

**SECURITY VETTING IN THE  
DEPARTMENT OF HOME AFFAIRS**

by  
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Mini-thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for  
the degree of Masters of Management in the field of Security  
(MM-S)

In the  
**GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC AND DEVELOPMENT  
MANAGEMENT UNIVERSITY OF WITWATERSRAND**

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**February 2017**

## **DECLARATION**

I hereby declare that the work submitted here is the result of my own independent investigation. Where assistance was sought, it was acknowledged. In addition, I declare that the work in this paper is submitted for the first time at this university/school toward the Master's Degree in Management in the field of Security and has not been submitted to any other university/faculty/school for the purpose of obtaining a degree.

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**STUDENT**

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**DATE**

## **ABSTRACT**

This is a report on Security Vetting in the Department of Home Affairs. The South African Public Service (including the Department of Home Affairs) as an employer has an obligation to deliver services in an accountable and transparent manner and because of that people who obtain employment in the public sector are expected to possess a high level of integrity and professional ethics. The Security Screening Investigation (SSI) commonly known as Security Vetting or Vetting was introduced in government departments with the objective of ensuring that all the individuals employed in government with access to classified information possess the qualities that will enable them “not to cause classified information or material to fall into unauthorised hands, thereby harming or endangering the security and/or interests of the State”. The process of vetting is, however, the mandate of the State Security Agency (SSA), with the responsibility of a larger portion of the vetting process while the smaller portion of the function lies with some government departments, of which the DHA is one. It has been observed that regardless of the decentralization of the functions of vetting by the SSA, there are still challenges that are experienced in DHA with the current vetting approach/strategy.

This study was undertaken with the purpose of identifying and describing the challenges relating to the current vetting process in the DHA and as a follow-up to determine the possibility of establishing a strategy that will address the current shortcomings. Interviews were undertaken with Home Affairs officials to collect data on the effectiveness and efficiency of the current vetting strategy in the department, the challenges and the shortcomings concerning vetting, as well as how vetting strategy can be constructed in order to alleviate the challenges and the shortcomings. The findings indicate that the current vetting strategy is neither effective nor efficient. The report further indicates that there are several challenges with the current vetting strategy in DHA, such as DHA reliance on SSA for the completion of the vetting process, a shortage of vetting officers in the department, delayed turnaround times on the conclusion of the vetting process as

well as failure in the implementation of the vetting strategy. The conclusion is that the current vetting strategy needs to be reviewed and improved.

## **DEDICATION**

I dedicate this thesis to my children, Boikanyo, Amogelang and Kefilwe, and my mother Agnes and sister Ditaba.

Thank you so much for the unconditional support during my studies.

I love you very much.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I wish to express my sincere gratitude and appreciation to the following people:

My Academic Supervisor, Professor Anthoni Van Nieuwkerk, for his dedicated support, his expert supervision and endless patience as well as his assistant with practical advice.

Mr K.L. Olifant, my supervisor at work, for his unstinting support and allowing me to undertake work and studies at the same time.

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## LIST OF ACRONYMS

|        |  |
|--------|--|
| COMSEC | Electronic Communication Security                        |
| CSIS   | Canada Security Intelligence Services                    |
| DHA    | Department of Home Affairs                               |
| DPSA   | Department of Public Services and Administration         |
| GCDCAF | Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces |
| GILAB  | General Intelligence Laws Amendment Bill                 |
| ICPC   | International Centre for Policy and Conflict             |
| LNP    | Liberia National Police                                  |
| MISS   | Minimum Information Security Standard                    |
| NIA    | National Intelligence Agency                             |
| NCC    | National Communication Centre                            |
| NSSS   | Nigeria State Security Services                          |
| NZSIS  | New Zealand Security Intelligence Services               |
| OIC    | Office for Interception Centers                          |
| SANAI  | South African National Academy of Intelligence           |
| SANDF  | South African National Defence Force                     |
| SAPS   | South African Police Service                             |
| SASS   | South African Secret Service                             |
| SSA    | State Security Agency                                    |
| SSI    | Security Screening Investigation                         |
| SSR    | Security Sector Reform                                   |
| SVIS   | Security Vetting Information System                      |
| VFU    | Vetting Fieldwork Unit                                   |
| UN     | United Nations   |
| UNMIL  | United Nations Mission in Liberia                        |

# **CHAPTER 1**

## **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1. INTRODUCTION**

The first democratic elections in South Africa held in 1994 brought about several changes in policy. Among these were strategies to ensure that individuals who obtain employment in government departments conduct themselves in a manner that will not endanger or compromise the image of the individual and especially the image of the specific department. This is because the Public Service as an employer has an obligation to deliver services in an accountable and transparent manner. It is expected that the people who obtain employment in the public sector possess a high level of integrity and professional ethics. The Security Screening Investigation (SSI), commonly known as Security Vetting or Vetting, was introduced in government departments. The main objective of government with regard to vetting is to ensure that all the individuals employed in government with access to classified information possess the qualities that will enable them “not to cause classified information or material to fall into unauthorised hands, thereby harming or endangering the security and/or interests of the State” (Minimum Information Security Standards (MISS), 1996, p 12). In order to ensure that this objective is met, the relevant members of the National Intelligence Structures (i.e. State Security Structures) conduct vetting on individuals who are applicants or employees of an organ of state.

### **1.2. BACKGROUND**

The process of vetting was not practiced previously in South Africa (Duthie, 2007). There was no vetting legislation applicable to the Public Service during the South African transition. There was also no formal practice of vetting that was applied within the public service sector or the “homelands” prior to 1994 with the exception of the South African National Intelligence Agency (NIA) currently

known as the South African State Security Agency (SSA). The South African State Security Agency (SSA) is the result of the merger between the NIA and the South African Secret Service (SASS) which took place in March 2010, the South African National Defence Force (SANDF) and the South African Police Service (SAPS) as they are regarded as the security components of the public service (Duthie, 2007). This has since changed as indicated above in terms of policies and strategies. After the introduction of SSI, the NIA had the responsibility to conduct vetting for entire government departments. However, since the public sector is the largest single employer in South Africa with thousands of applications from prospective employees, the demand for public servants who need to be vetted has increased and now presents a serious demand on the NIA due to lack of capacity. To address the above challenge, a new vetting strategy which is called the National Vetting Strategy in the Public Service was developed and approved by the cabinet in December 2006. The strategy resulted in the establishment of Vetting Fieldwork Units (VFU) in the major government departments which includes the Department of Home Affairs (Management of Job Applicants with Criminal Records in the Public Sector, 2009). This strategy was not without restrictions. It requires that the training of vetting officers, issuing of security clearance certificates and the supervision of the process remains with SSA in terms of its mandate as the only organization that can issue security clearances. This strategy requires a lengthy turnaround time for the processing and issuing of clearance certificates. Government departments are allowed to conduct part of the whole vetting process and the rest lies with SSA. Because entire government departments have to rely on SSA for vetting, the period before the conclusion of the vetting takes place is extended. The main intention of the vetting strategy is to prevent the risk of government officials becoming targets of acts of espionage, or being susceptible to corruption and other criminal and unconstitutional activities.

SSA is responsible for the control and supervision of the entire process including training of vetting officers, while government departments are responsible for employment of their own vetting officers. The Fieldwork Unit as a small part of

the vetting process does not warrant the issuing of clearance certificates because the evaluation process rests with SSA. Due to lack of capacity to deal with all the fieldwork processing of all the government departments (NIA Vetting Strategy in Context, 2007), the rest of the vetting process takes longer to finalise before a clearance certificate can be issued. The DHA is currently sitting with employees still waiting for clearance certificates and who applied more than two years previously. These officials are allowed to have access to classified information because their core functions will be affected if they have to wait until they are issued with security clearance before being allowed access to classified information. The DHA is a service delivery driven department and service delivery cannot be compromised because of an outstanding clearance certificate or vetting process that is still in progress.

### **1.3. PROBLEM STATEMENT**

In order to overcome the problems with employees who are not vetted and the associated potential threats to state security, the DHA need a vetting strategy that is effective and efficient with reasonable turnaround time. In addition, the process has to allow access by DHA officials to track and trace the progress of their clearance application. The terms ‘effective’ and ‘efficient’ are used in companies when exploring ways of improving business practice. The two terms are similar but they mean different things. According to Productivity SA (2007: p 27) effectiveness is described as the “ability to achieve the set goals and objectives” and efficiency is described as the “ability to accomplish a task with minimum expenditure of time and effort” (Reed & Swain, 1997: p 321). To describe the two terms in a simple way, efficiency is doing things right and effectiveness is doing the right things. In terms of vetting, efficiency will mean that the process of vetting should be done faster, i.e. within a reasonable time. Effectiveness will mean that every government employee should first be vetted before getting access to confidential information, i.e. before assuming duties. When effectiveness and efficiency are combined, the vetting process becomes faster and still meets the objective because an individual will be vetted within the period that they are still awaiting appointment.

Currently the DHA's vetting is reliant on SSA except for fieldwork which is a small part of the entire process. If DHA continues to depend on SSA for the rest of the vetting process, as it will not only be affected in terms of the turnaround time which will jeopardise overall efficiency in conducting vetting, but may also run the risk of allowing officials who can become easy targets for acts of espionage, corruption, other crimes and unconstitutional activities, to have access to classified information. From the above deliberation, it is clear that there is a need for a new approach that can improve on the current strategy and address the above challenges. If the DHA can have its own vetting unit that is capacitated to conduct vetting from start to end, it can address the above challenges and thereby reduce turnaround time for the issuing of clearance certificates. It therefore becomes important to conduct research that will identify challenges and shortcomings in the current vetting process in order to motivate expansion of the vetting mandate to the vetting units within the organs of state and in particular the DHA.

#### **1.4. PURPOSE STATEMENT**

The purpose of the research is to identify and describe the challenges relating to the current vetting process in the DHA and as a follow-up, determine the possibilities of establishing a strategy that will address the current shortcomings. Conducting this study will help in understanding the benefits of having a new and improved vetting strategy in the DHA.

#### **1.5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

##### **1.5.1. The main research question**

The main research question that informs the research is:

- a. How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in the DHA?

### **1.5.2. Sub-research questions**

The following are the sub-research questions:

- a. What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting at DHA?
- b. How should a vetting strategy be constructed in order to alleviate the challenges and shortcomings?

### **1.6. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RESEARCH**

In many instances, public servants are at risk of being easy targets of acts of espionage, sabotage, subversion, corruption and a range of other crimes and unconstitutional activities. It is for this reason that the Department of Public Service and Administration (DPSA) deemed it necessary and important that all government departments have adequate processes of vetting in place in order to curb the abovementioned actions (Management of Job Applicants with a Criminal Record in the Public Service, 2009). If there are shortcomings in how these processes are conducted, government departments will not only be running the risk of allowing officials who may be prone to being easy targets for acts of espionage, corruption, other crimes and unconstitutional activities, access to classified information but also tarnishing the image of government because of its reputation of employing corrupt officials and officials with criminal records. This will in turn have a negative impact on the government from the perspective of international relations and potentially impact on foreign investment. The use of vetting is viewed as one of the most important process in government processes, especially in a country like South Africa where the transition to democracy is ongoing, but it has not been studied as frequently as prosecutions, disclosure and reparations (Duthie, 2000). This study is conducted on the premise that it will add to the scholarly research and literature in the field of vetting to improve policies and practices.

## **1.7. CONCLUSION**

In this first chapter the study was introduced and the background was explained. The problem statement was presented as well as the purpose of the research. The research questions were indicated as well as the significance of the study. The next chapter will provide the review of the literature which will be followed by the research methodology followed on the report in chapter three. The fourth chapter will provide the presentation of the results. Chapter five which is the final chapter will present the general analysis of the research.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW: SECURITY VETTING**

#### **2.1. INTRODUCTION**

The purpose of the literature review is to provide a general framework on the subject of vetting. In this chapter, the focus will be on the theory of vetting, the role and importance of vetting practices in South Africa with more emphasis on the DHA. The National Vetting Strategy in the Public Service of 2006 that was developed and approved by the cabinet during December 2006 has resulted in the establishment of Vetting Fieldwork Units (VFU) in major government departments including the DHA (Management of Job Applicants with Criminal Records in the Public Sector, 2009). This chapter will discuss the gaps that might exist in the Vetting Strategy of 2006 with emphasis on the implementation process that was followed regarding the strategy. Other discussions will address the vetting concept in order to understand its meaning and origin and the normal practice in terms of vetting in other countries for benchmark purposes, and to derive commonality of the challenges and problems.

#### **2.2. VETTING CONCEPT DISCUSSED**

The concept of vetting has not received much attention in academic studies. It is preferable to first understand what vetting means before commencing with the study. The origin of vetting comes from horse racing terms whereby it was a requirement that a racehorse should be checked for health and soundness by a veterinarian before it is allowed to participate in racing. It was then taken as a term “vet” generally meaning to check, a process that involves a few steps and broadly takes place in the form of performing background checks on an individual before offering them employment (Wikipedia). It is not only used for employment purposes but is also used in countries undergoing a process of transition in order to determine what to do with public employees who were responsible for human

rights abuses. In this instance vetting is used as “processes of assessing the integrity of individuals (such as their adherence to relevant human rights standards and professional conduct including the person’s ability to manage their finances) in order to determine their suitability for public employment”. This is done through screening the candidates or public officials to determine if their history in relation to their behaviour warrants their exclusion from access to a public institution. In this case the behaviour refers to the individual respect for human rights especially from a transitional justice perspective (Duthie, 2007, p 17).

Vetting can also be described as a process that is based on “the evaluation of an individual’s character, attributes, background and actions” (Attorney-General’s Department, 2010a; Defence Vetting Report, 2007) as cited in Brooks, Corkill, Pooley, Cohen and Ferguson (2010), with the aim being to confirm the person’s identity and to ensure their integrity. Integrity in this case is more to do with the honesty of a person as well as to determine the person’s security vulnerabilities through police checks, referee checks and in some cases a security assessment interview which seeks to confirm the suitability of the person for a security clearance by determining whether they have “skeletons in their past” (Brooks et Al, 2010: p 36).

Vetting is not a new concept but has been practiced in various parts of the world where each country tends to describe it as it is applicable to them (Lucas, 2009). For example, in Northern Ireland vetting is about background checks of people with the purpose of attempting to exclude disloyal people or those who are considered to be susceptible to disloyalty for different reasons from employment in government (McEvoy & White, 2013). In the United States of America it is defined as an attempt “to determine whether past behaviour is a matter of concern for future reliability” (Moynihan & Combest, 1997). This definition seeks to understand whether past behaviour can influence future performance and/or reliability. The Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces Backgrounder (2006, p 2) defines vetting as “a process by which individuals are

screened for access to rights or duties”. It means background checks are done to ensure that a person has the required attributes to justify their access to certain rights and duties.

As indicated above, the phenomenon of vetting is not new internationally, as it has been practiced globally including in the African continent. From the African perspective, vetting is described as the process of assessing the integrity of an individual in order to determine suitability for public employment (United Nations: New York & Geneva, 2006). Other countries in Africa that practice vetting include Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Botswana. Other countries which also practice vetting include China, Brazil, Bosnia and India.

The South African Minimum Information Security Standards (MISS) document (1996, p 13) defines vetting as “the systematic process of investigation followed in determining a person’s security competence”. Investigation refers to checking, while security competence is the ability of an individual to conduct themselves in a manner whereby they are able to secure classified information or material so that it does not fall into unauthorised hands which can endanger or harm the security and/or interests of the state. Security competence is a measurable term and is normally measured against the following criteria: susceptibility to extortion or blackmail, willingness to accept bribes, corruption and susceptibility to being compromised because of compromising behaviour, and a person’s loyalty to the state/institution (MISS, 1996). As it may be observed from all the descriptions of vetting, the words such as integrity and suitability as well as background checks to ensure the past does not affect the present and/or the future are commonly used. This indicates that depending on which perspective one uses to describe vetting, the commonality in terms of checks always surfaces, meaning that all the descriptions reduce to one meaning, namely background checks. The intention is that before a person can be allowed access to public employment or indeed any employment, he/she has to be checked for suitability. Suitability will depend on the type of access the person is afforded, but mostly integrity is the main aspect.

According to the DHA Annual Performance Plan for 2013/14 -2015/16, one of the values of the DHA is its commitment to being free of corruption and ethical. Because vetting is about determining security competence, non-participation in corruption is one of the values of the DHA, it can be considered that the practice of vetting is relevant and needs to be done properly and effectively. The DHA Annual Performance Plan for 2013/14 -2015/16 is clear on their values of “discipline and security consciousness”. One of those values is behaviour and vetting is also about behaviour checking. In summary, the above descriptions have indicated what vetting is and also what role vetting plays in government. For the purposes of this study, the vetting definition as stipulated in the MISS document will be used.

The reason why vetting is needed in the DHA is because public employees are often at risk of being targeted for acts of fraud, corruption and other criminal and unconstitutional activities. There have been reports in the media about arrests of officials in the DHA who were involved in acts of fraud and corruption. To give an example, News24 on 13 August 2016 reported that two Home Affairs officials were arrested for fraud, corruption and extortion in the Giyani and Musina offices. The official in Giyani is an assistant office manager and was arrested for soliciting a bribe from asylum seekers from different countries during the time when he was managing the Refugee Centre at Beit Bridge. The other official was arrested for allegedly stamping the passport of an illegal immigrant who was detained for being in the country illegally. A further incident was reported by SABC News Life, dated 29 September 2016, where 25 people (immigration officers and Lesotho nationals) were arrested at a Lesotho port of entry for soliciting bribes in return for fraudulent documents. Based on the two scenarios, it can be seen that it is necessary that adequate processes of security vetting be put in place in order to ensure that every employee of DHA is trustworthy and honest (Republic of South Africa: Implementation of Vetting Strategy in the Public Service, 2007).

### **2.3. INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES ON THE PRACTICE OF VETTING**

Vetting practice is not the same around the world. Each country has their own way of vetting that is more acceptable to them. This refers only to the process and not the contents itself because the objective is to conduct background checks. From the previous discussion on the current vetting strategy and its shortcomings, the concepts of centralised, decentralised and mixed approaches to vetting were introduced as well as reasons for using either approach depending on what the country deems acceptable. Like the centralised approach being practiced in certain countries, the decentralised approach is also practiced in countries such as Switzerland and Germany. Other countries like Canada, the United Kingdom and the United States follow a combination of the two approaches. Although there is no specific document that states that South Africa is practicing a combination of the two methods, based on the definitions and descriptions of a combination of the two approaches, the writer concludes that is a combination because of the fact that there are government departments that do fieldwork and the rest lies with the intelligence structure, namely SSA.

Because of the extensive resources that vetting requires, especially financial resources, it will be beneficial to have a vetting strategy that will not only be cost efficient but also effective in terms of turnaround time and simplicity in accessing data to check progress, rather than having to make a telephone call. This can be done by creating a national database or standard research procedures. It is said that regardless of which approach is followed, most countries make an effort to ensure that vetting procedures are standardised so that the common goal is reached (GCDCAF, Backgrounder, 2006).

As already indicated above, there are more countries in the world practicing vetting, and it is important in this study to discuss those countries, their practices as well as the challenges that they might be experiencing in order to benchmark with them from the South African perspective. Countries in Africa that practice

vetting include Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria and Botswana. The other countries to be discussed in the report are China, Brazil, Bosnia and India.

### **2.3.1. Ghana**

The concept of vetting was introduced in 1992 after the new constitution was passed. The aim was that the approval of the presidential nominees should be done by the parliament and that process is commonly known as vetting. This was also part of the country's best effort to codify its objectives for a democratic system of government. Ghana's process of vetting in this regard is open for the public and it is telecast live giving an opportunity for members of the public to challenge the nominees who might have been dishonest when submitting their applications to the committee. Different from the South African version of vetting, in Ghana this process involves the candidates appearing before the committee (parliament) and answering questions from the committee. This process is said to be a revised one. The previous vetting process was described as highly "pro-forma (more documented), perfunctory and largely ceremonial. The revised process was as a result of a lawsuit from NPP opposition which confirmed the need to conduct vetting on all ministerial nominees regardless of whether or not they were suspended or were continuing ministers, with the aim of exposing wrongdoing and/or disqualifying unsuitable candidates. This has, however, been questioned by many because there is no clarity as to whether the Parliament as the committee which conducts vetting has the authority to reject the president's nominees especially if the majority in parliament belongs to the ruling party (Gyimah-Boadi, 2005, p2).

There were challenges experienced with this vetting approach. For example, it is said that the time allocated for hearings and investigations after the announcement of the nomination was limited which resulted in informal investigation which could have been ineffective because there were also many petitions from the public opposing the nominees which raised concerns about the quality of background checks conducted on the nominees. The shortcoming was the

parliament's technical incapability together with its committee where there were insufficient resources and technical capacity for checking and verifying claims. It was also seen that the research and the analytical capacity of the parliament was too weak to allow a deep investigation (Gymah-Boadi, 2005).

Above all, the process of vetting is said to be part of the recruitment process for potential public servants. It is divided into nominal vetting and positive vetting and is conducted by designated security agencies. Nominal vetting is for employment in the public service and positive vetting is for those potential candidates whose positions require that they have access to sensitive information where they also are required to take decisions on behalf of the state (Human Resource Management Policy Framework and Manual for The Ghana Public Services, 2015).

### **2.3.2. Liberia**

According to the International Centre for Policy and Conflict (ICPC), vetting has been conducted in Liberia since 2004 after the start of Security Sector Reforms (SSR) programmes with the first reform by the United Nations peacekeeping mission (UNMIL) of the Liberian National Police (LNP) (Africa Report No. 148, 2009). The vetting process was conducted by the international team of the United Nations mission with the police and military government arms involved. A number of LNP officers were selected to assist the team with the assessment of 'vettees', including those applying to join the newly established police force. Similar to the vetting process in Ghana, the public was involved in the process through the media, public debates and the publication of candidates' photographs. Similar to Ghana, the public was also encouraged to lodge complaints against candidates who were deemed to be unsuitable for police service. The process took two years and after that there were major problems observed within the LNP such as prevalent corruption, poor leadership and lack of knowledge on how operations should be based on human rights requirements and the law in Liberia. The main challenge in this process of vetting was that there were no allegations received

from the public and this is most likely because members of the public were afraid of possible revenge because the protection measures for informants remains inadequate and people do not trust that they will be safe.

However, the reform in the army seemed to be of some success. The soldiers underwent a rigorous vetting process which was indicated by experts as being successful when compared to international standards (Africa Report No 148, 2009).

### **2.3.3. Nigeria**

Vetting processes in Nigeria are the responsibility of the Nigerian State Security Services (SSS). It is indicated that amongst other functions of the SSS, the vetting of prospective appointees to public offices in Nigeria is included. This is similar to the situation in South Africa. It is not, however, indicated if there is any stage of the vetting process that is decentralized such as in the case of South Africa whereby fieldwork is done within government departments (Ajani, 2011).

### **2.3.4. Botswana**

There is limited information available regarding vetting practices in Botswana. It has been indicated that the process of vetting is the responsibility of the Directorate of Intelligence and Security Services, a body that was established in 2006. Amongst other functions, the Directorate has the responsibility of carrying out security vetting and providing clearance to people who occupy certain positions as well as people who have or may have access to any information that is classified or is of a sensitive nature and for an individual to be entitled to have to such access, they need to have a security clearance (Nkala, 2006). According to this information, the process of vetting in Botswana is similar to that of South Africa. When it comes to the duration of the process of vetting, the Director of Directorate Intelligence and Security indicated in his interview with the Sunday Standard Newspaper dated 08 June 2014 that it takes four days to vet a person who is a citizen of Botswana. It takes longer to vet someone who is not a

Botswana citizen because the Intelligence Services need to liaise with the applicant's country of origin (Ontebetse, 2013).

### **2.3.5. China**

The process of vetting is not always open to the public. It can therefore be difficult to obtain information in certain countries regarding vetting. China is one of the countries that do not open its vetting processes up to the public. However, Article 28 of the Republic of China's Constitution states that people who are in charge of the secrets of state will have to be examined and approved in accordance with the regulations of the national State Secrets Bureau and the relevant personnel department. This indicates that people who are employed in the government are not permitted to have access to confidential information without being checked or examined (Law of the People's Republic of China on Guarding State Secrets: Chapter IV, 1998).

### **2.3.6. Brazil**

Brazil keeps its vetting processes private and confidential. Furthermore, when writing an academic paper that involves intelligence studies, it is difficult because there is not much information available on the discipline of intelligence and the fact that intelligence is normally a secret. Bruneau (2009) notes that for a writer to get information concerning a country's intelligence system they need to have at least some kind of privileged access and in the case of this writer, she does not have this. However, it is said that the human resource departments in the Latin America have adopted the practice of background screening and checks which are also a form of vetting. As part of Latin America, it seems likely that Brazil is practicing vetting (Gonzalez, 2013).

### **2.3.7. Bosnia**

In Bosnia, the vetting process was a component of the country's transition to democracy and peace. Through the processes of vetting, an integrity criterion for employment was set as well as the assessment of suitability for employment in the public institutions (Mayer-Rieckh, 2007). This is the same as in South Africa. It is also indicated in the "Official Gazette of Bosnia and Herzegovina 54/05" that people who hold positions in public office and those applying for positions within the public institutions, as well as those in intelligence and defence, will be subjected to security checks, which is also referred to as vetting. These security checks are conducted by the Intelligence Security Agency of Bosnia and Herzegovina. This is similar to the situation in South Africa with an intelligence agency conducting vetting for the country.

### **2.3.8. India**

The case of India is not different from the other countries mentioned above. Its vetting process is not readily available for public access. However, the information that was found indicates that the country does conduct background verification during recruitment processes. Initially the verification was only concerned with educational certificates and letters from previous employers but that has since changed and now includes background checks that incorporate, amongst others, criminal checks and credit history. However, according to Shroff and Sinha (2012), there is no legal requirement or standard that allows for employers in India to conduct background checks on prospective employees. It is only in certain exceptional cases that background checks are legalized such as the case of the Reserve Bank of India which has issued notices to dealer banks to conduct background checks on potential employees. While there is no common standard, the dealer banks are not supposed to employ candidates with criminal records. From the above statements regarding vetting in India, it differs from

South African because of the fact that in India there is no legal requirement to conduct vetting, whereas in South Africa it is a requirement.

## **2.4. BENCHMARKING FROM INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVES**

From the discussion above regarding the international perspectives on the practice of vetting, it is difficult to use the countries mentioned above to benchmark for various reasons. Firstly, the process of vetting is a confidential matter and many countries do not open up that kind of information to public access. Secondly, academic studies are limited on the discipline of intelligence and the fact that intelligence is usually a secret and vetting is part of the intelligence process. Thirdly, the countries mentioned above have different practices compared to South Africa. However, the writer identified two countries whose vetting process is available and open to public scrutiny and for the purpose of this study these countries will be used for benchmarking purposes. They are New Zealand and Canada.

### **2.4.1. The vetting process in New Zealand**

In New Zealand, the process of vetting is not much different from that of South Africa. The government department or agency in New Zealand is responsible for deciding if an employee needs a security clearance based on that individual's access to classified government information. Their vetting is also a function of the country's intelligence agency, the New Zealand Security Intelligence Services (NZSIS). They are responsible for undertaking the vetting and also make recommendations regarding the issuing or non-issuing of security clearance (Tucker, 2012). Walter (2010) explains that NZSIS's responsibility of security clearance is set out in the New Zealand Security Intelligence Act of 1969 Section 4(1)(b) and Section 4(1)(c) which states that the NZSIS has a responsibility "to conduct inquiries into whether particular individuals should be granted security clearance, and to make appropriate recommendations based on those inquiries". These responsibilities are normally referred to as "vetting" which is used as a means to guard against risks that can affect national security. Tucker (2012) and

Walter (2010) observe that the reason for conducting the process of vetting is that any person in New Zealand who has a requirement to access classified government information needs to be in possession of valid security clearance. This is the same as in South Africa except that in New Zealand the process of vetting is the responsibility of the intelligence agency from the beginning to the end as opposed to South Africa where some of the stages of vetting are decentralised to a government department.

Besides the similarities and differences mentioned above as far as New Zealand and South Africa are concerned, there are some that can also be used especially for benchmark purposes. Both Walter (2010) and Rennie (2010) observe that the vetting system in New Zealand is similar to the one in South Africa and was struggling to cope with the volume of work due to capacity and the 9/11 situation which aggravated the problem and resulted in backlogs and long delays in the processing of vetting requests. This system thus proved to be ineffective, and there are similarities with the situation in South Africa which led to the Vetting Strategy of 2006 as previously explained.

New Zealand developed measures to improve the then struggling vetting strategy. They introduced a new improved computerization system called the Online Vetting Request System which replaced the old application system that was predominantly paper-based. This is currently used in New Zealand. The vetting application as compared to South Africa is no longer done on a paper application form. This method has reduced the delays in processing of vetting requests and there is also a tool for tracking the progress of vetting requests of applicants. The outcome is improved efficiency and effectiveness of the vetting process in relation to the engagement between the NZSIS and the user departments. This method also improved the turnaround time for issuing of clearance which is approximately five months (Walter, 2010).

#### **2.4.2 The vetting process in Canada**

The Canadian government has a system of vetting referred to as “screening”. As indicated by Vitkauskas (1999) and Lucas (2009), the responsibility of vetting or screening in Canada lies with the Canadian Security Intelligence Services (CSIS). Vitkauskas (1999) explains that the process of vetting is conducted on all government employees who have access to classified information and they are required to possess a valid security clearance. This is informed by Section 2 of the CSIS Act of 1984 as well as in the Security Policy of the Government of Canada (Hayward, 1999). This condition is also provided for in the Public Service Employment Act of Canada which is similar to South Africa. Even though the Intelligence Service in Canada (CSIS) has the responsibility to conduct vetting on government employees, they do not have the responsibility to grant, deny, revoke or suspend security clearance as in the case of South Africa. Their Security Policy in Government allows the relevant government department to undertake those functions. In other words, the CSIS conducts the security vetting assessments as in South Africa and they do the recommendations and let the requesting government department decide on whether to grant or deny a security clearance (Security Screening Program, 2015). The other main issue that is important for the purpose of benchmarking in security vetting is the turnaround time. In Canada it takes approximately 75 and 120 days to conclude the vetting process depending on which clearance is needed (Canadian Industrial Security Requirements on Personnel and Organization, 2012).

Table 1 below provides a brief comparison of different countries on their vetting process. It gives indication of what approaches each country follows compared to South Africa, who is responsible to conduct vetting in that country and the duration of the vetting process.

### 2.4.3. Comparison of vetting process in various countries

**Table 1: Comparison of vetting processes**

| <b>Characteristics of Vetting</b> | <b>South Africa</b>   | <b>New Zealand</b>   | <b>Canada</b>  | <b>Other Countries</b>   |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--|--|
| <b>Over-sight</b>                 | Vetting process is the responsibility of the Country's Intelligence Service: i.e. State Security Agency (SSA) | Vetting process is the responsibility of the Country's Intelligence Service: i.e. New Zealand Security Intelligence Services (NZSIS) | Vetting process is the responsibility of the Country's Intelligence Service: i.e. Canada Security Intelligence Services (CSIS) | Vetting process is said to be the responsibility of the relevant agency which could either be Country's Intelligence Agency or outsourced agencies |
| <b>Models</b>                     | Follows the centralised approach because of the Vetting Fieldwork Units in various government departments     | Follows the centralised approach because the entire process of vetting lies with the Intelligence Services                           | Follows the decentralised approach because the last stage of the vetting process lies with various government departments      | Because of the fact that the vetting process can also be outsourced, the process of vetting can either be centralised or decentralised             |
| <b>Decision-making</b>            | The granting and refusal of Clearances is the responsibility of SSA   | The granting and refusal of Clearances is the responsibility of NZSIS  | The granting and refusal of Clearances is the responsibility of the requesting government department                           | Not identified   |
| <b>Timing</b>                     | The duration of the vetting process is yet to be determined   | The duration of the vetting process is approximately five months   | The duration of the vetting process is between two and four months   | Differs from country to country  |
| <b>Legality</b>                   | Guided by the South   | Guided by the  | Guided by the  | Differs from   |

|  |   |                                       |  |                    |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|
|  | African National Strategic Intelligence Act | New Zealand Security Intelligence Act | Canada Security Intelligence Service Act | country to country |
|--|---|---------------------------------------|--|--------------------|

## **2.5. THE CURRENT SOUTH AFRICAN VETTING STRATEGY AND PRACTICE**

The discussion will be around current practices in vetting in South Africa especially its introduction within government departments with the emphasis on the DHA. The South African National Strategic Intelligence Act 39 (1994 as amended) explains how the process of vetting should be conducted as well who is responsible to conduct vetting. The Act states that it is the responsibility of the SSA as National Intelligence Structure to conduct vetting for the entire country. This is commonly practiced in many countries where national vetting is solely the responsibility of the intelligence service or a specialized service in that country. This is referred to as a centralised approach because all the work lies with one body. The advantage of this approach is that it ensures that vetting procedures are standardized across all the government departments. This approach also ensures that the organs of state do not have to develop their own vetting capabilities which can sometimes be tedious and time consuming and as a result affect the core functions. Using this approach ensures that resources are used to the optimum through elimination of unused capabilities (GCDCAF Backgrounder, 2006). According to the National Strategic Intelligence Act of 1994 this has been the practice in South Africa. It was easier and more practical because vetting was not seen as something that needed to be practiced across government departments and there was no legislation to practise vetting in the public service during the transition period because of lack of constitutional competency or lack of legal authority. There may also have been some self-interest on the part of the previous apartheid administration to avoid vetting processes (Klaaren, 2007)

This approach is not the only one available. There is also a decentralised approach and a combination of centralised and decentralised approach. This depends on what the specific country deems applicable. For example, a decentralised

approach is when the independent agencies or units perform vetting. Countries choose this approach when they want to keep information about their people secret and also to have control over vetting procedures and recruitment requirements as well as the potential to save costs. With the combination of two approaches, private businesses perform vetting (or certain duties of vetting) whilst the intelligence services undertake the balance of vetting duties (Geneva Center for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces Background, 2006). All these approaches can be used depending on which is most applicable and practical for the specific country.

On 23 June 2004 the previous Minister of the NIA, Minister Ronnie Kasrils, announced in his budget speech the need to improve on the vetting capability. The demand for vetting in government departments was increasing at a rapid rate and the NIA was struggling to meet the demands. The solution was to decentralise the vetting component because South Africa was at that time following the centralised approach. The realization was that that approach was no longer practical because of the high number of public servants who needed to be vetted. The intention behind this strategy was that major government departments will be allowed to conduct their own vetting but not the whole process of vetting. Only fieldwork is done on department level but the rest of the process lies with SSA. This means that the DHA only does fieldwork and waits for SSA to complete the process. As can be observed this approach is not entirely decentralised but is also not fully centralised *per se*, the approach can be understood as a combination of the two. This is because the government departments are responsible for some duties of vetting and the rest of the duties still lie with the intelligent agency. This was decided and approved by cabinet in 2006 with the following conditions (Vetting Strategy, 2006):

- Firstly, Vetting Fieldwork Units will be established in major government departments who will vet their own employees. These government departments will then be responsible to employ their own vetting officers but they will be trained by NIA who eventually will be responsible for the issuing of security clearances.

- Secondly, NIA will expand its own vetting capacity in order to support the newly established VFU and also to continue handling other requirements from government. These are to be done over a period of four years.
- Thirdly, technological support is improved and developed in order to accelerate the clearance or vetting process through better computerization.

According to the NIA Vetting Strategy in Context Speech of 2007, the implementation of this strategy was going to take a period of four years from the approval date. Additional staff was to be appointed in the NIA and in the 17 largest government departments with the purpose of dealing with the increase in vetting demand in an effective manner.

In this context, the study seeks to understand the current vetting strategy and the shortcomings and challenges that vetting officers as well as the DHA officials experience, as well as what improvements and/or changes they would like to see and how those will be beneficial to the departments. With the new strategy mentioned, this study will also assess whether the implementation process was correctly followed.

### **2.5.1. Policy implementation process: A framework for analysis**

While the implementation process is not the main focus of this study, it is important to know if the implementation process was properly followed. Cloete, Wissink, and De Coning (2006) believes that there is some confusion in South Africa as to the meaning of the theory of policy implementation, when it starts and ends and the types of implementation that can be applied. The definition of policy implementation as described by Van Meter and Van Horn (in Cloete et al, 2006) is as follows: “Policy implementation encompasses those actions by public or private individuals (or groups) that are directed at the achievement of objectives set forth in prior policy decisions. They observe that impact studies typically ask “What happened?” whereas implementation studies ask “Why did it happen?” Looking at the South African government perspective, there is a strong

emphasis on the relationship between implementation and project management. The two have a strong link as they both present a systematic way of ensuring that a process – be it a policy, strategy or an approach – is implemented to the desired level as well as to ensure that all the features are covered. The two also have time-frames that are specified and they also set goals and objectives to be achieved as well as keeping track of those goals and objectives (Australian Government). This has similarities with the implementation of the National Vetting Strategy that was set to take four years with all the objectives indicated above. It is not known to the writer whether all those objectives were achieved and if they were, whether the deadlines were met. This study aims to examine this matter.

Cloete, et al (2006) argues that implementation needs to be understood through making sense of what is called the “key clusters of explanatory variables” such as content, context, commitment, capacity and clients as well as coalitions. This is called the 5-C protocols and the meaning of each is described below (Brynard, 2005):

- the **content** of the policy itself: what it sets out to do (goals); how it problematises the issue (causal theory); how it aims to solve the perceived problem (methods);
- the nature of the institutional **context**: the corridor (often structured as standard operating procedures) through which policy must travel, and by whose boundaries it is limited, in the process of implementation;
- the **commitment** to the goals, causal theory and methods of the policy of those entrusted with carrying out the implementation at various levels;
- the administrative **capacity** of implementers to carry out changes; and
- The support of **clients and coalitions** whose interests are enhanced or threatened by the policy, and the strategies they employ to strengthen or deflect its implementation.

These variables are interlinked and interdependent. They influence each other depending on the situation of the implementation process. For example, implementation capacity is likely to be a function of the other variables because in every change that takes place, there should be resources that will have capacity to

carry out that change. Policy content may, or may not, provide for resources for capacity-building and may instead just lay out all the goals and objectives without considering the extent of resources for capacity building; the institutional context of the relevant agencies that may hinder or help such capacity enhancement; the commitment of implementers to the goals, causal theory and methods of the policy may make up for the lack of such capacity, or vice versa because the operating procedures can be too strict or too lenient to support or hinder the other variables; and finally the coalition of actors opposed to effective implementation may undermine the capacity that might otherwise have been sufficient – again, supportive clients and coalitions may in fact enhance capacity. It can be seen that none of the variables here will be able to function on its own without the other. The findings of this study will assist in establishing whether any of these variables have been used and if the interdependence amongst the variables was taken into consideration.

## **2.6. CONCLUSION**

From the above discussion, it can be determined that vetting is not just a concept, but a practice in most countries. Whether the definition of vetting varies, the meaning is one which is to conduct background checks on people, specifically those who seek employment or are already employed in the public service. The approach to the vetting process is not restricted to only one; there are at least three common approaches to vetting whereby a country can choose which is best and applicable to them as long as the contents and the objectives remain the same. The importance of vetting is clear on the above discussion and for as long as it is done correctly to ensure that the government officials do not fall prey to acts of espionage, corruption and other criminal and unconstitutional activities.

The chapter discussed the current vetting process and strategy that are currently followed in South Africa as well as the implementation processes that were followed to ensure that the strategies are in place. There are more than one approach to vetting processes; South Africa is following the combination of two approaches, which allows certain government departments to perform one step of

the vetting process and the rest of the steps remain with the intelligence service of the country. This approach was decided in 2006 after the number of public servants who needed to be vetted increased. When the approach was decided, there was a plan in place as to how the implementation of that strategy should take place.

The chapter also discussed the implementation process of vetting strategy as well as the period that the implementation process was supposed to take. While this implementation process was not the main focus of the study, it was necessary to discuss it to check if the process was followed according to the planned.

Lastly the chapter discussed the international vetting requirements for benchmark purposes. Ten countries were selected and their vetting strategies discussed. The countries were Ghana, Liberia, Nigeria, Botswana, China, Brazil, Bosnia, India, New Zealand and Canada. Because vetting is more of an intelligence function, it was not easy to obtain information in some of the countries, but it has been seen that vetting is well practiced in all the countries. Each country will have a different approach that is more suitable to them. A comparison between the countries was provided.

The next chapter discusses the research methodology including the research concepts, methods and research designs through which the study is conducted in order to give answers to the research questions. This chapter will also explain the suitability of the research methods as well as how data is collected and the analysis of the data. The administration of the questionnaire for interviews with DHA officials and approaches to measure validity and credibility of data will be clarified. How the sample of participants or respondents was selected will be explained.

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1. INTRODUCTION**

This chapter explains research concepts, the methods as well as research designs through which the study is conducted. It also explains the suitability of the research methods such as data collection and analysis of the data. Administration of the questionnaire for interviews with DHA officials and approaches to measure validity and credibility of data are explained as well as selection of the sample.

This study on security vetting in the DHA is a qualitative study. A qualitative study seeks to make sense of the content of interviews and/or those that are written in a text. The researcher asks questions with the purpose of making it possible for the participants to respond in their own words about how they perceive the social world. The respondents are treated as informants because they are viewed as “experts” (Hesse-Biber, 2010). Bryman (2012) concurs that qualitative research puts emphasis on the use of words during collection and analysis of data. Denzin (1989) argues “that data collected through participant observation is ideal in qualitative research” because in order to understand the statements from the participants fully, the researcher must have an “intimate familiarity” (Lofland & Lofland, 1995) with the social world in which the informant acts. This is also applicable to asking questions as it requires the knowledge of the specific topic under investigation (as cited in Matthews, 1995, p. 800). The researcher is familiar with the subject of study and has knowledge of the context in which the study is being conducted which is advantageous when it comes to the interpretation of the results. However, for the purpose of this research, collection of data through participant observation will not be the most suitable (Denzin, 1989).

### **3.2. RESEARCH APPROACH**

There is more than one approach commonly used to collect data using the qualitative method. The approaches are almost similar as their differences are not always clear, thus overlapping exists amongst them. For the purpose of this research, the approach followed was the phenomenology which can be traced back to the early 20<sup>th</sup> century by philosophers such as Husserl, Sartre and Merleau-Ponty. It is normally referred to as the “study of the conscious experience”. It is broadly described as the “study of individuals’ perceptions, feelings and lived experiences”. Because vetting is a process and it takes place amongst individuals, their experiences in this regard will assist in understanding whether the current vetting system is effective and/or efficient (Guest, Namey & Mitchell, 2013: p 11).

Because this research is based on identifying the problems and challenges with the current vetting system within the DHA, the phenomenology approach is well suited as it attempts to understand the individual’s lived experiences, and the behavioural, emotive and social meaning that these experiences have for them. Not only have the problems regarding the current vetting system been identified, but also the attitudes and the responses of DHA officials to those problems. Problems are often the result of something that might have failed. In this paper, the research also explores the probable causes of the problems that have been identified and also describes the origins (possible policy/strategy implementation failure) of those causes. It then suggests possible ways of overcoming the problems. To understand the challenges associated with implementation of policies and/or strategies, Cloete, Wissink and De Coning (2006) argues that implementation needs to be understood through making sense of what is called the “key clusters of explanatory variables” such as content, context, commitment, capacity and clients as well as coalitions. This is called the 5-C protocol. This 5-C protocol became useful when evaluating the implementation processes in relation to the current vetting strategy in use.

### **3.3. RESEARCH STRATEGY**

This study is qualitative in nature, and according to Bryman (2012, p 714), in qualitative research the strategies that are used are normally inductive, interpretivist and constructivist. However, “researchers do not always subscribe to all three of these features”. An inductive strategy to research is the one by which the researcher uses the findings to build a theory where a theory is an outcome of research. In this study, data was of a qualitative nature in the “form of respondents’ detailed answers” to the questions from the researcher. According to Merriam (2002), a researcher in qualitative research is responsible for collecting data and analysing it and will build knowledge which is based on a constructivist view in order to understand a phenomenon with the assumption that there is insufficient knowledge regarding that fact. The study is also a form of inquiry with the intention of understanding social process in this instance (vetting) “based on building a complex, holistic picture formed with words” which gave a detailed representation of informants’ or respondents’ views (Cresswell, 1994, p 76). The primary idea surrounding this qualitative strategy is that it is through description that knowledge is obtained and through practice that knowledge is built socially whereby reality is built by people who are taking part in the research, namely respondents (Hill & Wright, 2001).

### **3.4. RESEARCH DESIGN**

The research design that was followed was the basic interpretive qualitative approach. With this study, the researcher paid attention to the understanding of how respondents make meaning of the situation or phenomenon and “this meaning is mediated through the researcher as an instrument” for data collection. The research strategy as alluded to above is inductive and the outcome is descriptive. With this research design, the researcher seeks to understand a phenomenon, a process and worldview of the people involved in the situation or a combination of this (Merriam, 2002, pp 6-7). The researcher was responsible for the collection, analysis and interpretation of data and provided detailed descriptions of the outcome of the study.

### **3.5. DATA COLLECTION**

Data collection was done in the form of interviews. As the study is focused on security vetting in the DHA, data was collected from the DHA officials. Seven officials from DHA participated in the study. They were structured according to their level of involvement to the specific issue, such as the vetting officers, the normal employees whom vetting is conducted upon as well as management who are responsible for decision-making. As a DHA official, the researcher was able to have access to the participants. A request was sent to the respondents to participate in this research project. It was not necessary for the respondents to provide their real names for the report. Participation was voluntary and there was no penalty for refusal to participate. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time. All responses were treated with confidentiality. The SSA was also approached and requested to participate in the study but no response was provided.

#### **3.5.1. Primary data collection**

This was done in the form of semi-structured interviews. According to Bryman (2012, p 716), semi-structured interviews refer to “a context in which the interviewer has a series of questions in the general form of an interview guide but is able to vary the sequence of questions”. These types of interviews are not restrictive and allow the interviewer to ask some follow-up questions that may be necessary during the interview. Semi-structured interviews are normally comprehensive and thorough because the purpose of conducting a semi-structured interview is to obtain in-depth information from the respondents in their own words (Lofland, 1971). With this type of interview, the researcher was able to obtain information regarding vetting from DHA officials in relation to their own experience and what it means to them. It is a form of interaction that is done through communication and provides an opportunity for learning.

### **3.5.2. Sampling**

Qualitative research “tends to revolve around the notion of purposive sampling because this sampling is conducted with reference to the goal of research” (Bryman, 2012, p 416). This sampling has been chosen because the people who are sampled were relevant to the research question and were knowledgeable about the phenomenon being studied. The sampling consisted of seven DHA officials. Out of the seven DHA officials, four of them were vetting officers who are the people involved in the actual vetting. The other two were in management positions, responsible for decision-making, while the last one was a regular employee on whom vetting is conducted. The participants were chosen randomly within the departments.

### **3.6. DATA ANALYSIS**

Qualitative data analysis is the collection of information or data through interviews. The data needs to be described and summarised (Lacey & Luff, 2001). The description and summarising of data can be done by “organizing the data, breaking it into manageable units, synthesizing it, searching for patterns, meaning and discovering what is important” (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982) and understanding the data (Cresswell, 2003). Because the purpose of the research is to obtain data that will assist in answering the research question, collected data was organised and classified in order to seek relationships that might emerge from various themes that have been identified so that it could be coded in order to search for data, to compare similarities and/or differences as well as to identify any patterns that require further investigation. The idea of data analysis in a qualitative study is usually what Bryman (2012, p 566) refers to as “iterative - that is, there is a repetitive interplay between the collection and analysis of data”. The researcher did not wait until after collection of data is complete before starting with analysis; analysis started after collecting some of the information, and whatever was found during the initial analysis helped to shape the subsequent steps of the data collection process. In this research paper the main unit of analysis was the vetting system or strategy in the DHA.

### **3.7. VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Validity and reliability are terms that emerge from quantitative research (Hewlett, 2013). They are different terms but are used to measure quality, rigour and the broad potential of research and they are quantitative in nature. Validity refers to whether the researcher is observing, identifying or measuring what she or he claims to be measuring (Mason, 1996, pp 21-24 as cited in Bryman, 2012). Reliability refers to ‘the consistency of the researcher’s interactive style, data recording, data analysis and interpretation of participants’ meaning from the data’ (McMillan & Schumacher, 1993: p 385). Some writers suggest alternatives to these terms because of their quantitative nature. The proposition of trustworthiness and authenticity as criteria for assessing a qualitative study was done. Trustworthiness is described in terms of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability. For the purpose of this study, assessment will conform to the concept of credibility whereby the researcher will provide her accounts to the people involved in the research in order to ensure the research was conducted ethically and according to the “canons of good practice”, and also to confirm that there is correspondence between the researcher’s findings and perspectives and experiences of the respondents (Bryman, 2012, pp 390-391). In addition, the researcher is an employee in the DHA and as a Vetting Officer herself, some of the questions are relevant to her. The researcher has extensive experience and knowledge in the field of vetting, which was of assistance in the formulation of questionnaires. This ensures validity and reliability of the questions and their relevance in the study. Moreover, the researcher was responsible for conducting the interviews herself and notes were taken during the interviews. Lastly the researchers asked one researcher to give an opinion of the interpreted data.

### **3.8. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethics should be considered when researching through interaction with people. In this research, the participants were government officials and they were required

based on the questionnaire to reveal information that might be sensitive, especially on possible policy/strategy implementation failure. This might place the DHA and the SSA in a compromised situation and could have a negative impact on the policy implementers within the DHA and SSA.

In order to ensure that the participants are at ease and participate in the study voluntarily, permission was granted from the custodian of vetting in the country being the SSA as well as from the Director: Vetting from the DHA. The provision therefore is that information obtained for this study will not be published without the approval of the DHA, including this report. The information is collected on a trust basis and the respondents' identities will be kept confidential. It is also a fact that the researcher is an employee of DHA and bound by morals and ethics not to divulge any information of the Department to unauthorised people.

### **3.9. LIMITATIONS**

The scope of the study is limited to understanding the processes of vetting in the DHA and how these can be improved. The study confines itself to interviews and did not focus on the entire DHA in South Africa, but only focused specifically on the DHA Headquarters and DHA in Free State Province, Eastern Cape Province, Western Cape Province and KwaZulu-Natal Province as those are the main offices that have vetting representatives stationed in the office. The study made its findings from data collected from the identified population. This data assisted in enabling the researcher to derive knowledge about the process of vetting in the DHA and the best ways to improve the effectiveness and efficiency thereof.

### **3.10. CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the researcher described the methods used in the research study. The method of qualitative approach was used to gather data.

In the next chapter the presentation of results will be described followed by the discussion of findings and then the recommendations will be presented.

## **CHAPTER 4 PRESENTATION OF RESULTS**

### **4.1. INTRODUCTION**

In this chapter, data will be presented to demonstrate the researcher's interpretations of the results. The findings are presented based on the questions that were posed to the participants. There were three main questions which were broken down into sub-questions to arrive at one main answer. In qualitative research, data presentation means that the data should be presented in a systematic manner; it should be analysed and interpreted in order to arrive at a conclusion and draw up recommendations. The presentation will be an indication of what the researcher has learned and will be done in the form of themes and/or categories as well as descriptive narrative form accompanied by explanations, commentaries and comparisons. Due to the sensitivity of the study, the researcher will make use of pseudonyms to protect the identity of the participants.

### **4.2. PRESENTATION OF DATA**

The following data was collected during the interviews with seven different respondents. The respondents were asked the same questions and provided individual answers.

#### **4.2.1. Respondent A**

**Question 1: How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

##### **1.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of the vetting systems in DHA?**

Respondent A gave a brief description of how the current vetting strategy came into being. The idea behind the current vetting strategy was to decentralise the

vetting functions so that government departments will have their own vetting fieldwork units with other functions centralised at SSA. According to the strategy, it was supposed to have made the process of vetting easy and accessible as well as to be able to track and trace the progress by means of a security vetting information system called SVIS. However, the SVIS to date has not been established in most departments, like in the case of the DHA, where it is not functional because it is not connected to the main one at SSA. Because of that, the idea of tracking and tracing is not possible. The respondent also said that because the government departments are the ones responsible for the employment of the vetting officers, SSA does not have control over the number of vetting officers the departments employ as well as the post level of each vetting officer. The respondent believed that the strategy is not effective. He said that 15 years after the implementation of the vetting strategy, there are still many government officials that work without valid security clearances. In terms of the other steps in the vetting process, there is no capacity to carry out the mandate because of shortage of staff and that contributes to the ineffectiveness. There is also lack of communication between the SSA and the DHA. When DHA vetting officers make recommendations, SSA vetting officers who conclude the process of vetting do not take the recommendation into consideration when they decide to grant or refuse the clearance. This makes the strategy ineffective and less efficient because SSA vetting officers do not have the relevant insight and the understanding of different functions in the DHA. It will be easier if they consider the recommendations made by the people who have a better insight into, and the understanding of, their department.

## **1.2 How can the vetting process be made effective?**

The respondent said that the best way to have the strategy working effectively will be to start by first going back to the drawing board. There needs to be national conferences hosted by SSA with invitations extended to all the government departments that conduct vetting fieldwork. The departments should be allowed to submit their inputs and a document should be compiled from all the inputs given. This document should act as a guideline for conducting vetting across the

government departments. Respondents also mentioned that SSA needs to empower the computer networks in the DHA and all other government departments and connect the SVIS in DHA with the one in SSA so that track and trace is possible and also access to the previous vetting information is possible. SSA and DHA should work together to identify incapacity and decide together on the training that is needed.

**1.3 Do you think that the vetting posts are enough to cover the amount of work required to complete the vetting process?**

According to the respondent, the vetting posts in the DHA are not sufficient. He mentioned that the vetting is a continuous process and it needs capacity. In the DHA there are thirteen vetting officers against 16 000 DHA officials across the country and that is not even close to enough. The respondent also said that SSA seems to be struggling with the number of vetting officers especially those who are responsible for the evaluation of vetting information.

**1.4 Is there a vetting policy that you know about/have you seen it?**

The respondent mentioned that there is a vetting policy in the DHA that was approved in August 2013 and which will be reviewed again in 2015.

**Question 2: What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting in DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

**2.1 Describe the challenges and shortcomings you experience regarding vetting in the department?**

Respondent A believes that incapacity to process the increasing number of vetting applications is a challenge. He said that in the DHA there are thirteen vetting officers to process the whole department which has more than ten thousand officials. The respondent said that DHA is not entirely a security department; therefore there is no adequate cautioning of officials on matters of security and as a result the officials do not take security seriously. The respondent also said that

within the department there is a lack of co-operation. Vetting is part of Counter Corruption and Security Branch in the department and vetting is a directorate with the responsibility to fight corruption but it will not effectively fight corruption without the assistance of other directorates.

## **2.2 What do you think constitutes the challenges you mentioned?**

There was insufficient awareness about security in the department.

## **2.3 What could the major problems be in SSA that affects the vetting process in the DHA?**

The respondent noted that the problem of proximity is a challenge because vetting officers are not close to each other and they struggle to interact. He said that vetting is a chain and the functions therefore are intertwined. Vetting evaluators are based in SSA and they do not have easy access to the vetting fieldworkers, especially those that are based in the provinces. He said that sometimes there are issues that need to be cleared with the vetting fieldworker and it does not always happen. The respondent also mentioned that sometimes the evaluators do not agree with the recommendations made by the fieldworker, such as when the fieldworker recommends that the person should not be issued with a clearance and then the evaluator issues it and vice versa. That creates problems and it is a result of lack of communication. Respondent A also said that there is a lack of trust from SSA towards the departments that conduct vetting fieldwork. SSA does not make the previous vetting information available to the DHA.

## **2.4 Does top management provide enough support in terms of responsiveness and compliance regarding the processes of vetting?**

No: Respondent A said that compliance in terms of vetting is not enforced. There are still officials that are not cleared and the management does not seem to have a problem with that. There are also people whose clearances were denied and the results were presented to the top management, but they are still in the department and they are still allowed access to information in the department. This goes against the vetting strategy that states that if a person is denied a security

clearance on a specific post, that official needs to be seconded to a different post or be discharged from the department. The respondent said that the other issue is that there is no commitment to security from the top management. They even fail to take corrective measures against non-compliance with security and vetting. There is reluctance by managers to comply with the security requirements of posts under their instruction and some of the managers refuse to apply for security clearance, primarily because there are no enforcement measures.

**2.5 Are there any resistant or non-compliant officials in terms of the vetting process?**

Yes: Respondent A said that officials are not living up to their promises. When presentations are done, the officials promise to submit their applications but they do not do so and it seems as if they are sending a silent message of non-compliance.

**2.6. What do you think these challenges you mentioned result from? Could it be failure in terms of implementing the vetting strategy or just non-compliance with the vetting strategy?**

The respondent said that there was not sufficient awareness of the vetting strategy especially amongst the top managers in various departments. There is a tendency of not taking vetting seriously, mostly by top managers, and it could be because of lack of information. The implementation process was also not followed correctly. There is continued lack of capacity and the computerization of the whole process is not functional.

**2.7 If the answer to the above question was failure of implementation, what are the reasons for the failure? If the answer was non-compliance, what are the reasons for non-compliance?**

The respondent said that failure in the implementation was due to the lack of consultation with various departments from SSA with the idea of the vetting strategy, from the inception to the end. There is also lack of clarity on lines of

accountability. The respondent said that people are not held accountable when compliance is not followed with vetting procedures.

**Question 3: How should vetting strategy be constructed in order to alleviate the challenges?**

**Sub-questions:**

**3.1. How would you prefer vetting to be conducted in order to address the challenges and shortcomings?**

The respondent observed that the vetting units within the departments should be given the mandate to conduct the entire process of vetting.

**3.2 What improvements would you like to see regarding vetting?**

Security advisors from SSA must be deployed in different departments and form part of that specific department.

**3.3 What solutions do you think should be in place in order to alleviate the current challenges?**

The respondent felt that the most important solution for all the problems concerning vetting is that the entire vetting process should be handed over to the department level with SSA giving advice where necessary.

**3.4 What would you like to see SSA doing in order to accelerate the vetting process for the sake of fast response?**

Respondent A noted that SSA should start working on increasing their capacity if they cannot hand over the entire function of the vetting process to the DHA. They must also increase training periods; instead of having vetting training once or twice a year, it must be at least three times. There must be a uniform way of doing things within the departments/ For example, some of the DHA vetting officers who are deployed in the provinces are not allowed to submit vetting files in the SSA provincial offices with the reason being given that there is no capacity, yet other offices accept them. The respondent also said that he would like to see an increased and continuous communication between the SSA and the DHA.

Furthermore, he would like to see SSA conducting security awareness presentations to the top managers in DHA during the Director-General's forums.

### **3.5 What needs to be done to ensure that implementation is done properly?**

The respondent observed that implementation is a process and each stage should be completed before moving on to the next stage. There should be a committee that will ensure that monitoring and evaluation is done on each stage and the people responsible for each stage should be held accountable.

#### **Summary: Respondent A**

Respondent A believes that the current strategy is not effective and also not efficient. He seems to be mostly critical of the SSA. He notes that the SSA developed the vetting strategy with the purpose of decentralising the vetting functions so that government departments will have their own vetting fieldwork units with other functions centralised at SSA. The aim was to make the process of vetting easy and accessible with the possibility of being able to track and trace the progress by means of SVIS but that has not happened. He identified certain challenges in the DHA such as incapacity or shortage of vetting officers, lack of awareness, lack of co-operation amongst DHA officials, non-compliance but with few consequences to this, lack of accountability, problems with proximity, and failure of implementation. According to the respondent, the best way to resolve these challenges and to make the vetting effective is if the SSA can allow the DHA to have the entire vetting process within the department itself, with all vetting functions to be conducted in the DHA. However, there could be other solutions such as increased communication between the two departments on matters of vetting and awareness presentations that should target top managers. For implementation to be successful it needs to be followed properly step by step and should be monitored and evaluated continuously.

## **4.2.2 Respondent B**

**Question 1: How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

### **1.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of the vetting systems in the DHA?**

Respondent B said that she does not think the current vetting strategy is effective although there are some things that are effective. She believes that the administration function in the DHA is not strong enough to handle the work. There is no proper filing system and there are old files that need to be shredded but no shredding machine. The fact that there is also no database within the department makes it difficult to update any new vetting information. The DHA still has to rely on SSA with regard to that and it is a challenge to respond when people want to find out about the progress of their vetting. The vetting files that were submitted cannot be traced. Everything is still on paper that sometimes gets lost. The respondent stated that it will be easier if everything can be computerised. It is effective in a sense that from the DHA side, vetting files are sent to the SSA for evaluation but from there it is beyond DHA control.

### **1.2 How can the vetting process be made effective?**

The respondent said that from the DHA, the best way to make the current vetting strategy effective is to capacitate the administration function first and then the rest of the vetting fieldwork unit. She said the shelves in the strong room need to be cleaned and a new filing system set up. From SSA, the need is for the computerization of the vetting process with a database that can link the two departments so that tracking and tracing is possible.

### **1.3 Do you think that the vetting posts are enough to cover the amount of work required to complete the vetting process?**

The respondent said that there are not enough posts, especially in the provinces.

**1.4 Is there a vetting policy that you know about/have you seen it?**

The respondent confirmed that there is a vetting policy in the DHA.

**Question 2: What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting in DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

**2.1 Describe the challenges and shortcomings you experience regarding vetting in the department?**

Respondent B explained that the main problem in the DHA is the fact that the administration function is poor. There is no proper organization of files and copies of clearance certificates that have already been issued to officials.

**2.2 What do you think constitutes the challenges you mentioned?**

The Respondent explained that because of the fact that there has not being a strong administration function at the DHA in the past, the filing system has always been poor and everything was done on paper which has since been mislaid. There was nothing captured on computer. This makes it difficult to refer to previous information.

**2.3 What could the major problems in SSA be that affect the vetting process in DHA?**

The respondent felt that the main issue that affects the process of vetting from the SSA is the fact that their SVIS is not linked between the departments. The vetting files received in the DHA cannot be processed if they are not captured and that takes time because the capturing can be done in DHA but it still needs to be done at SSA because of non-linkage of the two departments. Respondent B said that she always has to carry information on a memory stick whenever she wants to submit to the SSA and that is also risky because it could be lost or stolen. The system takes longer to download information and that wastes time. The lack of capacity from SSA affects the process, especially the vetting evaluators and polygraph examiners. This results in clearance certificates not being issued at

times and if issued, they are issued late. She said that sometimes in a month she will receive two certificates and in another month she will receive maybe three or four. The DHA has the problem of not knowing which official is vetted, whose vetting is in progress, and that is because of lack of linked database from SSA to DHA. They always have to request an updated database from SSA and sometimes they do not get feedback from SSA.

#### **2.4 Does top management provide enough support in terms of responsiveness and compliance regarding the processes of vetting?**

The respondent said that it is not that clear because the Human Resource function within the department does issue a security clearance application on the newly appointed employees but then they do not make a follow-up later. The respondent said that she has realised that vetting is taken more seriously when it is approached through projects, for example when the manager from vetting interacts with a manager from finance about when they plan to conduct vetting in that specific section. There are times when some managers will not comply because they do not care about vetting.

#### **2.5 Is there any resistant or non-compliance in terms of the vetting process?**

The respondent said that it depends on the type of the work. She gave an example of when officials want to go for a foreign mission, they tend to respond positively to vetting because vetting is one of the requirements and one cannot be allowed to leave the country without a valid security clearance.

#### **2.6 What do you think these challenges you mentioned result from? Could it be failure in terms of implementing the vetting strategy or just non-compliance with the vetting strategy?**

Respondent B said that there was not sufficient awareness as far as vetting is concerned and it was not necessarily about compliance. People tend not to comply because they are not well informed.

**2.7 If the answer to the above question was failure of implementation, what are the reasons for the failure? If the answer was non-compliance, what are the reasons for non-compliance?**

The respondent felt that there is a great need to conduct awareness and it needs be done continuously.

**Question 3: How should vetting strategy is constructed in order to alleviate the challenges?**

**Sub-questions:**

**3.1 How would you prefer vetting to be conducted in order to address the challenges and shortcomings?**

The respondent observed that there must be a standard for how things should be done in vetting. Every vetting officer should submit a certain number of files.

**3.2 What improvements would you like to see regarding vetting?**

The respondent said that she would prefer that the DHA improves its vetting administration function before suggesting what SSA should improve on. The department can start by buying shredding machines so that all the irrelevant and old vetting files on paper can be shredded and then improve their filing system so that they can to track and trace internal files before going to SSA.

**3.3 What solutions do you think should be in place to alleviate the current challenges?**

The respondent said that she would like to see an improved turnaround time on the issuing of clearance certificates.

**3.4 What would you like to see SSA doing to accelerate the vetting process for the sake of fast response?**

Respondent B said that SSA should start working on increasing their capacity by employing more vetting evaluators and more polygraph examiners so that they can assign some of those skills to each department based on the number of files

submitted by each department. In that way the DHA will have its evaluator and polygraph examiner within the department and this will make it easier to interact when necessary.

### **3.6 What needs to be done to ensure that implementation is done properly?**

The respondent noted that when it comes to implementation, she is not sure but she believed it needs to be decentralised and each function within the stages of implementation should be assigned to an individual who will in turn be able to account when things are not going according to the requirements.

#### **Summary: Respondent B**

Respondent B is not very critical of SSA. She is not blaming the SSA for the problems that are experienced in the DHA. She mentions, however, that even though the current vetting strategy is not effective and there are challenges with the strategy, she believes most of those emanate from within the DHA. Her main concern is that the administration function of vetting in the DHA is poor. The paper-based way of doing things is also a problem because papers get lost and tracking and tracing progress on people's vetting is not possible. There is no database in place and the computer system that is available is not linked between the two departments. The respondent also mentioned the problem of capacity from SSA and in DHA which most affects the provinces. Her ideal solution to the above problems is that the two departments need to increase capacity; the DHA should start with its vetting administration function so that a proper filing system can be in place and SSA needs to increase the number of vetting evaluators and polygraph examiners so that each department can be assigned a certain number of them. She did not comment on implementation.

### **4.2.3 Respondent C**

**Question 1: How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

#### **1.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of the vetting systems in the DHA.**

Respondent C believes that the current vetting strategy is not effective. She has realised that vetting is no longer about prevention but more about pushing statistics. It is now all about how many people can be vetted within a certain period of time and not how positive or negative the outcomes of such vetting are. Within the DHA, there is still a high level of corrupt activities taking place; officials view vetting as a threat and their defensive mechanism against that threat is to choose not to co-operate.

#### **1.2 How can the vetting process be made effective?**

The respondent said that the one way is to educate people about vetting. Greater awareness is needed and also making security clearance a requirement when a person applies for a position.

#### **1.3 Do you think that the vetting posts are enough to cover the quantity of work required to complete the vetting process?**

The respondent said that there are not enough posts to cover the work and that capacity is one of the main challenges that affect the effectiveness of the vetting process. There are thirteen vetting officers in DHA to cover the entire department which has about ten thousand officials.

#### **1.4 Is there a vetting policy that you know about/have you seen it?**

The respondent confirmed that she knows of a vetting policy and she has seen it.

**Question 2: What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting in DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

**2.1 Describe the challenges and shortcomings you experience regarding vetting in the department.**

The respondent explained that she has experienced that officials are less receptive to vetting because they see it as a threat or an interrogative process. That has resulted in officials showing a negative attitude towards vetting and vetting officers. Officials have a tendency of not wanting to submit application forms and the accompanying documents. They are not always interested in complying with vetting. Another thing that is probably making officials less interested in complying is that there is no feedback provided to them after they have complied. The other issue is that recommendations from DHA's vetting fieldworkers are not taken into consideration by the SSA vetting evaluators and that is demoralising. This suggests a lack of trust from the SSA. This leads people to ask if they do not have trust over the work that was done by a DHA vetting officer, what was the idea of the vetting fieldwork units in the first place. This creates a problem because the DHA relies on the SSA for the completion of the vetting process and if the SSA is not willing to listen to what the DHA is recommending, then it is a problem.

**2.2 What do you think constitutes the challenges you mentioned?**

The respondent said that there is still a lack of information in matters of vetting and security in the DHA. Awareness has not been well conducted and people continue to ask her about what vetting is.

**2.3 What could the major problems be in SSA that affects the vetting process in the DHA?**

The respondent said that she finds it difficult to believe the SSA is taking vetting in various departments seriously. It appears that they have capacity problems but they do not seem to acknowledge that. They take too long to process the

applications and if they do finalise a vetting process, they may go against what has been recommended by the vetting fieldworker from the DHA. The respondent mentioned that there is a tendency to misplace documents in the SSA, and because there are no proper tracking and tracing procedures, documents are not often located if misplaced.

#### **2.4 Does top management provide enough support in terms of responsiveness and compliance regarding the processes of vetting?**

The respondent said that there is not enough support from management. Some of the top management does not even want to submit own security clearance applications. She is not sure if it is because top managers are not aware of vetting or if they are just ignorant. Not being aware is that they do not know about vetting at all and being ignorant suggests that they are aware of vetting and they know what is expected from them in terms of vetting but they choose to ignore it.

#### **2.5 Is there any resistance or non-compliance in terms of the vetting process?**

The respondent observes that there is a lot of resistance. People feel that vetting is in some way an invasion of their privacy.

#### **2.6 What do you think these challenges you mentioned result from? Could it be failure in implementing the vetting strategy or non-compliance with the vetting strategy?**

The respondent does not think that the implementation was done properly. The strategy promised things that are still to date not implemented. The issue of computerising the vetting system is still in progress, almost eight years later. They promised to increase capacity, but seeing that there is still a poor turnaround time from SSA in terms of issuing clearance certificates, this indicates that there are not enough people to handle the workload.

**2.7 If the answer to the above question was failure of implementation, what are the reasons for the failure? If the answer was non-compliance, what are the reasons for non-compliance?**

The respondent noted that it appeared that SSA did not think through the strategy before implementation. They did not plan for unforeseen circumstances like budget constraints and the amalgamation of the NIA and Secret Services. They then prioritised those issues rather than vetting.

**Question 3: How should the vetting strategy be constructed in order to alleviate the challenges?**

**Sub-questions:**

**3.1 How would you prefer vetting to be conducted in order to address the challenges and shortcomings?**

The respondent said that vetting should be handed over to the DHA as a whole, not just one function. She said that when positions are advertised, vetting should be included as one of the requirements so that people are not surprised when they are expected to go through the process. Vetting awareness should be compulsory during the induction programmes.

**3.2 What improvements would you like to see regarding vetting?**

The budget for vetting should be increased. The introduction of a research and development function within the vetting branch is needed which will assist with regard to current affairs and changes that occur so as to avoid being trapped in the past. Training of vetting admin officers is of critical importance because vetting starts there. The respondent noted that the resources are limited and an increase in the budget will assist in acquiring more resources.

**3.3 What solutions do you think should be in place to alleviate the current challenges?**

The respondent noted that according to her the best solution is if the entire process can be handed over to DHA so that all the functions can be handled within the

department. The other solution will be to increase the budget for vetting so that all the required systems can be paid for. The training of vetting officers should be done before they assume duty so that everything is standardised.

### **3.4 What would you like to see SSA doing to accelerate the vetting process for the sake of fast response?**

The respondent felt that the SSA should give the vetting mandate to the DHA because they are really failing.

### **3.5 What needs to be done to ensure that implementation is done properly?**

The respondent said that the top managers need to go back to the drawing board. Implementation process should be continuously monitored and evaluated. The targets must be attained per step so as to make it easier to check for areas that need improvement. The respondent also feels there are personal issues within the senior positions and they need to put those aside in order to achieve certain goals.

### **Summary: Respondent C**

Respondent C indicated that there is a problem in both departments. She noted that the current vetting strategy is not effective. The issues making the current strategy ineffective emanate from both the departments. The decisions that are taken by the SSA are forced on the DHA and they are not practical in the DHA, such as pushing statistics. The concern at SSA is about how many people can be vetted within a specific period. At the DHA, there is still a high level of corrupt activities taking place and those people who are involved in those activities are not always willing to comply with vetting processes. They see vetting as a threat. Some have a negative attitude towards the vetting process because they do not receive feedback after vetting is done and they lose interest. The respondent also mentioned the issue of capacity. There are not enough vetting officers to cover the workload and it seems to be a problem in both the departments. The other issue is that recommendations from the DHA's vetting fieldworkers are not taken into consideration by SSA vetting evaluators and that is demoralising. The respondent was also concerned about limited resources in the DHA and the budget constraints. The respondent believes that education and awareness are important

within the DHA. The other solution would be that the SSA should hand over the entire vetting process to DHA so that better control is possible. There must be an increase in budget to cover the expenses of systems that are related to vetting. According to the respondent, the implementation process was not executed properly.

#### **4.2.4 Respondent D**

**Question 1: How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in the DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

##### **1.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of the vetting systems in the DHA?**

Respondent D said that the strategy is not effective and even though the vetting officers in the DHA are doing their best in collecting application forms and doing fieldwork, the compliance level from the officials is very poor and that makes it difficult to get the work done. And as a result, the whole process becomes ineffective.

##### **1.2 How can the vetting process be made effective?**

The respondent noted that one way is to educate people about vetting. She also said that punitive measures should be in place to encourage people to comply.

##### **1.3 Do you think that the vetting posts are sufficient to cover the amount of work required to complete the vetting process?**

The respondent said that there are not enough posts to address the work. The limited capacity is one of the main challenges that affect the effectiveness of the vetting process. There are about thirteen vetting officers in DHA to cover the entire department which has over ten thousand DHA officials. The ratio is just not good.

**1.4 Is there a vetting policy that you know about/have you seen it?**

The respondent stated that she knows of a vetting policy and she has seen it.

**Question 2: What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting in the DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

**2.1 Describe the challenges and shortcomings you experience regarding vetting in the department.**

The respondent has experienced that officials are less receptive to the vetting process. They always have an excuse when they are supposed to submit documents. The respondent said that when people have excuses, it always makes her think that they have something to hide. The other challenge that the respondent has encountered is that even top managers are not complying, which makes it difficult to get the junior staff to comply. If top managers are unable to lead by example, then it is a problem.

**2.2 What do you think constitutes the challenges you mentioned?**

The respondent believes that most people are involved in corrupt activities and that is why they do not want to comply.

**2.3 What could the major problem be in the SSA that affects the vetting process in the DHA?**

The respondent finds it difficult to believe that SSA is taking vetting in various departments seriously. She said that it seems as if they are also having capacity problems but they do not seem to be acknowledging that.

**2.4 Does top management provide enough support in terms of responsiveness and compliance regarding the processes of vetting?**

The respondent felt that there is not enough support from management. There are still some of the top managers who do not want to submit their security clearance applications.

**2.5 Are there any resistance or non-compliance issues in terms of the vetting process?**

The respondent said that there is a lot of resistance. Some of the officials still say they do not know the purpose of vetting.

**2.6 What do you think these challenges you mentioned result from? Could it be failure in implementing the vetting strategy or non-compliance with the vetting strategy?**

The respondent noted that non-compliance is a problem and it is a result of lack of information. There are people who believe that vetting is an investigation. They are not well informed. Implementation was also not done properly. The security vetting information system which was supposed to make the whole process of vetting easy is just a dummy and not functional. The issue of capacity that was supposed to be addressed during the implementation process is still a problem to date.

**2.7 If the answer to the above question was failure of implementation, what are the reasons for the failure? If the answer was non-compliance, what are the reasons for non-compliance?**

The respondent observed that the SSA is focusing too much on their mandate and they lose focus on the relevant issues such as capacity shortage. They are also more focused on delivery and not necessarily the quality of the vetting process. The non-compliance is associated with lack of information and also can also be about the fact that feedback is poor from the SSA side. When people are complying and they do not get feedback, they become demoralised.

**Question 3: How should vetting strategy be constructed in order to alleviate the challenges?**

**Sub-questions:**

**3.1 How would you prefer vetting to be conducted in order to address the challenges and shortcomings?**

The respondent said that vetting should be handed over to the DHA as a whole, not just one function. This will enable proper control.

**3.2 What improvements would you like to see regarding vetting?**

The positions that are advertised need to indicate vetting as one of the requirements for employment.

**3.3 What solutions do you think should be in place in order to alleviate the current challenges?**

The respondent said that according to her the best solution is if the entire process is handed over to the DHA so that all the functions can be handled within the department. Furthermore, the research and development functions are required so as to benchmark with other countries.

**3.4 What would you like to see SSA doing to accelerate the vetting process for the sake of fast response?**

The respondent observed that SSA should give the vetting mandate to the DHA or they can increase their capacity so that they will be able to allocate a vetting evaluator and a polygraph examiner to the DHA. This will reduce the turnaround time and feedback will be provided when people require it. The SSA can also improve the technology so that SVIS is functional.

**3.5 What needs to be done to ensure that implementation is done properly?**

The respondent noted that the implementation should be done per department. The two departments should meet again and revisit the whole process of implementation. Creation of positions should be according to the number of

officials in a department. The various implementation steps should be executed, monitored and evaluated per step so as to avoid errors.

#### **Summary: Respondent D**

Respondent D has also indicated the ineffectiveness of the current vetting strategy. She identified challenges she has experienced and also possible solutions. According to her, the common problems that she came across were the issue of non-compliance from management and officials, resistance, lack of information and capacity shortages from both departments. She said that people in DHA still need to be educated on matters involving vetting. The SSA fails to provide feedback after vetting has been done. The solution that she believes could work is if SSA could allow DHA to conduct the entire vetting process from within.

#### **4.2.5 Respondent E**

##### **Question 1: How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in the DHA?**

##### **Sub-questions:**

###### **1.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of the vetting systems in the DHA?**

Respondent E said that the current strategy is not as effective as it should be. The idea that the DHA depends on SSA for concluding the vetting process is a challenge. The DHA is only allowed to do one function on the vetting process and the rest of the functions lie with SSA. The problem with depending on the SSA for the finalisation of the vetting process; is that sometimes SSA does not take into consideration the recommendations made by the DHA. The respondent observed that there are double standards especially in the provinces, where some of the provinces allow vetting officers to submit files within the SSA's provincial office, whilst other provinces will not allow that.

### **1.2 How can the vetting process be made effective?**

The respondent stated that the DHA should be declared a security department and be allowed to take over the vetting mandate in the department, so that the DHA can conduct vetting according to the values, mission and vision of the department.

### **1.3 Do you think that the vetting posts are enough to address the amount of work required to complete the vetting process?**

The respondent said that the number of posts is not adequate to cover the amount of vetting work. The number of vetting officers is limited and the administration function is affected by the work load.

### **1.4 Is there a vetting policy that you know about/have you seen it?**

The respondent confirmed that he has seen a vetting policy and it is still new.

## **Question 2: What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting in the DHA?**

### **Sub-questions:**

#### **2.1 Describe the challenges and shortcomings you experience regarding vetting in the department.**

The respondent said that one of the common challenges within the DHA is that people do not want to comply and they refuse to co-operate. Things are not done correctly as far as following vetting procedures. According to the vetting strategy, when an individual was refused a clearance, the rule is that the person should be seconded to a different position or they must be discharged from the department. However, with the DHA, there are people whose clearances were refused, but those people are still working and they still have access to information on positions where clearance was refused. The respondent also mentioned the issue of turnaround time in feedback on files that were submitted to the SSA. The challenge is that the relationship between the two departments seems to be poor. The SSA will promise to assist the department with something and then not keep to the commitment they have made. He provided an example in that when the

DHA was busy with a project of vetting people who are supposed to be deployed in foreign countries, the SSA promised to participate and prioritise those files, but they did not. People are still waiting for the finalization of their clearances and they will not be allowed to assume duties abroad until their security clearance certificates are issued.

## **2.2 What do you think constitutes the challenges you mention?**

The respondent believes that people have a negative attitude toward the process of vetting and maybe that is why they do not comply. They lack knowledge of what vetting is all about. They see vetting as a form of investigation, especially those who are involved in malicious activities. The other reason could be that some functions within the vetting section are short-staffed leading to capacity challenges. The respondent added that DHA does not always include vetting as a requirement for employment when they advertise the positions, so people do not expect vetting in their employment.

## **2.3 What could the major problems be in SSA that affects the vetting process in DHA?**

The respondent noted that according to him one of the major problems in the SSA is the fact that they do not take the recommendations from the DHA seriously. They are not capacitated enough to deal with the workload from all the government departments which has resulted in a very slow turnaround time.

## **2.4 Does top management provide enough support in responsiveness and compliance regarding the processes of vetting?**

The respondent said that managers are not providing enough support. Some managers are not even interested in vetting. They do not bother to be informed about what vetting is. Others will ask why they must be vetted.

**2.5 Are there any resistant or non-compliance actions in terms of the vetting process?**

The respondent felt that there is resistance and non-compliance because of poor attitudes and lack of knowledge.

**2.6 What do you think these challenges you mentioned result from? Could it be failure in implementing the vetting strategy or non-compliance with the vetting strategy?**

The respondent does not believe that implementation was done correctly. He gave an example of the SVIS that is still not fully functional a few years after the strategy was implemented. There is also lack of support from the SSA towards the DHA because they do not even co-operate.

**2.7 If the answer to the above question was failure of implementation, what are the reasons for the failure? If the answer was non-compliance, what are the reasons for non-compliance?**

Lack of co-operation between the two departments is one of the reasons for implementation failure. The respondent said that it becomes difficult to track which stage of implementation the department is at and which areas need to be revisited.

**Question 3: How should vetting strategy be constructed in order to alleviate the challenges?**

**Sub-questions:**

**3.1 How would you prefer vetting to be conducted in order to address the challenges and shortcomings?**

The respondent said that if the DHA can be declared a security department they will be given the mandate to conduct the entire process of vetting, it will make it easier for the department to do vetting the way it is appropriate and goes according to the functions of the departments.

### **3.2 What improvements would you like to see regarding vetting?**

The respondent said that he would like to see increased capacity for vetting functions in both the departments as well improving the resources.

### **3.3 What solutions do you think should be in place in order to alleviate the current challenges?**

The respondent said that, according to him, the best solution is for the DHA to have a mandate to conduct vetting.

### **3.4 What would you like to see the SSA doing in order to accelerate the vetting process for the sake of fast response?**

The respondent said that he would prefer to see enough support from the SSA and improved relations between the departments. He would also like see an increased pace in the turnaround time.

### **3.5 What needs to be done to ensure that implementation is done properly?**

According to the respondent, the idea of monitoring and evaluation as well as co-operation between the two departments in order to keep track of the stages of implementation will ensure that implementation is done properly.

### **Summary: Respondent E**

According to respondent E, the current vetting strategy is not as effective as it should be. His main concern is that the DHA is depended on the SSA for the finalization of the vetting process and they do not always take into consideration what the DHA recommends in terms of issuing clearances. The respondent said that people in the DHA are negative towards vetting and they tend to avoid compliance. The lack of information regarding vetting is also a problem. The respondent also spoke of capacity problems. One of the solutions is if the DHA can be declared a security department and then be handed the mandate to conduct the entire vetting process. In that way the DHA will be able to run the vetting process in a manner that is suitable to the values, mission and vision of the DHA.

#### **4.2.6 Respondent F**

**Question 1: How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in the DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

##### **1.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of the vetting systems in the DHA?**

Respondent F believes that the current vetting strategy is effective but also there is an element of it not being effective. It is effective in a sense that officials in the strategic positions who are trusted with confidential information are vetted and they have been proven to be competent and have a credible background. This has been discovered because vetting was conducted. The respondent believes that vetting is ineffective because of the DHA's dependence on SSA to complete the vetting process. It is a challenge because the DHA does not have control over the turnaround time for the issuing of clearance certificates. It takes longer for the SSA to finalise the process. It is also not possible to keep track of the files submitted to the SSA. The DHA is a sensitive department due to its timely interaction with foreigners, and it is quite risky to have officials who did not go through the vetting process because their integrity has not been tested and their credibility is not confirmed.

##### **1.2 How can the vetting process be made effective?**

The respondent said that the DHA should be handed the mandate of vetting so that they can conduct the entire vetting process.

##### **1.3 Do you think that the vetting posts are adequate to cover the amount of work required to complete the vetting process?**

The respondent said that there are not enough posts to cover the work. There are thirteen vetting officers for the entire DHA. That is not enough and due to cost cutting, it is still not easy to advertise more vetting positions.

#### **1.4 Is there a vetting policy that you know about/have you seen it?**

The respondent said that he knows of a vetting policy which is dated August 2013.

#### **Question 2: What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting in DHA?**

##### **Sub-questions:**

##### **2.1 Describe the challenges and shortcomings you experience regarding vetting in the department.**

The respondent said that co-operation from officials is very poor. They always have excuses when they have to avail themselves for vetting and some managers also have a tendency of refusing to co-operate. The respondent added that dependence on the SSA is a challenge on its own. They are overworked because they are not only responsible for the DHA's vetting but the rest of the country as well. The work is too overwhelming to them and they end up not providing feedback. He said that sometimes a file can be sent to SSA and five years will lapse and there will still be no feedback. The respondent also mentioned the non-receptive attitude of officials towards vetting. Limited resources also constitute a challenge as well as poor record-keeping that is not in place because there is no verification system that can confirm who has been vetted and who has not. The computer system that is supposed to keep a record of all vetting information is not functional.

##### **2.2 What do you think constitutes the challenges you mentioned?**

The dependence on the SSA constitutes the above-mentioned challenges because SSA is overwhelmed with the large volume of clearance applications.

##### **2.3 What could the major problem be in the SSA that affects the vetting process in the DHA?**

The SSA has a delayed turnaround time. An official waits too long for feedback after vetting fieldwork has been concluded from DHA. It can even take up to five

years and normally the clearance will be expiring after that period. The SVIS has not been fully functional. It has been left at the pilot stage and has not been fully functional. It still needs to be completed and establish one database for all the government departments so that tracking and tracing as well as record management can be in place.

**2.4 Does top management provide enough support in terms of responsiveness and compliance regarding the processes of vetting?**

The respondent said that there is support from top management. However, there are still some who are still resistant.

**2.5 Are there any resistance or non-compliance issues in of the vetting process?**

The respondent noted that there is resistance.

**2.6 What do you think these challenges you mentioned result from? Could it be failure in terms of implementing the vetting strategy or non-compliance with the vetting strategy?**

The respondent said that implementation could have failed. One example that indicates this is the SVIS that has been left on the pilot phase since the implementation and it not being used fully because it is not functional.

**2.7 If the answer to the above question was failure of implementation, what are the reasons for the failure? If the answer was non-compliance, what are the reasons for non-compliance?**

The respondent said that implementation cannot be done individually. The two departments must work together and brainstorm on issues that need to be revisited.

**Question 3: How should vetting strategy be constructed in order to alleviate the challenges?**

**Sub-questions:**

**3.1 How would you prefer vetting to be conducted in order to address the challenges and shortcomings?**

The respondent said that decentralisation of functions is required and the SSA should allow government departments to do certain functions in the vetting process in order to reduce the work load from them.

**3.2 What improvements would you like to see regarding vetting?**

Training in vetting should be done not only for vetting officers, but for the managers as well.

**3.3 What solutions do you think should be in place in order to alleviate the current challenges?**

The respondent said that according to him the best solution is if the entire process can be handed over to the DHA so that all the functions can be handled within the department.

### **3.4 What would you like to see SSA doing in order to accelerate the vetting process for the sake of fast response?**

The respondent said that SSA should just give the vetting mandate to DHA because the type of service being provided is of a delicate nature and the DHA officials understand the process better.

### **3.5 What needs to be done to ensure that implementation is done properly?**

The two departments need to work together.

#### **Summary: Respondent F**

According to respondent E, the current strategy is effective because due to the vetting process; officials at strategic positions within the DHA who are trusted with confidential information have been proven to be competent and they have a credible background. The respondent said that what makes the current strategy ineffective is that the DHA depends on the SSA for the completion of vetting. This is a problem because of the delay in the turnaround time from SSA which results in the employment of officials whose integrity has not been tested and whose credibility has not been confirmed. The respondent said that there is a shortage of vetting officers to cover the work load from DHA and SSA. The issue of co-operation from the officials when they need to comply with vetting is a problem. They always have excuses. The other thing is the limited resources. The delay in turnaround time from the SSA is a major problem. The respondent said that it will be better if the entire process of vetting is handed over to the DHA to reduce the work load from SSA. The respondent also stated that implementation was not done correctly. He gave an example of the computerization programme that was left at the pilot stage. That has led to problems of not being able to track and trace progress as well as record management.

#### **4.2.7 Respondent G**

**Question 1: How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in the DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

##### **1.1 Evaluate the effectiveness of the vetting systems in the DHA.**

Respondent G said that the current vetting strategy is 50% effective because annual vetting targets are met but the recommendations are not fully implemented. There are still people whose clearances were not positively recommended but those officials are still in the department doing the same job. The strategy requires that when vetting of an individual has been negative, that person should either be seconded to another position with less access or they should be discharged from the department. The respondent also said that there is a high level of non-compliance amongst the officials in terms of submission of the vetting forms.

##### **1.2 How can the vetting process be made effective?**

The respondent observed that if officials and managers can be 100% compliant with vetting and the recommendations be fully implemented, then vetting will be effective.

##### **1.3 Do you think that the vetting posts are adequate to cover the amount of work required to complete the vetting process?**

The respondent said that there are definitely not enough positions and vetting is one of the sections that is severely understaffed.

##### **1.4 Is there a vetting policy that you know about/have you seen it?**

The respondent said that he knows of a vetting policy which is dated August 2013.

**Question 2: What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting in the DHA?**

**Sub-questions:**

**2.1 Describe the challenges and shortcomings you experience regarding vetting in the department.**

The respondent said that lack of capacity from both SSA and DHA constitutes a major problem. There are budget constraints that make some of the functions difficult. The respondent also mentioned lack of support from the management when it comes to vetting.

**2.2 What do you think constitutes the challenges you mentioned?**

The respondent said that people are negative towards vetting because of the high prevalence of corruption.

**2.3 What could the major problem be in SSA that affects the vetting process in DHA?**

The respondent said that the SSA has capacity problems. The SSA people have a tendency of overlooking the recommendations that were made by the fieldworkers from the DHA.

**2.4 Does top management provide enough support in terms of responsiveness and compliance regarding the processes of vetting?**

The respondent stated that there is minimal support from top management.

**2.5 Are there any resistant or non-compliance actions in terms of the vetting process?**

The respondent said that there is resistance especially from managers and so far there are no consequences in place for non-compliance with vetting.

**2.6 What do you think these challenges you mentioned result from? Could it be failure in terms of implementing the vetting strategy or non-compliance with the vetting strategy?**

The respondent felt that compliance is major problem and it due to the fact that managers take vetting for granted.

**2.7 If the answer to the above question was failure of implementation, what are the reasons for the failure? If the answer was non-compliance, what are the reasons for non-compliance?**

The respondent said that the reason is that people see vetting as a threat.

**Question 3: How should vetting strategy be constructed in order to alleviate the challenges?**

**Sub-questions:**

**3.1 How would you prefer vetting to be conducted in order to address the challenges and shortcomings?**

The respondent said that capacity needs to be increased in both the departments and SSA should start taking the recommendations from the DHA's vetting officers seriously. The DHA should also start taking the recommendation outcomes seriously and implement them as such.

**3.2 What improvements would you like to see regarding vetting?**

Improved support from managers.

**3.3 What solutions do you think should be in place in order to alleviate the current challenges?**

Increasing capacity and introducing punitive measures for non-compliance in order to improve compliance and there might be 100% compliance.

### **3.4 What would you like to see SSA doing in order to accelerate the vetting process for the sake of fast response?**

They must increase their capacity and delegate some of their functions to the departments such as issuing of clearances for those people with minimal access to confidential information.

### **3.5 What needs to be done to ensure that implementation is done properly?**

The respondent observed that monitoring and evaluation is the best way to ensure correct implementation.

### **Summary: Respondent G**

The respondent is not saying that the current vetting strategy is entirely ineffective. According to him there is room for improvement in the 50% effectiveness that exists within the strategy. His concern that forms part of the 50% ineffectiveness is that the recommendations that are made after vetting is done are not implemented accordingly. He gave an example of those people who still have access to confidential information after their clearances were refused and this goes against the idea behind the vetting strategy. The challenges that he said he has experienced relate to the issue of non-compliance from officials and the managers. He also mentioned the lack of capacity from both departments as well as lack of support from the management when it comes to vetting. He said that this is also a result of the lack of punitive measures against people who do not comply. The respondent emphasized the increase in capacity in both the departments as a possible solution and also the introduction of punitive measures for non-compliance. The SSA should delegate some of its vetting functions to the DHA such as issuing of clearances for those people with minimal access to confidential information

## **CHAPTER 5**

### **GENERAL ANALYSIS OF THE RESEARCH**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION**

This chapter presents the findings of the research. The analysis will summarise answers to the three main questions. The analysis was guided by the 5-Cs protocol.

Security vetting in the department of Home Affairs was the topic of this research paper. The research study focused on the current South African vetting strategy and practices and the international perspectives on the practice of vetting with the purpose of identifying and describing the challenges relating to the current vetting process in the DHA and furthermore to determine the possibilities of establishing a strategy that will address the current shortcomings.

Recommendations are made on the basis of the findings of the study. It was clear from the study that the current vetting strategy is not without challenges and there is a need for intervention. The respondents were interviewed and they gave answers to the following questions which also guided the study:

- How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in the DHA?
- What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting in the DHA?
- How should a vetting strategy be constructed in order to alleviate the challenges and shortcomings?

In this chapter, findings will be discussed, followed by the recommendations and if there is any further information identified, further study may be necessary. The chapter will end with conclusions drawn from the study.

## **5.2. FINDINGS**

The following are the findings gathered from the information collected from interviews, literature studies and personal experience on each of the research questions.

### **5.2.1. Research question one: How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in DHA?**

The data suggests strongly that the current vetting is not effective and it also not efficient. In simple terms efficiency is doing things right and effectiveness is doing the right things. The terms 'effective' and 'efficient' are often used in companies during brainstorming sessions to improve the business. In terms of vetting, efficiency means that the process of vetting should be done faster or within a reasonable time. Effectiveness means that every government employee should first be vetted before gaining access to confidential information, or before assuming duties. The research indicated that the process of vetting within the DHA is not processed and/or finalised within a reasonable time which is considered to be between two and six months. The study confirms that there are officials in the DHA who have submitted their vetting applications and are still without a security clearance. It was stated that it could take as long as five years to complete the vetting of an individual.

It was confirmed in the study that officials in the DHA assume their respective duties and are allowed to have access to confidential information without a valid security clearance. There are people in the DHA and some at management level that lack a security clearance and are allowed access to confidential information. The aim of the vetting strategy was that when the process of vetting is complete and recommendations are done, they should be implemented as such. When it is recommended that an official's clearance be refused, that person should either be discharged from the department or they must be shifted to another position with limited access to sensitive information. It was confirmed in the study that there are

people whose clearances were not granted but they are still employed by the department and have the same access to information.

### **5.2.2. What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting at the DHA?**

The study has confirmed that there are several challenges with vetting in the DHA.

- **Reliance on SSA**

It was indicated in the study that the fact that the DHA is dependent on SSA for the completion of the vetting process is the main challenge. Most of the problems are as a result of the DHA depending on SSA. The study indicated the problem of delayed turnaround time. DHA vetting officers make an effort to complete their part of the work and after submitting to SSA, they no longer have control of what happens. In most cases, it is a waiting game and sometimes there will be no feedback at all. This has been demoralising for the officials in the DHA because they never get to know if they have been vetted negatively or positively. SSA is the only department in South Africa that has the mandate to conduct vetting. It was after the realization that the demand for vetting in all government departments had increased and SSA was struggling to deal with the high demand that they decided to decentralise vetting and let the departments do one aspect or function of vetting which is called fieldwork. The remainder of the functions are still the responsibility of the SSA and that is a challenge. The fact that the DHA still complains about waiting for feedback from SSA regarding the fieldwork indicates that SSA faces a serious challenge. It was apparent in the study that there is a capacity problem in the SSA. The vetting section in SSA seems to be short-staffed and is unable to process all the fieldwork sent to them, bearing in mind that it is not only fieldwork from DHA but the rest of the departments in the country as well.

- **Capacity**

The study indicated capacity as one of the challenges as explained above. It was apparent in the study that the DHA has a shortage of vetting officers to meet the demand of vetting within the Department. It was indicated that there are only thirteen vetting officers to cover the fieldwork of the entire department which consists of approximately 16 000 officials. It is not easy to work if the department is understaffed because some of the functions will be adversely affected. The researcher is employed as a vetting officer and is working at the provincial level as the only vetting officer in the province where there are many officials to be vetted. The administration function of vetting in the province is done by the vetting officer and is time-consuming.

- **Long or delayed turnaround time**

The delays in turnaround time were discussed. The study has shown that once the fieldwork has been done by the DHA, the files are handed over to the SSA to finalise the process and issue the clearances. This has been a problem because the waiting period is too long to be regarded as reasonable. It can be up to five years and sometimes clearances are never received. The example given was that clearance certificates are received in very small quantities, with an average of four clearances a month received while the DHA would have send more than four vetting files to the SSA for finalization.

- **Lack of information, education and knowledge**

The study has shown that there are a number of people within the DHA who are not aware of vetting and what it entails. People still ask what is vetting and why they have to go through vetting and as a result they see it as a threat and invasion of their personal privacy.

- **Non-compliance**

It was established in the study that DHA officials have a tendency to avoid the vetting process and do not want to comply with vetting requirements. This could be linked to a lack of information as the study shows. It was also indicated that there are no enforcement measures for compliance with vetting and there are no corrective measures for non-compliance.

- **Lack of support from top management**

The study reveals that top managers in the DHA do not show support with regard to vetting. They do not seem to take it seriously and that could also be the reason why there are no enforcement measures for compliance with vetting and there are no corrective measures for non-compliance. They may also not be well informed on issues involving vetting.

- **Implementation failure**

The study found that the vetting strategy that is currently in place was not implemented properly. It was indicated in the study that when the strategy was first established in 2006, it was with the following aims:

- Firstly, Vetting Fieldwork units will be established in major government departments who will vet their own employees. The government departments will then be responsible to employ their own vetting officer but they will be trained by the NIA which will eventually be responsible for the issuing of security clearances.
- Secondly, the NIA will expand its own vetting capacity in order to support the newly established VFU and to continue handling other requirements from government. These are to be done over a period of four years.
- Thirdly, the technological support is improved and developed in order to accelerate the clearance or vetting process through improved computerization.

Based on what the study has found, the third aim is the one that was not established in full. The study indicated that the computerization which is known

as the SVIS has been established but is not functional. It was found that the SVIS is not interlinked so most processes remain paper based. This has made it difficult to perform tracking and tracing of the vetting process of officials. It was indicated that it is still difficult to know who has been vetted and who has not been vetted.

- **Lack of corrective measures for non-compliance**

As indicated above, there are no corrective measures for non-compliance, as it has proved difficult to enforce compliance

- **Recommendations by DHA not taken into consideration by SSA**

In the study it was found that when the DHA has made recommendations on the vetting submitted to SSA, those recommendations are often ignored and not taken into consideration. The example that was given was that when a DHA vetting officer recommends that an official should not be granted a clearance, SSA will grant and issue a clearance and vice versa. This presents a challenge because DHA vetting officers understand the dynamics and what it means to have specific access to certain information. It was indicated that it seems as if the SSA does not trust the DHA to recommend appropriately.

### **5.3. DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS**

#### **5.3.1.5-Cs Protocol on the implementation of the vetting strategy**

The discussion of the findings will be based on the 5-Cs protocol, namely Content, Context, Commitment, Capacity, and Clients and Coalitions.

##### **5.3.1.1. Content**

This part of the paper focuses on the content of the vetting strategy, what it intended to address in terms of goals and objectives as well as how the strategy intends to address the identified problem (Brynard, 2003). The content of the strategy should be unambiguous and should be understood by the implementers to avoid compromising the implementation of the strategy (Najam, 1995). Brynard

also suggests that policy content is a function of the level and type of coercion by government in order to achieve the goals and the objectives of that specific policy. It has to be clear so that the policy implementers understand what the consequences will be should there be some form of failure in the implementation. It is also said that “the content of policy is not only important in the means it employs to achieve the ends, but also the determination of the ends themselves, and how it chooses the specific means to reach those ends’ (Brynard 2001:180). All these need to be indicated in the content of the policy. Looking at the vetting strategy, it is clear that the strategy was to address the capacity constraints experienced by the NIA when performing vetting duties due to the high demands of vetting of civil servants. That is the intent and the goals or objectives were as follows:

- Firstly, Vetting Fieldwork units will be established in major government departments who will vet their own employees. The government departments will then be responsible to employ their own vetting officer but they will be trained by the NIA who eventually will be responsible for the issuing of security clearances.
- Secondly, the NIA will expand its own vetting capacity in order to support the newly established VFU and also to continue handling other requirements from government. These are to be done over a period of four years.
- Thirdly, the technological support should be improved and developed in order to accelerate the clearance or vetting process through better computerization.

#### ***5.3.1.2. Context***

The nature of the institutional context which is sometimes referred to as the corridor includes the standard operating procedures through which the strategy or policy will be implemented, the availability of resources and the allocation thereof as well as the organizational structure. All these will have an impact on the implementation of the strategy (Najam, 1995). The respondents in the research indicated lack of resources being available to carry out the vetting process and the

capacity shortage between the two departments. According to Brynard (2005), the institutional context will largely be shaped by factors such as social, economic, political and legal imperatives because these factors have impact on the outcomes of any policy or strategy implementation. Because the vetting strategy was not for only one department to implement, the Standard Operating Procedures as well as the resources to complete the implementation of the strategy have been affected by the factors mentioned. It is said that for working relationships to be effective, certain actions such as “bargaining, cajoling, accommodation, threats and gestures of respect need to be put in place” (Warwick, 1982, p 188). On the basis of the data collected in the paper, the working relationship between the departments involved has not been effective because, according to Respondent A, there is lack of communication between SSA which is the custodian of vetting and the DHA. It is difficult to have successful policy implementation if there is no interaction amongst the parties involved. Respondents A and E mentioned that there seems to be lack of trust between the two departments which makes it difficult to have an effective working relationship. Respondent E also mentions a poor relationship between SSA and DHA because there are times when SSA promised to assist DHA with some projects but they (DHA) did not fulfil that promise and as a result have a negative impact on the process. Respondents also indicated lack of co-operation between the two departments.

### ***5.3.1.3. Commitment***

Najam (1995) notes that commitment in this regard refers to the importance of having those who are entrusted with the carrying out of the policy implementation at various levels to be committed for the purpose of achieving a successful implementation. Brynard and De Coning (2006. p. 198) notes that “if those responsible for carrying out a policy are not willing or they are unable to”, that policy will fail even if it is the best policy. In this case, commitment from both departments seemed positive during the early steps of the implementation process. The VFU were established within the different departments with the inclusion of the DHA. The SSA is still handling other vetting requirements such as polygraph and evaluation as well as the issuing of security clearance certificates; however,

the issue of capacity which was one of the reasons behind the vetting strategy is still a problem. All respondents indicated that there appears to be capacity problems within the SSA which is resulting in backlog and slow turnaround time in issuing clearance certificates. One of the objectives of the vetting strategy was that the SSA will expand their capacity in order to support the newly established VFU. Even though commitment cannot necessarily be quantified, it is possible to identify certain factors that will give an idea of whether participants in the implementation process are committed or not. In this case, it is concluded by the DHA officials based on the data that there is no commitment from the SSA because what was discussed during the vetting strategy did not happen the way it was suggested. This indicates how all the variables within the implementation process are interlinked and influence each other. Effective implementation cannot take place if one of the variables is not fully supported. For example, now DHA is committed to the vetting strategy and SSA indicates lack of commitment and as a result it affects the variable of Context because of lack of resources, in this case, critical human resources.

#### ***5.3.1.4. Capacity***

In this case, capacity not only refers to a number, but also the administrative and operational (Najam, 1995) capabilities such as skills, knowledge and experience to perform the duties. It is also viewed as “availability of and access to concrete or tangible resources such as human, financial, technology, logistical as well as intangible requirements of leadership, motivation, commitment, willingness, courage, endurance” (Brynard & de Coning, 2006, p 199). The data indicated that there are a number of people within the DHA that are not aware of what vetting is as well as what it entails; some of those are top managers who are supposed to ensure that their subordinates are vetted. It was also indicated in the data that those top managers within the DHA show limited interest in providing support to issues that are related to vetting and that there are no corrective measures for those who do not comply with vetting. The question is how the vetting strategy will be effectively implemented if there is still lack of support from top management. The capacity level within the DHA is also lacking as there are only thirteen vetting

officers who are responsible for the vetting of the entire department. Respondent A indicated that the technological aspect of the vetting strategy is not effective and also not secure. One of the goals of the vetting strategy was that the technological support will be improved and developed to accelerate the vetting process through better computerization; however, all the respondents indicated that the technology is poor and makes it difficult to track and trace the progress of vetting applications.

#### ***5.3.1.5. Clients and Coalitions***

The vetting process requires a two-way approach for it to be effective. The nature of the process itself requires that the top management, vetting officers, officials whom vetting is conducted on as well as SSA should work together and build a relationship. Vetting will not be effective if there is no co-operation between the above parties. It has been indicated that the relationship amongst the parties is poor and that is one of the main reasons for the ineffectiveness of the process. It is important that there is enough support from top management, vetting officers, officials and the SSA.

#### **5.3.2. Shortcomings**

As indicated above, security vetting is the responsibility of the SSA and the rest of the departments in government and state owned entities depend on SSA for vetting. However, this dependency of all the departments in the country on the SSA has proved to be a challenge, especially on the matter of the turnaround time to issue clearances. It is understandable that vetting is a lengthy process but it seems to take longer than can reasonably be expected. The SSA has admitted to having backlogs due to internal capacity constraints. They have indicated that they receive high volumes of security clearance requests and need to collaborate with SAPS for criminal record information. This could contribute to the delays in completion of the process and the poor turnaround time (Public Service Commission, 2013). Considering that the SSA receives a high volume of security clearance requests, the question remains, what have they done or what are they

doing to resolve that challenge as it affects all the departments because they all depend on the SSA. It will not be easy to know exactly what lies behind this inability for SSA to address the challenges mentioned because they have provided only one reason. It is then of importance that the research attempts to provide explanations. This will be done by discussing four issues with the aim of providing further insight.

1. The South African Intelligence service prior to 1994, during transition to democracy and currently.
2. The issue of secrecy in the intelligence service and its relevance in the democratic setting as well its effect on vetting in general.
3. The amalgamation of the intelligence service, i.e. NIA and Secret Services.
4. The recruitment process in SSA.

#### ***5.3.2.1. The South African Intelligence service pre-1994, during transition to democracy and currently***

Before 1994, the intelligence service in South Africa was under the rule of the white minority. However, intelligence evolved and Africa (2009) divided the evolution into four distinct phases from 1910 to 1994 and after. The evolution started with the merging of the four colonies in South Africa that were white controlled. They became one Union and later the first national strategic intelligence serviced of the apartheid government was established with the main function of protecting the colonial regime and also to ensure that the potential sources of anti-colonial resistance were identified and dealt with as early as possible. During the period 1969 to 1990, the NIS, the military intelligence and the security branch merged in order to ensure that the apartheid regime was maintained despite the fact that those agencies were opposing each other. This was due to many reasons but the main reason was that for one intelligence agency to be dominant or to claim supremacy was largely influenced by the preference of the serving prime minister or the president (Shaw, 1995). Transition started in 1990 and was characterized by the transformation of many institutions including the intelligence services, which was part of the security sector reform. As part of

the transformation of the intelligence services, there were recommendations made that included the following:

- Security forces must be subject to the supremacy of the constitution;
- They be politically non-partisan;
- Respect for human rights is paramount;
- Strive to be representative of the society as a whole; and
- Non-racialism and democracy apply.

One of the criteria for vetting is an individual's past conduct. This differs across institution, transitional context and time. For example, in post-communist countries, individuals are often vetted for evidence of non-violent actions that have however constituted violations of "public trust" such as past collaboration with secret service institutions. In post-conflict countries, it is members of the security institutions that have to be screened for violent abuses such as war crimes, crimes against humanity and crimes of genocide. The general rule is that any "involvement in gross violations of human rights or serious crimes under international law should always disqualify a person from public employment" because these are regarded as serious crimes and they indicate a lack of integrity in a person which as a result may affect that person's credibility to hold public service (Duthie, 2007).

As can be seen from the above recommendations that were made during the transformation of the intelligence services, one of the recommendations was that security forces should be able to respect human rights and they therefore need to be screened to ensure that they will be able to work in public office. However, according to Duthie (2007), the transition period in South Africa was not subjected to the process of vetting. There was a choice made against vetting because of primarily a lack of legal authority to conduct vetting of public employees. It was also "because of an approach that the position of staff in the public service be protected during the transitional phase" as indicated by the acting director-general of the DPSA. Instead, the Goldstone Commission was used as a form of screening during that period. This is, however, referring to the

non-security components. With the security components with specific reference to the intelligence services, vetting has always been conducted on the employees.

The role of the intelligence services was only indicated in the constitution several years later after the first democratic elections. However, the national intelligence service was already established and functional. It was due to the Intelligence Service Act of 1994 (Act 38 of 1994) that the amalgamation of the statutory and non-statutory intelligence services was provided for and formed into two national intelligence departments that represent the democratic South Africa. The two departments were distinguished according to their functions: i.e. domestic and foreign functions. The domestic intelligence was the National Intelligence Agency (NIA) which was responsible for the external threats to security and also responsible for counter-intelligence as well as to ensure that foreign agents do not easily penetrate the South African Intelligence machinery; as well as the implementation of the Minimum Information Security Standards across government. The foreign intelligence was the South African Secret Service (SASS) responsible for external collection of intelligence about threats from outside of the country (Africa, 2004). However, the necessity of the NIA was questioned primarily because of its mandate which also included the collection of political intelligence since such agencies are quite rare in constitutional democracies (Seeger, 2009). These two were the post-apartheid intelligence service with the Defence Intelligence responsible for military intelligence. The concern was the issue of oversight and accountability in the intelligence. According to Dombroski (2006), this post-apartheid intelligence has presented the “fractiousness, factionalism and corruption” which are similar to those characteristics in the apartheid intelligence. This includes lack of trust which goes against the intelligence function in a democracy and has shown itself to be lacking in oversight and accountability. For some time, the competence of the post-apartheid intelligence has been questioned within the government by former Presidents Nelson Mandela and Thabo Mbeki. After the burglary that took place in the NIA office in 1997, former President Mandela expressed his concern about the NIA, asking them how it is possible that they can “claim with any measure of

integrity that they are competent to protect the country if they are unable to secure their own premises” (Sanders, 2006). Similarly, during the administration of President Mbeki, in his address to the Intelligence Service Day Tenth Anniversary Awards Ceremony, Mr Mbeki mentioned his concern of many years about the “quality of a significant proportion of the intelligence” he had received.

In 1999, the former minister of intelligence revealed that about 115 NIA and SASS employees were charged with misconduct. Misconduct in any organization is unacceptable and it becomes a great concern when it is done by an organization that is supposed to be fighting and guarding against misconduct. These issues say a lot about professionalism or lack of it. The issue of capacity has also been a cause of concern in the post-apartheid intelligence space. It is noted that there is a severe shortage of well qualified personnel and lack of specialized skills in the post-apartheid intelligence structures (Butt, 2010). This is reflected in the study where capacity problems in the SSA were identified that contribute to slow turnaround times in the vetting process. This gives rise to the question that there may also be a shortage of qualified people to perform vetting at the NIA.

#### ***5.3.2.2. The issue of secrecy in the intelligence service and its relevance in the democratic setting as well as its effect on vetting in general***

It has been said that secrecy is the intrinsic feature in the intelligence area and that most intelligence services depend on secrecy to be effective (Hutton, 2007). The same applies to South African intelligence; they keep secrets, usually in the name of national security. More than any other state department, the intelligence services regularly withhold information from the public and even from other government departments. As a result, the public have little knowledge about the activities in intelligence and this has led to misconceptions (Africa, 2009). However, in the democratic setting, secrecy can pose a challenge because one of the principles of democracy is transparency and the challenge is balancing secrecy and transparency. Africa (2009) indicates that this is one of the most important challenges that South Africa in the post-apartheid administration needs to overcome. The purpose of the Secrecy Bill in South Africa is to “provide for the

protection of sensitive information, to provide for a system of classification, reclassification and declassification of the state information, to provide for the protection of certain valuable state information against alteration, destruction or loss or unlawful disclosure, to regulate the manner in which state information may be protected, to repeal the Protection of Information Act, 1982 (Act No. 84 of 1982) and to provide for matters connected therewith” (Republic Of South Africa Bill, 2010). The bill describes the sensitive information as “state information which must be protected from unlawful disclosure in order to prevent the national security of the Republic from being harmed”. As indicated above the issue of secrecy poses a challenge in a democratic setting, not only because transparency is one of the principles of democracy but also because the right to access to information is a basic human right. In the South African context that basic human right to have access to information co-exists with the protection of other information (Mathews, 1978; Currie & Klaaren, 2002 cited in Africa, 2009) and there is prescribed legislation that guides the two notions. Because the legislation co-exists and it can be seen that they are contradictory to some extent, it can be inferred that there is limited consensus between the intelligence services and the important stakeholders in the public on what is considered a threat to national security and what information therefore warrants protection (Africa, 2006). This is also indicated in Hutton (2010) in that there is always a question about what should be kept a secret as well as which information should be protected, by whom, from whom and why.

Africa (2009) explains that an argument can be made that because in South Africa there is no internal or external conflict since democracy, therefore there is no need for the state to resort to extreme secrecy as compared to the apartheid period. However, the interconnection between countries and the fact that the world itself is unpredictable, means that there will always be different threats to security which will require early warning capabilities of the intelligence services. With vetting as a measure to determine an individual’s ability to act in a manner that he/she does not cause classified information to fall into the hands of unauthorized people, thereby harming the security of the state (Republic of South Africa MISS

document), one may conclude that the vetting process can form part of early warning capabilities as mentioned above. The only challenge that has been identified is that people tend to want to know and understand the reasons for conducting vetting as well as why certain questions are being asked during the vetting investigation. One can say that the issue of secrecy has played a role in how vetting is being conducted because some of those questions posed by employees do not always get answered, and the answer will always be that it is part of the process. This can be perceived as lack of openness which has been argued by some writers as increasing suspicions and that people tend to believe that there is an ulterior motive in conducting vetting (Aubrey, 1981; Cohen, 1982; Mates, 1989 cited in Africa, 2009). Vetting is endorsed in the MISS document. However, the documents itself has received criticism indicating that even though it is a post--1995 document, it is based on administrative instruments inherited from the apartheid regime which granted officials the authority to classify information on the grounds of national security and thereby limit public access to information (Hutton, 2010). This has resulted in the public assuming that the intelligence services in the current democracy are not very different from the intelligence service in the apartheid era in terms of being repressive and invasive (Hutton, 2009). From the experience of the writer as a vetting officer, vetting has been regarded by most government employees as being too invasive of one's privacy and when some questions do not get answered, it makes people uncomfortable and resistant to the vetting process.

### ***5.3.2.3. The amalgamation of the intelligence service, i.e. NIA and Secret Services***

As discussed above, the two intelligence services were responsible for different functions after 1994. In 2009, President Jacob Zuma tasked the different ministers of the security clusters to review the structure of the civilian intelligence community. This was done during the time he was appointing a new cabinet in May 2009. The purpose of the review was to develop a more effective and efficient intelligent structure (www.ssa.gov). In October 2009, Minister Siyabonga Cwele announced a major restructuring of the South African

Intelligence community. In his address, the Minister indicated that the intelligence service would be structured in such a way that some of the structures within intelligence would be removed so as to avoid duplication and wastage with the purpose of putting intelligence at the core of the government business. The Minister's concern was that a part of the intelligence budget was "being spent on corporate affairs rather than on operations which is the core business of any intelligence service". Further the Ministry was reviewing the White Paper on Intelligence which informs the doctrine and strategy of South African national security. The review process involved government departments, civil society and the public in general (Engelbrecht, 2009).

The other concern that led to the restructuring was that there was a lack of co-ordination, overlapping mandates and wasteful duplication. The different intelligence structures had their own corporate services components which resulted in them having funds that could be used in operations and technical support. There was limited information sharing and lack of co-operation amongst the intelligence structures. This caused risks of the kind that has led to the security disaster in the United States in 2009. The area of vetting was also a concern because there was poor service delivery (GILAB: SSA Briefing, 2013). During the same briefing, the then Acting DDG of SSA, Mr D Dlomo, indicated that his department had the challenge of backlogs in the area of vetting because of the delays caused by bottlenecks. He also said that as part of combating corruption, the Department had to improve on the turnaround times for vetting by delegating the function of vetting certificates. This would mean that all the required controls for vetting would then be in place. Vetting is a daily function and there is no need to have a long consultative process. There were concerns from some members in the briefing about the delegation of certain vetting functions. One concern was the risk of compromising the standard on vetting due to delegation. The other concern was about addressing the backlog by rearranging the working methods as opposed to delegating because of the matter of the Guptas whereby no one accepted the responsibility because of delegating. The idea was that delegating the responsibility will not address the backlog challenges but instead could lead to

unintended risks. These concerns were not addressed and the backlog remains, affecting the process of vetting in different departments. However, the delegation that was referred to in the briefing has not taken place since the meeting in 2013.

The State Security Agency is the new organization following the review process indicated by Minister Cwele. Its mandate is to “provide the government with intelligence on domestic and foreign threats or potential threats to national stability, the constitutional order and the safety and wellbeing of our people”. The structures that were said to close and fall into the SSA as a branch included the NIA, SASS, SANAI, NCC, OIC and COMSEC. Each structure will be led by a head that will be accountable to the Director General of SSA (Engelbrecht, 2009).

The Minister in his speech emphasized that staff working in all those entities would not be affected by the redeployment. However, this amalgamation did not occur without criticism. Africa (2009) argues that the restructuring of the intelligence community which resulted in the creation of the SSA is a reflection of the rising securitization of the country and that the security of the state has now colonized that of human security. This undermines the core principles of the intelligence service as this was not the first restructuring of the intelligence service since 1994. All the ministers of the intelligence services have made promises when restructuring was taking place, such as the implementation of elements of the services’ vetting strategy and to expand the vetting field units in prioritized institutions with the intention to broaden the programme’s reach. The challenge still remains the lack of vetting services that reaches a broader spectrum. In every budget speech from ministers of intelligence or state security, there is always something that is said about vetting but thus far the problems associated with vetting persist. In the 2015 budget speech, Minister David Mahlobo indicated that the SSA plays a critical role in the initiatives that combat corruption and vetting is one of them. This has been repeated since 2006 but with little evidence of improvements being made.

#### ***5.3.2.4. Recruitment processes in the SSA***

According to the 2003 Government Gazette on the Ministries of Intelligence, the recruitment process in the intelligence services starts with advertising the position internally and externally. They also do headhunting which can take place simultaneously with advertising. The headhunt is mostly utilized to obtain skills which are not readily available in the marketplace. This process can be done through the utilization of services of registered and security cleared consultancies in order to reach a targeted pool of people. Besides the two recruitment processes, there is also a process of talent spotting that is used to identify people with specific talents and skills. The recruitment process in SSA is quite broad and from how it has been conducted, SSA should be able to employ people with relevant skills who will provide the best vetting service needed, but that is not the case. It is still difficult to answer the question as to what makes it impossible for the SSA to provide government departments with the proper vetting services. There is always the issue of backlogs and poor turnaround time which does not appear to have been addressed. Attempts by the writer to obtain explanations from the department were fruitless. The requests that were sent were ignored and no responses were provided.

#### **5.4. RECOMMENDATIONS**

The study was undertaken to examine information on vetting in the DHA, if it is effective and efficient as well as the challenges experienced in vetting. The purpose of the study was to identify and describe the challenges relating to the current vetting process in the DHA and as a follow-up, determine the possibilities of establishing a strategy that will address the current shortcomings.

The recommendations are made on the basis of information obtained in the study:

- The SSA should hand over the mandate for vetting to the DHA so that all the functions in vetting are conducted in the DHA. In that case they will be able to grant and/or refuse security clearances. This will make it easier because the DHA will have control of all aspects involving vetting. Most of the problems will be alleviated.

- If the above solution is not possible, then the two departments, and especially SSA, need to increase their capacity. When there is a shortage of staff, the throughput of work is negatively impacted. If SSA increases its capacity, it will assist them in allocating the vetting functions to the departments. This will make tracking and tracing possible because each department will know the exact identification of a person who is responsible for them at SSA rather than going to the whole section of vetting and still not get help. An increase in capacity will also reduce the turnaround time because there will be enough people to address the volume of work.
- Within the DHA, there is a serious need for awareness to improve knowledge and information on vetting. Officials and management in the DHA need to be informed about vetting. It will be advisable for the DHA to invite SSA to do awareness presentations targeting top managers. There must also be the introduction of punitive measures to deal with non-compliance.
- The need for a research and development function within vetting is of importance. The study discussed countries that practice vetting and reference was made to Canada and New Zealand in particular for comparison purposes. Looking at the two countries and how they conduct vetting, it will be advisable for people to be sent to these countries on an exchange programme. This can be done if there is a section that will be solely responsible for the function of research and development; in order to keep up with changes, since, if a vetting officer is required to do research and development work, then the vetting function will suffer.
- On the question of failed implementation process, the best solution will be monitoring and evaluation so that it is easy to revisit any area that is not performing. Consideration should be given to the use of the 5-Cs protocol. With this current vetting strategy, it is apparent in the study that there is a need to revisit some of the stages, especially those that are still not fully implemented to date mainly due to capacity and non-functioning computerization programmes.

Based on the above solutions, it is recommended that the two departments revisit the original intentions of the vetting process. The solutions presented in this study can be used to inform the discussions. Since the issue of capacity was found to be the key common challenge, the following recommendations are made. This is also based on the 5-Cs protocol discussed above.

- Both SSA and DHA need to increase their capacity by employing more vetting officers to conduct fieldwork and evaluation as well as the increased employment of polygraph examiners.
- Training should be conducted at least three times a year to make provision for new vetting officers.
- Once there is adequate staff in place to carry out the vetting functions, the SSA can allocate evaluators and polygraph examiners to various departments, so that when DHA vetting officers have queries, there will be a specific person to provide such support.
- SSA should consider handing over the entire vetting process to the DHA to avoid lengthy turnaround times and to avoid making recommendations that are less favourable to the DHA due to the lack of understanding of the DHA functions, values, mission and vision.
- Should the above recommendations be taken into consideration to a point of establishing a new vetting strategy, the implementation thereafter should be executed following the 5-Cs protocol from Brynard as discussed above. It is therefore also recommended that the implementation must include monitoring and evaluation on each and every step of the implementation process.

The study also indicated a serious challenge with regard to the knowledge and understanding of vetting within the DHA. It is therefore recommended that measures should be taken to educate officials about vetting. This can be done through awareness presentations, induction programmes or any other form of presentation that can adequately provide the required information.

Further study on this topic is recommended as the researcher believes that not sufficient information was gathered on the following aspects:

- The exact duration of the vetting process, starting from the beginning to the issuing of the clearance.
- When does the process of vetting start, before or after the assumption of duties?
- The benchmarking was not done thoroughly due to lack of information from different countries and because of the sensitivity of the topic. Further study is required to assess the exact process of vetting from those different countries to compare with South Africa.

## **5.5. CONCLUSION**

The core of the study was identifying and describing the challenges relating to the current vetting process in the DHA and as a follow-up to determine the possibility of establishing a strategy that will address the current shortcomings. It was revealed that there are challenges with the current strategy that have an impact on the effectiveness and the efficiency of the strategy. The main concern that was common in most of the interviews was the lack of capacity to process applications. The poor turnaround time was identified as well as the implementation failure of the current strategy. It was indicated during the course of the study that when the implementation was introduced, the intentions included increasing of capacity and the improvement of computerization which were to be completed within a period of four years. However, these two objectives have not been properly realised and are the main reason for the ineffectiveness of the strategy. There is thus a need to revisit the strategy as some of the solutions identified in the study have indicated.

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# ANNEXURE

## Research Questionnaire

### INTERVIEW GUIDE

#### Introduction

This interview forms part of my study to perform an evaluation of the vetting strategy as well as its implementation process in the Department of Home Affairs. The interview is being conducted as part of my studies for a Masters of Management in the Field of Security at the University of Witwatersrand Graduate School of Public and Development Management. The aim of the test identify and describe the challenges relating to the current vetting process in the DHA as well as evaluating the effectiveness and the efficiency of the current vetting strategy through understanding the implementation process with the strategy. As a follow up, the paper will also seek to determine the possibilities of establishing a strategy that will address the current short comings as well as the ways in which implementation process can be improved.

You have been chosen in your capacity as an employee/ expert and as an authority on the subject within your department/section together with the other 13 participants in the study. Your identity would be kept confidential in this thesis. You are requested to answer and discuss the questions raised only in terms of your own experience. I am requesting to have your permission to record and make detailed notes of our discussion.

If you agree, please tick. X

|                   |          |
|-------------------|----------|
| Voluntarily agree | Disagree |
|                   |          |

Signature:

Date:

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| Respondent No       |  |
| Interview date      |  |
| Department: DHA/SSA |  |

NB: This questionnaire consists of four parts

**Part 1: Biographical Information**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Office: \_\_\_\_\_

Designation: \_\_\_\_\_

| Job   | Description |
|-------|-------------|
| _____ | _____       |
| _____ | _____       |
| _____ | _____       |
| _____ | _____       |

Interview questions

5.1.1. How effective and efficient is the current vetting strategy in DHA?

- Evaluate the effectiveness of the vetting systems in DHA?
- How can the vetting process be made effective?
- Do you think that there vetting posts are enough to cover the amount of work required to complete the vetting process?
- Is there a vetting policy that you know about/ have you seen it?

**5.2. Sub-Research questions:**

5.2.1. What are the challenges and shortcomings concerning vetting at DHA?

- Describe the challenges and shortcomings do you experience regarding vetting in the department?
- What do you think constitutes the challenges you mentioned?
- What could be the major problems in SSA that affects the vetting process in DHA?
- Does top management provide enough support in terms of responsiveness and compliance regarding the processes of vetting?
- Are there any resistant or non compliance in terms of vetting process?

- What do you think these challenges you mentioned results from? Could it be perhaps failure in terms of implementing the vetting strategy or just non compliance with the vetting strategy?
- If the answer to the above question was failure of implementation, what are the reasons for the failure? If the answer was non-compliance, what are the reasons for non-compliance?

5.2.2. How should a vetting strategy be constructed in order to alleviate the challenges and shortcomings?

- How would you prefer vetting to be conducted in order to address the challenges and shortcomings?
- What improvements would you like to see regarding vetting?
- What solutions do you think should be in place in order to alleviate the current challenges?
- What would you like to see SSA doing in order to accelerate the vetting process for the sake of fast response?
- What needs to be done to ensure that implementation is done properly?