



# PORTFOLIO COMMITTEE ON FORESTRY, FISHERIES AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## PROGRESS ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMISSION ON GENDER EQUALITY

**DATE: 20 FEBRUARY 2024**



forestry, fisheries  
& the environment

Department:  
Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment  
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA



# BACKGROUND

- During the financial year 2021/2022, the Commission on Gender Equality (CGE) embarked on an investigation of gender transformation within the private and public sectors.
- The Department was identified to participate in the process and to provide the Commission with the relevant information in line with the questionnaire provided.
- The CGE then held Gender Transformation Hearings on 24 November 2021 in which the Department of Forestry, Fisheries and the Environment (DFFE) appeared before the Commission.
- Subsequently, the Commission provided a report on 13 June 2022 with the findings and recommendations for DFFE to implement.



# COMMISSION ON GENDER EQUALITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- Policies were outdated and had to be reviewed to ensure that they were gender neutral. This had to be done within six (6) months of the hearing in line with the Department's internal process.
- The DFFE had to amend its Sexual Harassment Policy and align it with the Code of Good Practice of 2005. However, currently the 2022 Code is in place.
- A gender lens must be applied during the formulation of the next Five-Year Strategic Plan.
- The Employment Equity (EE) Manager, with support from top and senior management, had to ensure that persons with disabilities (PWD) are well represented at all levels in the workplace.



# COMMISSION ON GENDER EQUALITY RECOMMENDATIONS...CONT...

- The DFFE had to ensure that PWD benefit equally from workplace Skills Development. Budget must be made available to this end.
- The EE Manager, with support from top and senior management, had to ensure that all racial groups are well represented in the workplace.
- The Department to also provide detailed action plans in respect of the gaps identified.



# PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMISSION ON GENDER EQUALITY

- **Policy review:**
  - ✓ Reviewed DFFE policies were then submitted to the Commission six (6) months after the hearing in accordance with the Commission's recommendations.
  - ✓ Revised Sexual Harassment Policy and aligned it with the Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment in the Workplace of March 2022. The policy addresses all forms of harassment in the workplace.
  - ✓ All policies submitted for review were drafted with a gender lens. This was communicated to the DFFE for further review and application. The Action Plan (which consists of the B-BBEE report, Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act, Skills Development Act, EEA and Harassment Policy) was presented to the Commission.
- A five-year strategic plan was revised applying on gender lens.
- Persons with Disabilities representation in the Department is at 2% of post establishment.

# PROGRESS REPORT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF RECOMMENDATIONS MADE BY THE COMMISSION ON GENDER EQUALITY...CONT...

- 4,3% of appointed interns are Persons with Disabilities.
- Workplace Skills Plan implemented 1% personnel budget for skills development is R19, 561,170.00 for the 2023/24 financial year.
- The Performance Agreement of the DDGs include the achievement of Employment Equity Targets. Monthly Employment Equity Reports are compiled to monitor progress in meeting the EE targets.
- The Department is guided by the Gender Responsive Planning Budgeting Monitoring Evaluation and Auding Framework (GRPBMEA).



# PROGRESS AND UPDATE ON THE CGE DETAILED FINDINGS AND DFFE ACTION PLAN

- The employment policies have since been reviewed to ensure they are gender neutral with language that is sensitive to gender binary, not perpetuating gender discrimination and inequality, and transformative in nature and approved as per the recommendations of the Commission.
- The policies were subsequently submitted to the Commission and confirmed to have been developed with a gender lens, after the date of DFFE's appearance at the Commission:
  - ✓ Recruitment, Selection and Appointment Policy;
  - ✓ Job Evaluation Policy;
  - ✓ Learning and Development Policy;
  - ✓ Overtime Policy;
  - ✓ Performance Management and Development System Policy; and
  - ✓ Working Hours Policy.

# PROGRESS AND UPDATE ON THE CGE RECOMMENDATIONS

- The Harassment Policy has been updated to be in line with the DPSA Policy and Procedure on the Management of Sexual Harassment in the Public Service and the Code of Good Practice on the Prevention and Elimination of Harassment Gazetted 18 March 2022. The Harassment Policy has been consulted with the Departmental Bargaining Council (DBC), and shared with employees for inputs.
- Awareness Sessions on harassment in the workplace are implemented through monthly Induction sessions for new employees and quarterly with physical and virtual awareness sessions.
- The Department submitted the Annual Sexual Harassment Report due to the Department of Public Service and Administration on 31 April 2023. The five (5) cases of sexual harassment were reported to DPSA in April 2023. One (1) case of sexual harassment was reported by mid-term 2023/24. Investigations were conducted in all cases and disciplinary action subsequently implemented. Two (2) cases were issued with two (2) months' salary suspension, one (1) case was withdrawn on the day of the hearing (perpetrator apologised to complainant), one (1) contract expiry and one (1) contract ended.





# PROGRESS AND UPDATE ON THE CGE RECOMMENDATIONS...CONT...

- **Procurement Practices**

- **Implementation of Section 2 of the BBEE Act 53 of 2003**

- ✓ The Department is implementing and monitoring the procurement of services in line with the BBEE Act 53 of 2003. Quarterly Progress reports are compiled.
- ✓ 65% (R434 649 806,45 / R1 903 424 666,12) of overall expenditure from BBEE compliant companies (B-BBEE Levels 1- 8).
- ✓ 28 % (R49 602 812,93 / R1 903 424 666,12) of expenditure from companies that are at least 51% owned by women.

- **Implementation of Section 2 of the Preferential Procurement Policy Framework Act (PPPF) Act 5 of 2000 and PPPFA regulations for subcontracting.**



# PROGRESS AND UPDATE ON THE CGE RECOMMENDATIONS...CONT...

- The Department monitors Procurement through Monthly Reports:
  - ✓ The Departmental policy has been developed and approved in line with the new procurement regulations. In terms of the policy the Department's Specific Goals applicable for preferential procurement are enterprises/ entities that have more than 50% (fifty percent) ownership by Black People, 50% ownership by women; and 50% ownership by people with disabilities.
- The Department is guided by the Gender Responsive Planning Budgeting Monitoring Evaluation and Auding Framework (GRPBMEA). The Department submitted the GRPBMEA Report to the Department of Women Youth and Persons with Disabilities (DWYPD).
- The Department is implementing and monitoring procurement in line with the PPPF Act of 2000.
- The Procurement Plan is used to track progress on the various projects, and regular meetings are held with Project Managers to ensure adherence with the set timeframes.



# PROGRESS AND UPDATE ON THE CGE RECOMMENDATIONS...CONT...

- **Women Empowerment Principles**

- The Department has an Employment Equity Plan for the period 2022-2025.
- Implementation of Employment Equity Plan to progressively achieve target of 47% for 2022/23, 49% for 2023/24 and 50% for 2024/25 financial year. Achievement for target for Women at SMS level as at end of December 2023 is 51% (increased since September 2022 from 46%).
- Top management at level 16, the status is still the same.
- Target for Women at SMS level is 50%, new three-year Employment Equity Plan 2022 – 2025 progress monitored monthly.
- Performance Agreements of DDGs include the achievement of Employment Equity Targets. Monthly Employment Equity Reports are compiled to monitor progress in meeting the EE targets.
- Bi-Annual assessment of DDGs are conducted in meeting the EE targets.



# PROGRESS AND UPDATE ON THE CGE RECOMMENDATIONS...CONT...

- **Skills Development**

- Workplace Skills Plan implemented 1% personnel budget for skills development, an amount of R19, 561,170.00 during the 2023/24 financial year.
- Bursary intake for 2024 Academic year: 134 part-time students and 40 full-time students. 58% allocated to women.
- Interns' intake for last two (2) years: 231 (50% women, 4.3% persons with disabilities).
- Departmental Learning Networks (DLN) for MMS and SMS as well as for ASD and lower levels are held quarterly.

- **Employee Health and Wellness**

- The Department has appointed internal Wellness Practitioners and is in the process of appointing an external wellness service provider through the supply chain management process to supplement the internal capacity. The external service provider is anticipated to commence on 01 July 2024.



# DFFE APPLICATION OF GENDER LENS

The DFFE ensures application of a gender lens on the Five-year Strategic Plan in line with the strategic goals identified and implemented by the Branches/Programmes.

## The Priority Areas are:

- Employment Equity
  - ✓ Improved human resources and representativity in the capacity of the sector.
  - ✓ Implementation of the Transformation and Culture Activities pertaining to the Values of the Department.
  - ✓ Implementation of the Wellness Management Programmes – such as work life balance, financial management, mental health awareness workshops and counselling and support programs.
- Awareness Sessions
  - ✓ Increased Access to Departmental services through events, public education and awareness campaigns, stakeholder engagements implemented/convened.



# DFFE APPLICATION OF GENDER LENS...CONT...

**The Priority Areas are:**

## **Sector Gender Strategy and Implementation Plan**

- ✓ The Department has Sector Gender Strategy and Implementation Plan. The implementation is monitored through the Sector Gender Coordinators Forum composed of the National, Provincial and Public Entities Coordinators. Quarterly reports are compiled and submitted to MinTech Working Groups meetings.
- ✓ Contribution of the Department to Socio-Economic transformation and empowerment of previously disadvantaged.

**The Department continues to ensure that gender is mainstreamed through the implementation of programmes and projects.** Previously disadvantaged individuals participate in the wildlife, ecotourism and bioprospecting/trade value chain projects, biodiversity economy infrastructure projects and waste management projects.



# DFFE APPLICATION OF GENDER LENS...CONT...

- Gender Empowerment Principle 5&7: Implementation and monitoring of Gender Responsive Planning Budgeting Monitoring Evaluation Auditing (GRPBMEA) ongoing and submission of reports to various external stakeholders: Department of Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities.
- Diversity Programmes addressing gender, disability, race etc including LGBTQI+ through the Awareness sessions, Women sessions, Men's sessions, Disability Management Programmes.
- Gender responsive implementation of programmes, e.g. Boys and Girls empowerment programmes, programmes targeting unemployed young women.



# DFFE APPLICATION OF GENDER LENS...CONT...

- Poverty Alleviation programmes contributing to the South African Economic Reconstruction and Recovery Plan through Environmental Programmes Expanded Public Works Programmes.
  - Number of Work Opportunities in the Environmental Programmes, Fisheries and Forestry created target of 60% women, 55% for youth, 2% for persons with disabilities.
- ✓ Cumulatively 50 152 work opportunities created:
- Women:  $28\ 903/50\ 152 = 58\%$ ;
  - Youth:  $29\ 990/50\ 152 = 60\%$  ; and
  - Persons with Disabilities:  $350/50\ 152 = 1\%$





Thank You



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