



MEDIA STATEMENT

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

03 April 2026

SAAPAM Welcomes Pivotal Public Administration Legislation Strengthening Professionalisation

The South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM) formally welcomes the promulgation of two significant pieces of legislation: the Public Management Amendment Act 07 of 2025 and the Public Service Amendment Act 09 of 2025. These legislative developments mark a critical milestone in the journey toward strengthening governance, accountability and professionalisation within the South African public administration.

The Public Management Amendment Act 07 of 2025 introduces several progressive reforms. Most notably, it facilitates the devolution of administrative powers from executive authorities (*political heads of government departments who are tasked with providing policy direction and oversight*) to Heads of Department. It further enhances the role of the Director General in the Presidency in supporting the President, additionally it establishes mechanisms for the recovery of over-payments of remuneration and benefits, further clarifying the role of the Public Service Commission in handling grievances. Additionally, the Act provides greater clarity regarding the responsibilities of the President and Premiers in the appointment and career management of Heads of Department.

Complementing this, the Public Service Amendment Act 09 of 2025 provides for the transfer and secondment of employees within the public service and strengthens provisions prohibiting public servants from conducting business with the state and formalises the National School of Government as a national department. The Act further addresses the removal of employment disparities across the public administration and introduces provisions relating to the determination of conditions of service with financial implications.

Key Provisions and Structural Shifts

SAAPAM notes with keen interest specific amendments to the Public Service Act that will redefine the operational landscape:

- **Administrative Autonomy:** Ministers and MECs will no longer hold the primary power to appoint employees. This authority is now vested in the Head of Department or Director General.
- **Political Neutrality:** To safeguard the impartiality of the state, public servants, Heads of Department and staff within their offices are prohibited from holding positions within the high ranking leadership structures of political parties, such as the NEC, PEC, REC or equivalent bodies.
- **Employment and Retirement:** The standard retirement age of 65 may now be extended by a maximum of two years at the discretion of the Head of Department. Furthermore, employees are permitted to retire early, before the age of 60, provided they serve a three month notice period or six months in the case of a Head of Department.
- **Rethink on Re-employment:** Individuals who were previously dismissed may be re-employed if their skills are required after they have served their sanctions, though they will be treated as new entrants to the service.
- **Remunerative Work:** Employees seeking to perform work outside of their official duties must apply for permission. The Head of Department must process such applications within 30 days. Should a decision not be communicated within this timeframe, the application is deemed approved.

Prior to these amendments, Executive Authorities held significant administrative powers over human resources. The new legislation shifts these functions to the **Accounting Officer** (the Director General or Head of Department), effectively separating political oversight from administrative management to ensure a more meritocratic and stable public service.

According to the South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM) Executive Director, Professor John Molepo, these legislative reforms represent a transformative moment for public administration in South Africa.

"We welcome these two important pieces of legislation as they redefine public administration in South Africa and deepen the realisation of professionalisation. They create an opportunity to bridge the gap between theory and practice, enabling practitioners to contribute to academia and academics to engage meaningfully with the public sector."

SAAPAM extends its appreciation to all stakeholders who played a fundamental role in the realisation of these Acts. This includes both former and current Directors General of the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA), the National School of Government (NSG), the Public Service Commission (PSC) and the broader governance and administration cluster.

In advancing its mandate, SAAPAM will embark on a nationwide road show engaging its members and stakeholders to unpack the implications of the new legislation. Furthermore, the Association will encourage scholars and practitioners to critically engage with and document these legislative developments in academic and professional discourse.

SAAPAM remains committed to promoting excellence, ethical leadership and continuous professional development within the field of public administration.

Issued by: South African Association of Public Administration and Management (SAAPAM)

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