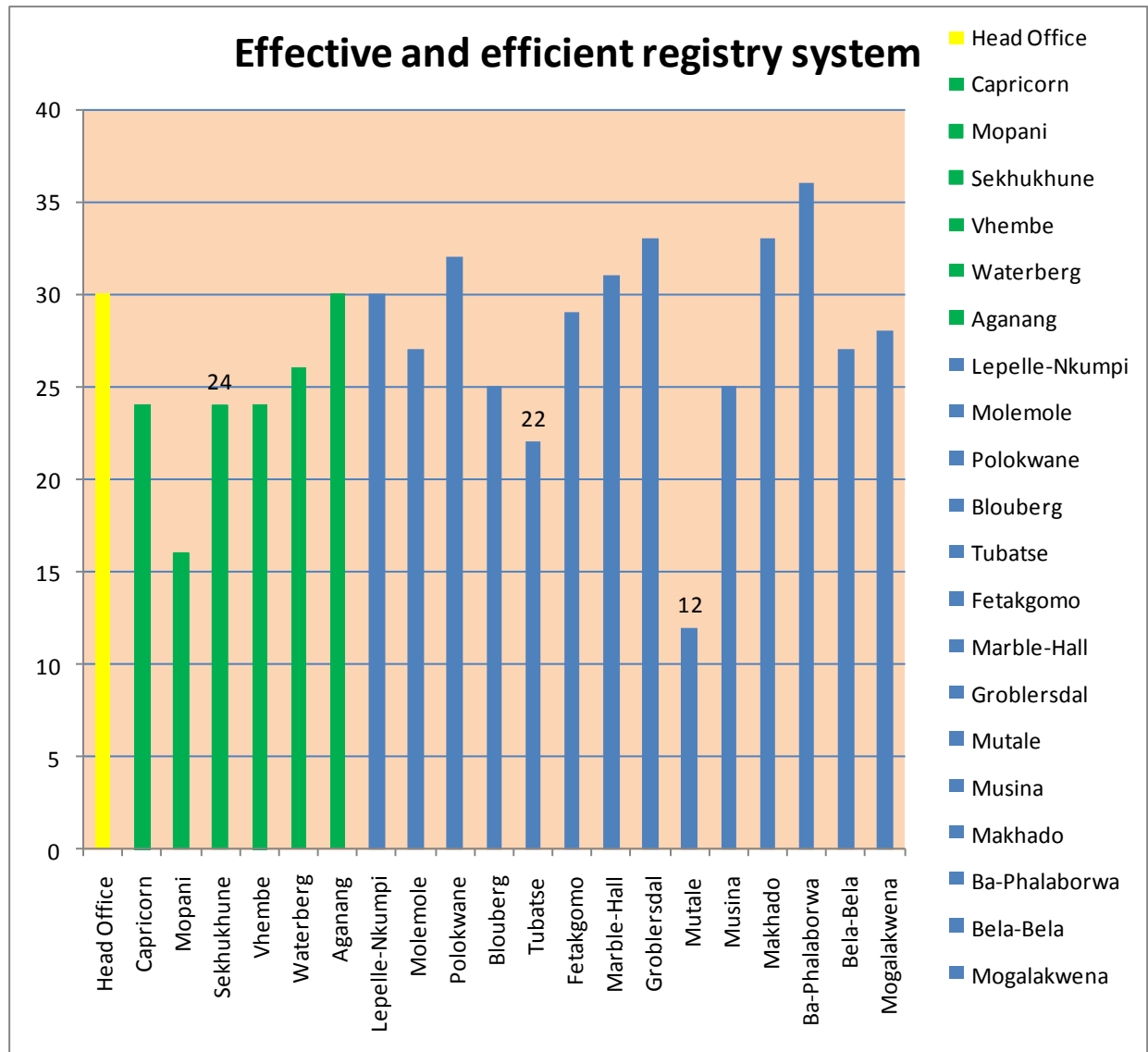


Figure 4.9: Comparison of 1 Head Office, 5 districts and 15 municipalities in terms of the keeping of an effective and efficient registry system

One district and two municipalities showed partial compliance with the policy, meaning that, even though employee records are being kept, the keeping of the records is neither efficiently nor effectively done. All (100%) of the respondents indicated the following:

- Piles of loose correspondence had not yet been filed.
- No record had been kept of the number of folios kept on employee files.

- Negative external audit findings indicated the unavailability of relevant documents on file.
- The staff concerned were unaware of record transfer requirements.

Most respondents with scores from 12 to 36 (see Column 3 of Table 4.3) showed that the record-keeping system in employ at the time of the study often failed to provide an audit trail of when documents were either removed from a file or when new documents were placed on file. In addition, no monitoring system was in place to ensure sound record keeping that complied with legislation and regulation requirements related to disposal. Generally, procedures and processes for maintaining, monitoring and keeping track of files to ensure that they are complete at all times are regarded as important for the maintenance and updating of paper-based employee records. The lack of mechanisms for keeping track of what happens to files might place the LDA at a disadvantage, as such a lack might lead to records being lost without a trace and to a failure to comply with the set regulations (Willis, 2005:91). The extent of noncompliance with the requirements for an effective and efficient registry system has been found to be higher in the case of municipalities than in the case of districts and Head Office (see Figures 4.3 and 4.5)

All (100%) of the respondents in the current study indicated the inability of the system to identify records that are eligible for transfer, the lack of awareness among the staff responsible for the maintenance of the records of the transfer requirements involved, and the lack of a systematic disposal programme (Mnjama, 2001:115). Such shortcomings might result in the system being exposed to such threats as the following:

- The possibility of a staff member deliberately destroying certain records that should be retained;
- Flawed payment of leave gratuities, due to missing leave records;
- The incurring of storage costs, due to the accumulation of records that are created and stored indefinitely; and
- Difficulties in retrieving information, since many records are kept unnecessarily, thus cluttering up the system (Mnjama, 2001:115).

In addition, the closed files of staff members whose services had been terminated were still found to being kept in the registry.

4.8.4 Storage facilities

Of the respondents, 100% indicated that their storage infrastructure did not comply with the terms set out in the Model (South Africa, 2002:56). The degree of noncompliance with the set requirements varied among Head Office and the various districts and municipalities (see Figure 4.10 below).

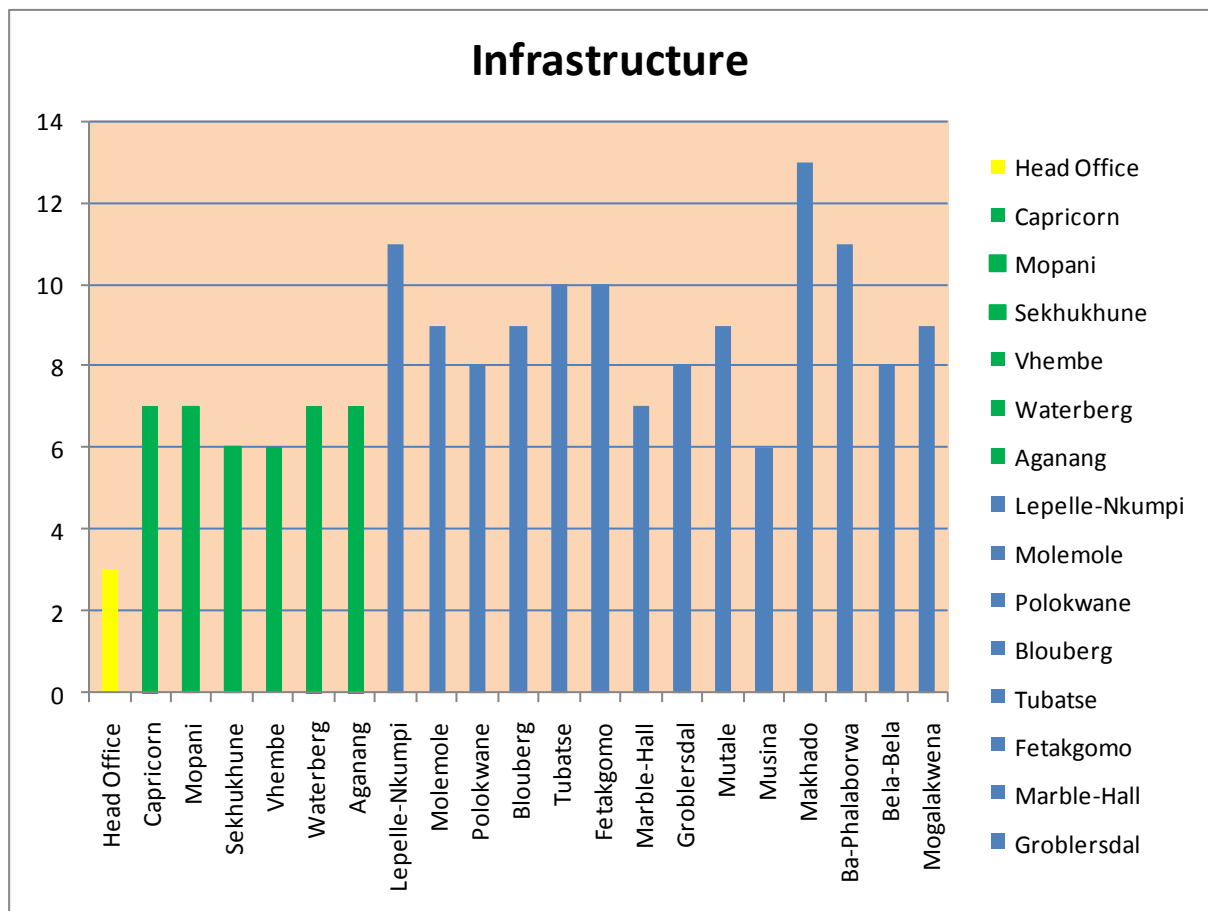


Figure 4.10: Comparison of 1 Head Office, 5 districts and 15 municipalities in terms of infrastructure

In this respect, the scores ranged from 3% to 13.90% among the respondents from Head Office, the districts and the municipalities. The following conditions were revealed:

- No smoke detectors,
- No air-conditioners,

- Inadequate work space; and
- The conducting of no regular inspections of security measures.

All the above-mentioned factors place records management centres at risk. Such risks range from the inability to detect fire at an early stage in storage spaces where paper records are in abundance, to the lack of systems for safeguarding records in cases of disaster. The districts and Head Office indicated that counters to prevent unauthorised entry into registries exist, whereas 75% of all the municipalities surveyed indicated that they lacked such counters, and that the records storage space allocated was also used as a shared office. Greater noncompliance with the set policy regarding infrastructure could be seen in the municipalities than in the Head Office and districts surveyed (see Figures 4.3 and 4.6). The issue is of grave concern, as the human resources records are confidential and sensitive in nature, necessitating that access to such records be controlled at all times. The current study discovered that procedures for safeguarding storage areas for records were not in place at all (100%) of the institutions concerned.

4.9 Conclusion

A questionnaire developed by DPSA was adapted by the researcher for use as the main data collection strategy. The first section of the questionnaire focused on the policy and institutional framework, with the second section focusing on the integrity of human resources data and information, the third on the record-keeping system, and the fourth on storage requirements. The selection of participants by purposeful sampling helped establish a variety of human records management practices prevailing within the Department at three levels, namely Head Office, district and municipality. The limitation of the sampling strategy was that the data collected and the results of the study were limited to the participants concerned.

The data collected in the study were analysed, using the assessment scorecard prescribed by the Model (South Africa, 2002:57). The study demonstrated that, even though there was partial compliance with the set requirements in certain aspects, there was a general lack of compliance with records management practices regarding policy, infrastructure,

the maintenance of an efficient and effective registry system, and the integrity of data. Data collected by means of the questionnaire from the records management practitioners working in the municipalities, districts and Head Office of the LDA were analysed. The graphical comparison of data collected from districts and Head Office was performed. The comparison excluded the municipalities, since it was discovered that they were unable to answer Section B of the questionnaire, due to them not having access to PERSAL. The involvement of records management practitioners in gathering data enabled the necessary data to be collected from experts in the field of records management. However, their use also served to limit the study, because such employees might have highlighted the extent of awareness in human resources records management practices, no matter whether the practices concerned were known about and/or even implemented.

The findings of the investigation showed that the LDA is performing below the expected standards, as such standards are stipulated in the Model. Findings of the study showed noncompliance in three key performance areas, namely in the areas of policy, storage infrastructure, and effective and efficient registry systems. The study also showed only partial compliance in one key performance area, namely the integrity of paper-based and electronic employee records. It was also shown through observations that records management staff who are regarded as experts in the area, are lacking basic understanding of records management matters. Some of the staff are not aware of the existence of policy, registry procedure manual and other related documents governing records management practices.

CHAPTER FIVE

EVALUATION OF RESEARCH FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

The focus of the current chapter is on the evaluation of research findings on the basis of records management practices and the theoretical framework of the study. The LDA's performance in terms of records management practices is evaluated regarding the processes and procedures of the information and records flow, the regulatory framework, the storage facilities and the integrity of human resources records kept on PERSAL and on files. The investigation of records management practices in the LDA has shown that the management of records in accordance with the Model remains a challenge.

5.2 Evaluation of research findings

The influence on records management of other disciplines, such as archival and information management, is still evident in the current records management practices in the LDA. Records are still kept for planning and decision-making, in line with the management view of records management. Information Technology, as one of the disciplines concerned, contributes towards improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's records management performance. In this section of the current mini-thesis, research findings of the study are evaluated in terms of records management practices and the theoretical framework of the study.

5.2.1 Structural organisation and the flow of records and information

Records and information flow from the municipalities through the districts to Head Office (see Figure 3.2), with, at each level, copies being kept in a file, which leads to duplication of the records concerned. In case of an application for a resettlement being received from a municipality, a copy of the submission to the district remains in the file that is kept by the municipality. The district also keeps a copy of the submission to Head Office, where the issue concerned is resolved. After finalisation, a copy of the Head Office response is kept in main series file, with another being forwarded, by way of the

district, to the municipality concerned, for record-keeping purposes. The chain of events that transpires prior to the approval or rejection of the resettlement application seems long and costly, in the sense that the records require conveying from one station to another. Ways of reducing the length and time of the chain require exploring. Some of the research findings made, including those regarding the challenges of storage space, might result from the information flow. The flow of documents and information from the municipalities to Head Office by way of the districts seems costly for the LDA, in the sense that the officers concerned have to spend time on travelling between the different offices concerned, rather than concentrating on the improvement of service delivery.

Service delivery, in terms of the core functions of the LDA, takes place in the municipalities. Human resources functions that support the core functions seem to be centralised. Most decisions with regard to the supportive human resources functions are taken at Head Office. Decisions in respect of the supportive functions can be taken where the core functions are performed in respect of the services that are on offer to the officers concerned, or they can be transferred closer to such services, which means that the decisions can be taken at district level. The advantages and disadvantages of both locations should be explored in order to allow the LDA to opt for the most suitable method in terms of the given environment.

5.2.2 Records management practices, the *Departmental Records Management Policy*, and the related regulatory framework

The responses from records management practitioners showed that records management practices are, to a certain extent, not guided by the framework of policies, rules and procedures, even though a *Departmental Records Management Policy* exists (Department of Agriculture, 2006). The lack of clear roles for the employee, the employer, the line managers, and the human resource units, as highlighted by the research findings, implies that records are not being properly managed from their creation, which is a key stage in terms of both the life cycle and the continuum view of records management (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:5). Proper records management entails a controlled system of the life cycle or

continuum of records in accordance with regulatory guidelines and principles, of which most are derived from other disciplines. For records to be of value to the LDA, they must be managed properly from creation until disposal (Shepherd & Yeo, 2003:9–10; Wamukoya, 2000:27). Section 3 of the *Departmental Records Management Policy* stipulates the roles and responsibilities of all employees, supervisors, records management units, Heads of districts and all managers (Department of Agriculture, 2006:3) which, on the basis of the current research findings, are not being adhered to.

The research findings also show variation in the degree of noncompliance of records management with policy. Municipalities show a higher degree of noncompliance with the policy than does Head Office and the districts. The districts are expected to support the municipalities in their operations, so, if records management practices in the districts do not comply with the Model, then the municipalities are likely to follow suit. Records flow from the municipalities to Head Office by way of the districts, with the same procedure being followed when documents have to flow from Head Office to the municipalities. Transport is used to convey records between the different entities concerned. Risks are associated with the procedure that is currently in place. Records might be delayed at some point in their conveyance, and they might also become lost. Municipalities might also not be provided with information in terms of how human resources records are managed, since the records for officers attached to the municipalities are managed in the districts. The coordinating, supportive and monitoring role that is supposed to be filled by Head Office for the districts and municipalities requires more attention.

The research findings of the current study were based on the responses provided by records management practitioners working at municipal, district, or Head Office level. The findings highlight the inefficiency of records management practices in compliance with the *Departmental Records Management Policy* that was approved in, and implemented from, September 2006. The lack of proper records management in conformance with policy might lead to individualised records management practices, which might result in the creation of mini-registries in offices, in the duplication of

records kept, and in the loss of records of administrative value to the LDA. The creation of mini-registries hampers the ability of the Department to make records available when they are needed, as well as to delays in the retrieval and reuse of records. The study also found that terminated employee records were still to be found in the registry, where only active records were meant to be kept. Although semi-active and inactive records are still needed for administrative purposes, the keeping of active, semi-active and non-current records in the same place creates storage and retrieval problems for the Department (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:10), which ultimately leads to difficulties in identifying records that are due for disposal. Records should be available when they are needed, as their accessibility provides evidence of the Department fulfilling its mandate, as well as helping to protect it from litigation, and promoting good governance, accountability, transparency and openness.

Research findings have also shown that the current manual record-keeping system is neither effective nor efficient. Loose forms are still found in the registry offices, the unauthorised destruction of records cannot be detected, and there is lack of compliance with archival instructions. The proper management of paper-based employee records is important, as it helps to ensure a smooth transition to an e-based government (South Africa, 2006:6). The study also discovered that the LDA lacks a disposal policy as such, despite some general disposal guidelines being contained in Section 5 of the *Departmental Records Management Policy*. Records are generated in terms of terminated file plans, and no procedures are in place for their disposal. Records are generated and stored despite the lack of adequate storage space, since all records that are generated, including ephemeral ones, are accumulated. The lack of storage space is aggravated by the duplication of records in the registry and office-based mini-registries. If records are kept in offices, the management and filing of such records might not be done in terms of the file plans. Informal filing structures might then be created. The development and implementation of a disposal policy is urgently required (Kemoni, 1998:59), because the lack of policy implementation leads to the inflation of operational costs, such as those resulting from the need for storage space and from an excessive amount of time spent

searching for records. The current records management system fails to identify those records that are due for disposal, and no systematic disposal programme is in place.

The current study shows that electronic records did not always match paper-based employee records. The study shows that the data available on PERSAL did not always match the records kept on file. Employee data captured on PERSAL must match records available in employee files in terms of compliance with the NMIR. The need to keep all the supporting documents for all transactions captured on PERSAL in employee files cannot be overemphasised. The details of leave days used by an employee must be captured on PERSAL, with the leave forms for such days also being available from an employee's leave file. Should such an employee resign or terminate his/her service, the payment of their leave gratuity, for example, is based on such records. The findings of the current study also support the findings found in reports from the Auditor General (Department of Agriculture, 2006), in terms of which records management issues are raised. Such issues include leave forms being found on file, but not captured on PERSAL, or leave details being captured, but not found on, PERSAL. The employee data created on PERSAL is stored for a specific period until it is archived. Prior to it being archived, the records are treated as active, with differentiation between the active and semi-active stages not being able to be detected, in contrast with how records are treated in terms of the life cycle view.

The management of human resources records in the LDA forms part of the management of public records (South Africa, 2003:60). In terms of policy directives, departments must develop and implement a records management policy and a registry procedure manual that suits their operations. The implementation of a records management policy and of a registry procedure manual should include the establishment, maintenance, control, and promotion of sound records management practices within the Department (An & Fiao, 2004:35). A registry procedure manual, which is still lacking in the Department, could be used by all employees as a tool for records creation, and would promote the following of set processes and procedures in the handling of records prior to storage. The registry

procedure manual and policy should be approved by the National/Provincial Archivist before implementation.

5.2.3 Storage facilities

The LDA is greatly challenged in terms of records storage space in most offices (Kemoni, 1998:59; Mnjama, 2003:94). The storage facility for files is inadequate, and does not comply with the standards set out in terms of the Model. The storage facilities have flammable walls, no fire extinguishers are available in the registries, and there are no separation counters. The issue of access to registries and human resources files has been raised as a challenge by most of the institutions concerned. Human resources records are confidential and sensitive in nature, and if their security cannot be guaranteed, the LDA might be exposed to litigation, seeing that, in some instances, the privacy of the officers concerned might be compromised. Human resources records need to be managed with care to maintain their confidential status (Martino & Kleiner, 2000:50–51; Mnjama, 2001:113–114). If the access to human resources records is not controlled, the provisions of the Model are contravened (South Africa, 2002:38), as well are the provisions made in Section 6.2 of the *Departmental Records Management Policy*, in terms of which only certain persons are allowed to access human resources records (South Africa, 2002:38–39). In order to control access to records, knowledgeable records management practitioners need to develop and to implement policies that are aligned with the regulations and objectives of the Department.

5.3 Conclusion

The findings of the investigation showed that the LDA is performing below the expected standards stipulated in the Model. The findings of the current study generally show noncompliance with requirements relating to policy, storage infrastructure, and the maintenance of effective and efficient registry systems, and only partial compliance with those concerning the integrity of data. Records management practices are, to a certain extent, not guided by the framework of policy rules and processes, even though a *Departmental Records Management Policy* exists. The current study found that electronic

and paper-based employee records exist, with more challenges being experienced in regards to the management of paper-based employee records, as a greater percentage of human resources records are in paper form.

CHAPTER SIX

RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 Introduction

The case study showed that the questionnaire contained in the Model, including the elements added by the researcher, can be used as a tool for measuring the performance of human resources records management practices, as well as for identifying gaps in practice (South Africa: 2002:49). The questionnaire can be used to establish whether records management practices comply with the set policies and regulatory framework, whether secure storage conditions exist, and whether the record keeping performed is efficient and effective. The Model can also be used to establish the integrity of employee records kept on file and on PERSAL in accordance with the NMIR. Research findings from the investigation provided the basis for recommendations regarding the development of intervention strategies for the improvement of records management practices in the LDA.

6.2 Recommendations of the study

The results of the study have shown that the management of records in the LDA are insufficient and do not provide an environment in which the compliance of departmental actions and decisions with the set regulations and evidence for good governance can be provided at all times. The following recommendations are suggested for the improvement of human resources records management practices within the Department.

6.2.1 The need for an awareness campaign to be conducted among all the staff

An awareness campaign should be held among all the staff in order to promote and to highlight the benefits of records management, including, among other issues, the necessity for keeping records as evidence and memory, which will enable the Department to account for its actions and decisions transparently and openly. All staff, as records creators, should be made aware of the role that they need to play in ensuring that the records created are effectively and efficiently managed. The role played by staff ranges from the allocation of reference numbers in accordance with the departmental file plans

(i.e. classification systems) to ensuring that records are referred to the registry for safe storage. An awareness campaign should be an ongoing process done by a capacitated records management staff, which needs to be informed by staff performance on proper implementation of records management practices.

A checklist similar to the modified version illustrated in Figure 6.1 below could also be used to help ensure uniformity in the creation of records in the Department of Agriculture as a whole.

- When records are created, check that the following actions are performed:
- Are the names of the creators and their job titles or professional status recorded?
 - If several individuals have contributed to one record, are they all identified as having contributed to the record concerned? Is the extent of each individual's contribution unambiguously stated?
 - Is it clear why the record was created, in what business context, and on what occasion?
 - Are all records signed and dated?
 - Are the recipients fully identified? Are their addresses given correctly?
 - Have any unexplained abbreviations been used in the record?
 - Is the language of the record clear and concise?
 - Are handwritten records legible?
 - If alterations have been made to a paper document, is it clear that such alterations were legitimately made? Has each alteration been signed and dated? Is the original wording still legible?
 - Have security classifications, if any, been correctly assigned?

Figure 6.1: Checklist for auditing best practice in records creation (Shepherd, 2003:106)

An awareness campaign would also help to popularise such records management tools as the *Departmental Records Management Policy*, a departmental manual, compiled in terms of Section 14 of PAIA, and the departmental File Plans. The conflicting views held

by records management officers, which varies from regarding records management as a filing function, through records being owned by their creators, to that of registries being used as dumping grounds for all records no longer needed in offices, should also be confronted. Alternative views that regard records as an asset and a resource might then be promoted.

6.2.2 Involvement of role-players in the establishment of standards, procedures and processes for records management

Records management procedures and processes need to be embraced and owned by all the role-players concerned (Yusuf & Chell, 2005:104). The coordination and collaboration of all role-players is essential in establishing integrated records management processes and procedures for efficient and effective records management. All staff as creators of records, as well as all information technology officers, records management units, human resources units, supervisors and managers have different roles to play in ensuring that sound records management practices prevail in the LDA. By involving everyone concerned in the process, the functioning of registries and the practices will be realigned with that of the organisation as a whole.

6.2.3 Popularisation of the *Departmental Records Management Policy*

The findings of the current study show that the *Departmental Records Management Policy* which was approved of and implemented in September 2006 has, so far, been ineffective. The ineffectiveness of the *Policy* might be due to it not yet being popularised among all records management practitioners and users, or, if already popularised, it's not yet having been monitored in terms of its proper implementation. The lack of proper records management according to the set policy might lead to individualised records management practices contributing to the loss of records of administrative value to the LDA, to the required records not being available when they are needed, and to the delayed retrieval of records. The *Departmental Records Management Policy* and other related policies should be popularised, and the monitoring of their implementation should be effectively carried through by records management staff in various institutions. The

constant checking of compliance with policy and the evaluation of departmental records management performance should be conducted on a regular basis. The *Departmental Records Management Policy* should also be regularly reviewed, at least once a year, to ensure that all departmental functions are covered.

A registry procedure manual, a retention schedule and a systematic disposal programme should also be developed, in compliance with national and provincial records management directives. The keeping of a retention schedule should ensure that records are not kept for longer than is necessary. In the development of the registry procedure manual and the retention schedule, stakeholders must be involved in promoting adherence to records management processes and procedures (Yusuf & Chell, 2005:105–110).

The current study also found evidence of loose folios in human resources registries, the inability of the records management system to detect records due for disposal, and the unauthorised destruction of records. The LDA was also found to lack a disposal policy, despite some general disposal guidelines being given in Section 5 of the *Departmental Records Management Policy*. The proper management of paper-based employee records is important for ensuring a smooth transition to e-based government (South Africa, 2006:6). Records management units at Head Office, and in the districts and municipalities, must develop a uniform strategy for how to address the current crisis in record keeping.

The LDA records management system seems not to be compliant with current legislation and regulations, especially regarding disposal-related matters. The present manual record-keeping system is neither effective nor efficient. The Department should conduct an audit to establish which records are available, what type of storage is used, what records exist, where they are located, and who is responsible for keeping the records (Yusuf & Chell, 2005:72–76). Such an audit would help to determine the storage space requirements. Records, including ephemeral ones that need not be kept for long, are

constantly being generated. With their ever-increasing accumulation, they require ever more storage space, which poses the challenge of additional costs for the LDA that are unnecessary as regards the storage of those records that have minimal value. The development and implementation of an effective disposal policy is urgently required (Kemoni, 1998:59). The current records management system fails to identify which records are due for disposal, and no systematic disposal programme is, as yet, in place.

6.2.4 Development and implementation of a coordinated training programme for records management practices

The current study indicates the need to capacitate records management practitioners in the LDA. The findings of the study, which were based on the perspectives of records management practitioners, showed that those responsible for the maintenance of records in the Department seemed to lack the necessary skills and knowledge to do so effectively. Records management practitioners should become knowledgeable about the relevant policy, procedures and processes. Well-trained records management staff would be able to facilitate and support the implementation of sound records management practices throughout the Department (Barata et al., 2001:40; Kemoni, 1998:59; Mnjama, 2001:119). In those case where staff experience problems in allocating correct reference numbers, capacitated records management officers could be deployed to offer the service (Chinyemba & Ngulube, 2005:9).

Rather than being a once-off activity, training should be continuously offered to records management officers to inculcate new skills and knowledge regarding records management. Thereafter, records management audits should be conducted to monitor and assess compliance with the set standards and regulations. A systematic training programme informed by audits reports must be developed for each year. The challenges that are faced by records management staff should be identified, so that they can be overcome in implementing records management practices compliant with the regulatory framework. The creation of forums as a staff development platform at which records management officers can share their experiences, their best practices and their ways of

coping with challenges is advised (DPSA, 2002: 1-3). Records management training could also be extended to all staff as creators of records in the LDA to ensure that they become aware of their roles and responsibilities, as reflected in the set policy (Department of Agriculture, 2006:3).

Records management training for all staff could be differentiated so as to cater for the various roles and responsibilities of the different levels of staff members. For example, all supervisors, managers and Heads of districts have additional roles to play in promoting sound records management. A records management committee could also be established to ensure that the set policies and procedures are implemented. The committee should be constituted in such a way that it contains representatives from all branches of the LDA, as are shown in Figure 3.1. All staff should change the way in which they work and the way in which they view records management, in order to establish a new work ethic. In developing and implementing a new records management strategy, the principles of change management should also be taken into consideration. The staff need to be familiar with the drivers, the objectives and the benefits of sound records management practices.

6.2.5 Proper management of electronic human resources records

The LDA should promote the proper management of electronic human resources records. The findings of the study showed that electronic and paper-based employee records do not currently provide accountable records of all human resources transactions in compliance with NMIR. An example of the data available on PERSAL not always matching the records kept on file is given in Subsection 5.2.2 of Chapter Five of the current study. Supervisors and managers in human resources units should establish procedures and control measures for managing the records kept on PERSAL for the Department so that the electronic records kept on PERSAL can be relied on for planning and decision-making. A comparative audit of employee data available on PERSAL against that which is available in paper records kept on file should be conducted. Missing employee data should be identified, and those employees whose information is

incomplete should then be requested to provide the outstanding data, keeping in mind that employee data play a crucial role in planning and decision-making. Procedures and control mechanisms for the monitoring and review of compliance with set service standards should be implemented in order to promote sound records management practices.

The LDA should also develop and implement an electronic records management system that will manage document and record flow throughout the organisation. The electronic system that is currently being used was specifically designed for the keeping of human resources records alone, so that all other records are still manually handled. The electronic system should promote efficiency and effectiveness in records management in general. Instead of relying on physically conveying records from one place to the other, the delivery of documents to relevant work stations could then be done electronically. Before implementing the system, a needs analysis should be conducted in order to establish the user requirements and e-readiness of the LDA for such a system. The findings from the needs analysis should also inform the design of the system. The system should also be able to manage emails, as they form part of electronic records.

6.2.6 Review of human resources management delegations

The flow of records and information from municipalities through the districts to Head Office (see Figure 3.2) and the movement of records from processing to approval (see Figure 3.3) constitute a long chain of actions that must be completed before a matter can be resolved. The exceptional length of the chain is a result of the delegation of human resources management functions that is currently in place. Delegations related to human resources functions can be made in such a way that senior managers in the districts are given the authority to finalise matters pertaining to human resources. The resultant flow of documents is represented in Figure 6.2 below.

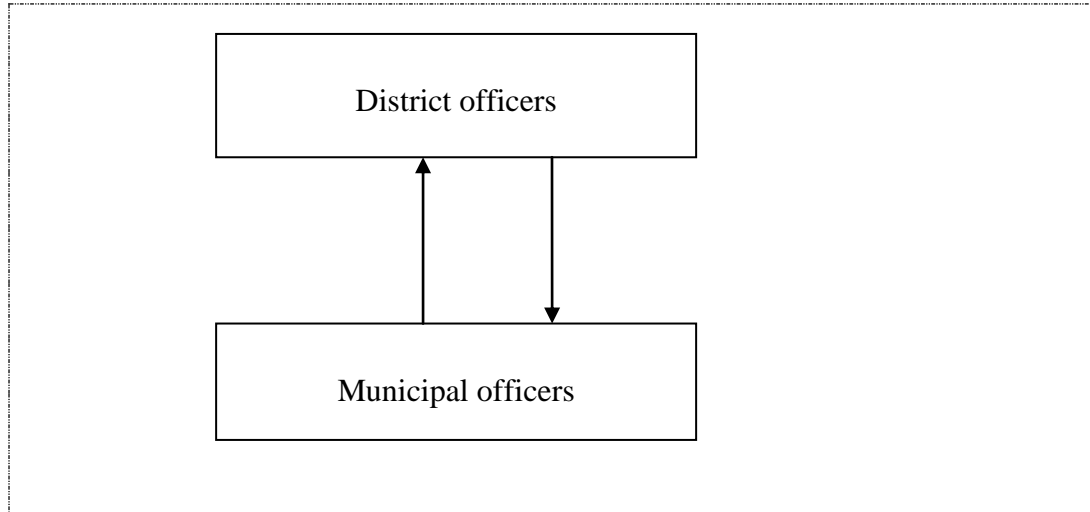


Figure 6.2: Revised flow of documents from municipalities to districts

The revised flow of documents would reduce both the length of the chain and the amount of turnaround time required for responding to applications. All types of requests by the officers of the Department would then be improved. Costs for the conveyance of documents from municipalities to Head Office by way of the districts would then be reduced. The amount of time lost by officers in manually transferring the documents would also be minimised. The revised delegations should eliminate the delays that are currently caused by the submission and resubmission of documents which takes place at various levels prior to the granting or refusal of approval. The keeping of duplicate records will also be minimised, since, in terms of Figures 3.2 and 3.3, paper copies of the same document are presently kept at three different levels, namely at Head Office, and at district and municipal level (see also Subsection 5.2.1 in this regard).

6.2.7 The need for top-level management support

Top-level management support is needed to ensure success in the implementation of the proposed records management initiatives. There are financial implications in conducting awareness campaigns and in popularising policies, in developing and implementing a systematic training programme, and in developing and implementing an electronic system. The support of top management is crucial for the initiatives to take off the

ground. Consequently, the buy-in of management will facilitate the granting of financial and administrative support in the development, implementation and review of the initiatives in order to promote a sound culture of records management.

6.3 Conclusion

Intervention strategies for the improvement of records management practices in the Department proposed are based on research findings. They include the development of training programmes, the popularisation of the records management policy, the conducting of awareness campaigns regarding the benefits of records to all staff, the improvement of the flow of information and records from municipalities through districts to Head Office, and the review of delegations on human resources functions. The study focused on assessing the human resources records management practices from the records management practitioners' point of view, although there is still a need to extend the assessment of records management practices from the users' perspective. Further research can also be conducted to establish the level of skills of all practitioners involved in records management

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APPENDIX .1



LIMPOPO
PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
MEMORANDUM

To : Head of Department
From : KO Legodi
Date : 18 August 2007
Subject : REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO CONDUCT
RESEARCH IN
LIMPOPO DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE ON
RTHE
PROPOSED RESEARCH TOPIC

1. PURPOSE

To seek approval from the Head of Department to conduct research in the Human Resource Records Management practices.

2. BACKGROUND AND ANALYSIS

I am a final year student registered with the University of Stellenbosch for Masters in Public Administration. The proposed research topic is “Assessment of Human Resource Records Management Practices in Limpopo Department of Agriculture based on DPSA’s Best Practice Model”.

According to the Public Service Handbook “ Best Practice Model for Keeping and Managing Paper-Based Employee Records”, human resource records practices should be assessed to identify problematic areas and gaps in keeping and managing the resource. The practices would be assessed (see attached assessment tool as prescribed by the model) on the following areas: policy and institutional framework, record keeping system, storage requirements and integrity of human resource data and information. My target population for the study will be records management practitioners within HR registry services at Districts , municipalities and Head Office.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

I therefore request that approval be granted for the study to be conducted in the Departments. The study will contribute towards identification of gaps for the efficient human resource records management, which are critical for efficient Departmental operation. The outcome of the investigation will also form the basis on which interventions would be designed in order to improve practices within the Department.

.....
.....
SENIOR MANAGER: HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES
DATE

RECOMMENDED/ NOT RECOMMENDED

.....

.....
GENERAL MANAGER: HRM
DATE

APPROVED/NOT APPROVED

.....

.....
HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
DATE

Subsection 4.1.1 Policy Assessment:					
To ensure that the keeping and management of paper-based and electronic employee records are in line with the policy directives and institutional framework.					
Ref.	Assessment Criteria	Yes	No	Limited	Score
A1	Do you have a specific written policy for the keeping and management of all employee paper-based and electronic records?	0	2	N/A	
A2	Is the policy referred to in A1, in line with and/or does it make provision for indicators, as included in the following legislation, regulations and policies:				
	A2/1 Constitution of the Republic	0	2	N/A	
	A2/2 Promotion of Access to Information	0	2	N/A	
	A2/3 National Archives of South Africa	0	2	N/A	
	A2/4 National Archives Instructions	0	2	N/A	
	A2/5 White Paper on Human Resource Management	0	2	N/A	
	A2/6 Public Service Act	0	2	N/A	
	A2/7 Public Service Regulations	0	2	N/A	
	A2/8 National Minimum Information Requirements	0	2	N/A	
	A2/9 Integrity of the appointment Process	0	2	N/A	
	A2/10 Labour Relations Act	0	2	N/A	
	A2/11 Basic Conditions of Employment Act	0	2	N/A	
	A2/12 Resolutions of the Public Service Bargaining Council	0	2	N/A	
A3	Is there a dedicated records manager (a sub-record manager) who takes specific responsibility for the keeping and management of paper-based employee records?	0	2	N/A	
A4	Do you have a written procedure manual for the keeping and management of all employee paper-based and electronic records?	0	2	N/A	
A5	Is the policy clear on the roles of the following role-players:				
	A5/1 National Departments (Archives, DPSA, National Treasury)	0	2	N/A	
	A5/2 Provincial Treasury	0	2	N/A	
	A5/3 Office of the Premier	0	2	N/A	
	A5/4 Human Resource Units in the Department	0	2	N/A	
	A5/5 Line managers in the Department	0	2	N/A	
	A5/6 Employees	0	2	N/A	
	A5/7 Internal audits units	0	2	N/A	
A6	Are delegations in place to support sound keeping and management of employee paper-based and electronic records?	0	2	N/A	
A7	Do the procedures for paper-based employee records include clarity on the flow of documents between employer, line manager and human resources units?	0	2	N/A	
Ref.	Assessment Criteria	0	2	N/A	Score

A8	Are line managers fully aware of the human resources paper-based and electronic record-keeping policy and procedures?	0	2	N/A	
A9	Do you, on a regular basis, inform line managers and employees of their roles, and share the policy document with them?	0	2	N/A	
A10	Do line managers fulfil their responsibilities in terms of orientating employees to their obligations regarding paper-based and electronic human resources records?	0	2	1	
A11	Are employees keeping to their obligations in terms of the completion and submission of paper-based and electronic human resources records?	0	2	1	
A12	Do the policy statement and supportive processes include information on the appointment of staff that is validated?	0	2	N/A	
A13	Do you have guidelines in the policy on the kind of information/documents to be kept on each file?	0	2	N/A	
A14	If yes, are these in line with the NMIR?	0	2	1	
A15	Are there any service standards for the keeping and management of paper-based and electronic employee records?	0	2	N/A	
A16	If you answered 'yes' to A15, are the service standards monitored?	0	2	1	
A17	If you answered 'yes' to A16, do you take corrective actions if standards are not adhered to?	0	2	1	
A18	If you answered 'yes' to A17, do the corrective measures include training?	0	2	1	
A19	If you answered 'yes' to A18, do corrective actions include disciplinary actions?	0	2	1	
A20	Is there a service-level agreement between line managers and the human resources unit in terms of roles and responsibilities regarding the keeping and management of paper-based and electronic employee records?	0	2	N/A	
Total Score					
Subsection 4.1.2 Integrity of paper-based employee records:					
To ensure that paper-based employee and electronic records provide accountable records of all human resources transactions.					
Name of District/Office:					
Number of employees in the District:					
Ref.		No.	% of total number of employees	Score	
B1	Adherence of personal files to NMIR:				
	B1/1	How many contain application forms (Z83s)?			
	B1/2	How many contain certified copies of identity documents?			
	B1/3	How many contain information regarding union membership?			

	B1/4	How many contain appointment letters?				
	B1/5	For how many of the staff do the details on the appointment letter correspond with the details captured on PERSAL?				
B2	Adherence to training and development requirements (on personal or development files):					
	B2/1	How many contain certified copies of formal qualifications?				
	B2/2	How many contain certified copies of courses attended during the last five years?				
	B2/3	How many of the qualifications have been verified?				
B3	Adherence to leave:					
	B3/1	How many leave files contain certificates and/or documents validating the calculated capped leave?				
	B3/2	How many of the staff who have been employed in the public service for at least five years have less than ten leave forms filed on the file?				
B4	How many employees have personal files, keeping in mind that temporary files cannot be regarded as personal files?					
B5	How many employees have leave files, keeping in mind that temporary files cannot be regarded as leave files?					
B6	How many personal files contain comprehensive appointment documents?					
B7	How many personal files contain certified copies of identity documents?					
Ref.	Assessment Criteria		Yes	No	Limited	Score
B8	Are qualifications in B2/1 and courses in B2/2 captured on PERSAL?		0	2	1	
B9	Is biographical information (i.e. surname, initials, first names, date of birth, marital status, details of spouse and dependants) captured on PERSAL in the same way as it appears on the ID document in the file?		0	2	1	
B10	B10/1	Is there paper-based and electronic record of an approved establishment?	0	2	1	
	B10/2	Does the approved establishment captured on PERSAL the same as the copy kept in file?	0	2	1	
	B10/3	How often is electronic record of establishment updated?	0	2	1	
	B10/4	Are job evaluation results captured on PERSAL?	0	2	1	
B11	Are leave records on PERSAL available from the leave files, and vice versa?		0	2	1	
B12	Is the employee employment history on PERSAL also available from the files, and vice versa?		0	2	1	
Ref.	Assessment Criteria		Days	Weeks	Months	Score

B13	What is the average time lapse between the approval of an employee's leave and the capturing on PERSAL of the leave details?	0	1	2		
B14	What is the average time lapse between the capturing and approval of leave details on PERSAL?	0	1	2		
B15	What is the average time lapse between the approval of a transfer and capturing of details of the transfer on PERSAL?	0	1	2		
B16	What is the average time lapse between the actual appointment of new staff and the effecting of their salaries on PERSAL?	0	1	2		
Total score²						
Subsection 4.1.3 Record keeping:						
To ensure effective, efficient and accountable keeping of paper-based employee records.						
Ref.	Assessment Criteria	Yes	Seldom	Often	No	Total
C1	Are there proper arrangements in place regarding who is authorised to request employee files?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C2	Does the record-filing system make it easy to find a file?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C3	Is it easy to retrieve records?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C4	Are shelves visibly numbered?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C5	Are all loose folios on file numbered?	0	1	2	3	
C6	Do you keep records of the number of folios on a file?	0	1	2	3	
C7	Are all loose forms filed on a daily basis?	0	1	2	3	
C8	Are there piles of loose forms (backlogs) not yet filed?	3	2	1	0	
C9	Do you have negative external audit findings indicating that not all the relevant documents were on the file of an employee?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C10	Does the record-keeping system effectively track when documents are removed from a file?	0	1	2	3	
C11	Does the record-keeping system effectively track when files are taken from the registry?	0	1	2	3	
C12	Does the record-keeping system effectively track the number of folios on file?	0	1	2	3	
C13	Does the record-keeping system effectively track the filling of new documents on file?	0	1	2	3	
C14	Does the record-keeping system effectively maintain tracking aids to locate files?	0	1	2	3	
C15	Does the record-keeping system effectively maintain tracking aids to retrieve records?	0	1	2	3	
C16	Is there protection against unauthorised viewing, or the destruction of records?	0	1	2	3	
C17	Are appropriate access controls assigned to users of records?	0	1	2	3	

² **Rating Scale to apply:** 0% = 6 points; 1% – 20% = 5 points; 21% – 40% = 4 points; 41% – 60% = 3 points; 61% – 80% = 2 points; 81% – 100% = 1 point.

C18	Does the record system regulate who is permitted to access records, and under what circumstances such records can be accessed?	0	1	2	3	
C19	Does the record-keeping system track when records are transferred to intermediate storage in the Department?	0	1	2	3	
C20	Does the record-keeping system provide audit trails?	0	1	2	3	
C21	Does the record-keeping system provide clear links to the files?	0	1	2	3	
C22	Does the record-keeping system track when documents are removed for destruction?	0	1	2	3	
C23	Does the system record what records have been transferred, as well as when and how?	0	1	2	3	
C24	Do you report missing files?	0	1	2	3	
C25	Do you report missing folios?	0	1	2	3	
C26	Is there compliance with the archival instructions?	0	1	2	3	
C27	Can records be transferred without authorised written approval?	0	1	2	3	
C28	Is there any monitoring system that ensures that record keeping complies with the legislation and regulations related to disposal?	0	1	2	3	
C29	Is the staff aware of transfer requirements?	0	?	N/A	3	
C30	Can the record system easily identify records that are eligible for transfer?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C31	Can the record system easily identify records that are eligible for destruction?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C32	Is there a systematic disposal programme?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C33	Is there a record of files or documents that have been destroyed?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C34	Can records be destroyed without the written approval of an authorised person?	0	N/A	N/A	3	
C35	Are there many closed files in the registry of staff whose services were terminated more than three years ago?	0	N/A	N/A	3	

Total Score

Subsection 4.1.4 Storage Facilities:

To ensure appropriate storage conditions for the protection, accessibility and management of files in a cost-effective, but secure, manner.

Ref.	Assessment Criteria	Yes	No	Score	
D1	Is there an adequate (large enough) storage facility for files?	0	1		
D2	Does the storage facility comply with the following minimum standards:				
	D2/1	Adequate shelving	0	1	
	D2/2	Adequate work space	0	1	
	D2/3	Lock-up facilities	0	1	
	D2/4	Smoke detector	0	1	
	D2/5	Fire extinguisher	0	1	
	D2/6	Locks on main doors	0	1	
	D2/7	Air-conditioner	0	1	

	D2/8	Clean and tidy	0	1	
	D2/9	Pest-free	0	1	
	D2/10	Adequate filing cabinets	0	1	
	D2/11	Bars on windows	0	1	
	D2/12	Is there a separating counter to prevent the entry of unauthorised visitors?	0	1	
	D2/13	Are there suitable storage facilities for closed files?	0	1	
	D2/14	Are there suitable storage facilities for archive files?	0	1	
	D2/15	Are paper records identified and protected against disaster?	0	1	
	D2/16	In the event of fire, floods, or other natural disasters, are there procedures for safeguarding records storage areas in the building?	0	1	
	D2/17	Are regular inspections held of the security requirements?	0	1	
	D2/18	Are fire inspections and drill exercises held regularly?	0	1	
	D2/19	Is there sufficient stationery in the registry?	0	1	
Total Score					

APPENDIX 2

Letter requesting consent from participants

PO Box 251

Bochum

0790

Dear Participant

REQUEST FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION IN A RESEARCH STUDY: UNIVERSITY OF STELLENBOSCH

You are kindly requested to take part in my research study entitled “Assessment of Human Resource Records Management practices in Limpopo Department of Agriculture based on DPSA’s Best Practice Model”. The study will establish the extent to which the Departmental employee records provide accountable records of all human resource transactions. Kindly note that permission to conduct the study in the Department has been sought and approval has been granted by the Head of Department.

Data collected in the study would help identify existing gaps and trends in records management practices, thus forming the basis on which measures will be designed. Data collection is mainly through the questionnaire, which you are requested to complete.

Completion of the questionnaire is voluntary and your anonymity will be safeguarded and guaranteed. Your name will not be used in the research report, and no views/ opinions will be linked to you.

Yours sincerely

KO Legodi

Contact No.: 0828825848

015 294 3081