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FOR PSA MEMBERS: DEPARTMENT OF SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT (DSBD)

11-11-2024

Feedback: DSBD Departmental Bargaining Chamber

OHS compliance

The employer reported that the Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) committee is currently operational, comprising First Aiders, Firefighters, Peer Educators/Wellness Buddies, and SHREQ Representatives. A workshop for Committee members was held on 17 September 2024, arranged by the Department. The PSA, however, expressed dissatisfaction with the presentation, as it failed to address critical building defects such as poor ventilation and limited office space. Additionally, the PSA raised concerns over the employer's indication that the Director-General (DG) has instructed all employees working from home to return to the office by 1 December 2024. The employer confirmed that the DG authorised a memo instructing all employees to resume on-site work by that date. Following a recent meeting, labour agreed to caucus, and the caucus resolved to urgently request a meeting with the DG. A letter was immediately sent to the DG to discuss the matter. The PSA is committed to ensuring that no employee is required to enter a non-compliant building and will keep members updated on developments.

Moving to new building/office

Members are reminded that the current building lease expired in October 2024. The employer has requested an extension of the lease until March 2025, as the process to secure a new building is still underway. The Department plans to move to a new facility that will house both the Department and its merged entities to achieve cost savings. The total space requirement, based on a comprehensive needs analysis, is approximately 18 106.5 m², including lettable space and parking. The DSBD will represent the entities as the lessor and anticipates that merged entities will be fully established by the time of occupation. The Department is currently piloting a hybrid working model, which has allowed the reduction of office occupation, as most employees continue to work remotely. The PSA questioned whether the proposed building would be ready by 1 December 2024, given the plan to recall employees who are currently working from home. The employer responded that the building would not be ready for occupation by that date, as it still needed to submit the proposal to the Department of Public Works and Infrastructure.

Filling of funded vacant posts

The employer reported that 315 positions have been created in the current establishment, with 243 filled permanently and 70 remaining vacant. Additionally, 40 positions are at various stages of recruitment, whilst seven are pending concurrence from the Department of Public Service and Administration. Another

16 posts are awaiting instructions from the respective Branch Heads. The PSA commended the employer for its efforts in reducing the vacancy rate and enquired about the timeline for completing all appointments. The employer responded that it aims to finalise all appointments by the end of this financial year. The PSA welcomed this update.

Strategy on attraction of youth

Members will recall that in the previous meeting, the employer introduced its intention to develop a strategy document aimed at attracting young talent to the Department. A draft of this document has now been completed and will be submitted to the Management Committee (MANCO) for input. The PSA enquired when the document would be shared with labour. The employer responded that the draft would be shared with labour once feedback has been received from MANCO.

Policies

The employer introduced the following new departmental policies and requested that these be referred to the task team for further engagement with labour:

ICT Governance Policy: This policy aims to institutionalise and coordinate ICT governance in the DSBD, embedding it as a key aspect of corporate governance. The policy outlines principles and practices that the Department must follow to ensure effective ICT governance.

ICT Acceptable Use Policy: This policy defines the acceptable use of computer equipment and electronic devices in the DSBD. The guidelines are designed to protect employees and the DSBD, as inappropriate usage can expose the Department to cybersecurity risks, including virus attacks, ransomware, data breaches, and legal issues.

The PSA has noted the introduction of these new policies (*attached*). Members are encouraged to review the policies and submit feedback to motjatji.mala@psa.co.za by no later than **13 November 2024**. Members will be informed of developments.

Employees who want to join the PSA can visit the PSA's website, send an email to ask@psa.co.za, or contact a PSA Provincial Offices.

Reuben Maleka
GENERAL MANAGER