

Date: 18 July 2024

Attention: Mr. Sithole Mbanga
Title: Chief Executive Officer
Company: South African Local Government Association
Email: smbanga@salga.org.za

Proposals on Professionalisation in Local Government

Dear Mr Mbanga,

Professionalising the public sector is crucial for creating a skilled and ethical workforce capable of delivering high-quality services and fostering public trust in government institutions. The government-wide professionalisation initiative aligns with the National Development Plan (NDP) Vision 2030 to build a capable state. The National School of Government (NSG) leads this effort by developing a national framework that includes merit-based recruitment, effective induction, continuous learning, robust performance management, and structured career progression. This comprehensive national framework is based on five key pillars:

Pillar 1. Pre-entry recruitment and selection provides merit-based recruitment selecting public servants for their skills and integrity.

Pillar 2. Induction and onboarding orientation to help new employees integrate effectively into their roles.

Pillar 3. Planning and performance management establishing robust systems for continuous performance evaluation and improvement.

Pillar 4. Continuing Learning and Professional Development (CPD) promotes ongoing education and skills enhancement to keep public servants up-to-date and competent.

Pillar 5. Career progression and career incidents to ensure structured career growth and effective management of career incidents.

These pillars aim to create a professional, skilled and ethical workforce, enhancing the capacity of the public sector.

The Role of Professional Bodies in the Professionalisation

Implementing the NSG's framework requires collaboration with key stakeholders, including professional bodies registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA). These bodies can play a crucial role by offering professional designations to public servants who adhere to high standards of competence and integrity. Designation holders are monitored annually for Continuing Professional Development (CPD). These functions ensure that public servants are qualified, competent, and continually improving their skills and knowledge.

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The Municipal Systems Act Regulations

The Municipal Systems Act Regulations provide a competency framework for local government. Annexure A of the Regulations details the required competencies for different roles within local government. This includes management competencies, personal competencies, and public service orientation competencies.

The competency framework highlights specific functional and professional competencies necessary for public servants, emphasising the depth of knowledge and ability to handle complex and challenging situations within their roles.

Key Functional Clusters

The competency framework is broken down into key functional clusters including development and town planning, technical services, community services, corporate services, and finance. Each cluster specifies the competencies and minimum requirements for various positions, ensuring a structured approach to talent management and development within the municipal environment.

Professional Conduct

The regulations also stress the importance of professional conduct, including adherence to ethical and moral standards to promote trust and confidence in the public service.

Our Proposals

The proposals below fully support the government's professionalisation initiatives aiming to ensure a more effective implementation of these initiatives in local government by promoting collaboration with accredited professional bodies in South Africa.

Compulsory Membership with Professional Bodies for Local Government Accountants

We proposed that all local government accountants should hold compulsory membership with professional bodies registered with the SAQA. This ensures that they meet the national standards of professionalism and are committed to continuous professional development (CPD).

Proposed Amendments to the Municipal Systems Act Regulations

Annexure A

Amend the existing competency framework in Annexure A to include a requirement for compulsory membership of relevant professional bodies for each accounting role within local government. This amendment should list the specific professional bodies recognised by SAQA for each role.

Amendments to section 13(1) of the Regulations

We propose that Section 13(1) Competency Requirements for Staff of the Regulations should be amended as follows:

13. (1) A person appointed as a staff member in terms of these Regulations must, where applicable—

- (a) have the necessary competencies; and
- (b) comply with the minimum requirements for education qualifications, work experience, and knowledge as set out in Annexure A; and

(c) hold a relevant professional designation conferred by a recognised professional body registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA).

(2) A staff member who was appointed before these Regulations came into effect and who does not meet the minimum competency requirements of the relevant post as prescribed, shall be deemed to be meeting the requirements of the post. Despite the provision of this regulation, a municipality may place a staff member on a programme to acquire the competency requirements, **including obtaining the relevant professional designation**, as prescribed for the staff member to be eligible for career opportunities in the municipality.

(3) If a staff member has not attained the competencies as prescribed in these Regulations, the municipality must utilise the workplace skills plan to identify and address the staff member's competency gaps and development needs, **including support for obtaining the relevant professional designation**.

Conclusion

CIBA fully endorses the government's initiative to professionalise local government and is confident that our recommendations will significantly improve the existing framework. We value the opportunity to engage and provide input on this crucial matter and earnestly request that CIBA be included in any discussions held by professional bodies or advisory forums related to the professionalisation of local government. We appreciate your time and consideration of our proposals. CIBA welcomes further cooperation and discussions to ensure the successful implementation of these initiatives.

Please do not hesitate to contact us should you need further information or clarification.

Kind regards,



Eszter Rapanos
Technical Manager

ANNEXURE A: About CIBA

CIBA is a Professional Accountancy Organisation (PAO) and Self-Regulatory Organisation for accountants, tax practitioners, financial managers, and financial directors, in the public and private sector, with offices in South Africa and Namibia. We are associate members of the Pan African Federation of Accountants (PAFA) and full members of the International CFO Alliance (ICFOA). CIBA is authorised to issue designations as registered with the South African Qualifications Authority (SAQA) and our designated members are recognised as accounting officers, independent reviewers, and independent accounting professionals.

CIBA is a statutorily recognised professional accountancy organisation performing a public service in terms of the following empowering legislation:

South Africa

- Recognised Professional Body and Registered Professional Designations: National Qualifications Framework Act 67 of 2008
- Recognised Controlling Body for Tax Practitioners: Section 240A of the Tax Administration Act, 2011
- Professional Accountancy Organisation for Assurance and Non-assurance providers: Regulation 29(4) of the Companies Act, 2008 and Section 60(2) of the Close Corporations Act, 1984.

Namibia

- Professional Accountancy Organisation for Accounting Officers: Section 60(2) of the Close Corporations Act, 1988.

CIBA's objectives are to protect the public interest by adopting and enforcing standards of ethics, conduct, quality, and service engagement standards that seek to ensure the delivery of accountable and transparent professional service by CIBA members.

We do this by offering executive education and continuous professional development (CPD) via our training platform CIBA Academy, technical news updates via accounting weekly and CFO talks, and enforcing ethical conduct through thorough monitoring and disciplinary procedures.

Our brands include:

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