

Directive 10.2

The Submission and Approval of HR Plans in the Malta Public Service

Issued on 2 September 2022 by the Principal Permanent Secretary (PPS) in terms of the Public Administration Act.

1. Applicability

1.1 This Directive supersedes in its entirety the original version issued on 11 December 2015 and the subsequent revisions issued on 6 April 2017 and 1 June 2018.

1.2 This Directive is applicable to the Public Service.

2. Objectives

2.1 This Directive reiterates the mandatory requirement for the preparation of two-year HR Plans, revisable annually, by all Ministries, complementarily with the preparation of the Business Plans. These plans aim at streamlining procedures and processes for better coordination and effectiveness in Programme Implementation and HR Management.

2.2 This Directive empowers Permanent Secretaries to facilitate the filling of approved vacancies, provided that Ministries have funds available and provided that they operate in accordance with the following parameters:

- Vacancies are to be filled after being given clearance to proceed with the HR plans according to the approved budget and according to the given guidelines/instructions by the Coordinating Committee on HR Planning.

- The filling of vacancies is to be carried out in strict conformity with Directive 9 and standing Classification Agreements.
- The operational and strategic dimensions of the people management function, which include a more focused approach towards the holistic development, management and well-being of employees, is spearheaded by the People and Standards Division (P&SD), composed of the People Resourcing and Compliance Directorate, the Research and Personnel Systems Directorate, the People Support and Well-being Directorate, the Employee Support Programme (ESP), the Quality of Service Directorate the Industrial Relations Unit and the Institute for the Public Services. This puts the P&SD, as part of the Coordinating Committee on HR Planning, in a strategic position to ascertain effective and holistic people management across the Public Service.

2.3 This Directive concerns the drawing up of rolling two-year HR plans as part of the Business and Financial Planning process under the Fiscal Responsibility Act (CAP. 534), which plans aim to entrench a holistic approach to HR and business requirements through forward-planning and the efficient prioritization of resources.

2.4 Apart from having the full force of the Fiscal Responsibility Act behind it, the provisions of this Directive will further simplify the recruitment process as it reaffirms the mandatory requirement of the two-year HR plans as compared to the previous piecemeal approach where requests for recruitment were raised in a sporadic manner.

3. Preliminary

3.1 This Directive establishes a multidisciplinary Coordinating Committee on HR Planning, set up by the Principal Permanent Secretary (PPS) and led by the P&SD. The Committee is composed of representatives from the P&SD, the Ministry responsible for Finance and advisors nominated by the PPS.

3.2 The primary function of this Committee will be the scrutiny and approval of the two-year HR plans in accordance with the set budgetary provisions allocated in the Financial Estimates and the capacity requirements entailed for the efficient implementation of projects and programmes undertaken by the line Ministry concerned.

3.3 The Coordinating Committee shall have the authority to make the necessary consultations with the competent authorities in order to be in a position to assess and approve these plans.

3.4 The Coordinating Committee's direction is binding and shall be strictly respected. No Ministry shall process any vacancy, update or amend its two-year plan prior to attaining the necessary approvals from the Coordinating Committee. Ministries who opt to by-pass this Committee and refer directly to the Ministry for Finance for any financial approval or otherwise will be acting in breach of this Directive.

3.5 The Committee shall hold regular meetings to safeguard the efficient HR and financial processes across the Public Service.

4. General Procedure

4.1 Ministries are to submit their two-year HR Plans to the Coordinating Committee concurrent with the submission of the Business Plans which are submitted to the Ministry responsible for Finance. These plans should be strictly contained within the estimated budget previously communicated to the Ministries. These are to be presented in line with the template attached as Annex I with this Directive.

4.2 The Coordinating Committee shall give its feedback to each Ministry explaining any modifications required. Ministries are bound to cooperate fully with the Coordinating Committee's requests for clarifications/adjustments for this process to be completed as required.

4.3 When preparing their HR Plan, Ministries should keep in view that the allocation under 'Personal Emoluments' for each year should cover the entire staff complement, namely staff already in place, proposed recruitment, promotions, replacements, progressions, envisaged renewal of contracts, allowances, bonuses and other perks, headships, assistant directorships, as well as holders of political office, private secretariats, policy consultants, advisors and persons/positions of trust carrying out technical/ancillary functions.

4.4 Any transfers that shall be part of the approved complement/personal emoluments will continue by the delegated procedure. Transfers that will add to the approved complement/personal emoluments may only be proceeded with subject that the releasing ministry will not require an external replacement as a consequence of the transfer.

4.5 Projected budgetary allocations for personal emoluments should cover salaries for all current and new posts and positions for the whole financial year, that is from 1 January to 31 December, regardless of when vacancies are projected to be filled in.

4.6 In the case of vacancies to be filled as a result of selection processes initiated during the previous year, as per HR Plan, or vacancies from the preceding year's HR Plan for which the recruitment process has not initiated, the Ministry should, if still required, ask for the Committee's approval to carry forward in addition to the next year's Plan. In such cases the Ministry is to ensure that the funds to fill such vacancies are still available from the previous year, which would be carried forward to the new year.

4.7 In cases where the requirement for the creation of a new vacancy is due to either an expansion of service from the Ministry's end or arising out from the implementation of a particular project, Ministries are expected to support their submissions by either presenting the Coordinating Committee with a projected organigram or a business plan which clearly outlines the capacity required in terms of human resources.

4.8 As soon as the financial allocation for 'Personal Emoluments' for the forthcoming year in respect of each vote administered by the Ministry is published in the annual Financial Estimates, the Coordinating Committee will communicate the budgeted financial allocation for new external recruitment to each Ministry as issued by Ministry responsible for Finance, and request the ministry to revise its HR Plans in line with such allocation by the stipulated deadline. Once the revised Plans are received by the Committee, the Committee will re-assess and issue a communication outlining the parameters according to which the revised HR Plan may be proceeded with.

4.9 Ministries are to strictly adhere to the approved HR Plans and budgetary allocations. Should exceptional circumstances arise which require line Ministries to depart from their approved HR Plan, a formal request is to reach the Coordinating Committee in good time for the necessary considerations. Such requests must be supported by a convincing justification and whilst quantifying any corresponding changes in costs, Ministries are to state also the reason as to why the requested excess could not have been envisaged at the stage when the HR Plan was being drawn up during the previous year. The Ministry may only effect such changes on receipt of the Coordinating Committee's approval.

5. Monitoring

5.1 The P&SD will monitor the implementation of this Directive on an ongoing basis by randomly screening calls for applications which are being referred to the People Resourcing and Compliance Directorate at P&SD prior to publication on a weekly basis. The outcome of this monitoring process will subsequently be passed on for the attention of the Coordinating Committee for any action required.

6. Implementation

6.1 Failure to abide by this Directive is to be regarded as grounds for disciplinary proceedings, without prejudice to the provisions of the Fiscal Responsibility Act.

6.2 This Directive supersedes the Directive that came into force on 11 December 2015 and amended on 6 April 2017 and 1 June 2018.

6.3 This Directive shall come into force on 2 September 2022 and is indefinitely applicable, unless otherwise withdrawn.

Attached

[*HR Plan Template*](#)

Tony Sultana

Principal Permanent Secretary