

# A NEW SOUTH AFRICAN DIPLOMATIC ACADEMY

DRAFT FINAL REPORT: 31 AUGUST 2019

MINISTERIAL TASK TEAM - CHAIRED BY A/PROF RICHARD CALLAND

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### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS & NOTE OF APPRECIATION

This was an interesting and stimulating assignment, narrow but deep. We are grateful for the opportunity to contribute to the strengthening of what we believe is a strategically vital area of South African governmental capacity.

We were ably assisted by the staff of the DTRD, with special thanks to Stanley Makgohlo, and valued the opportunity to interview and otherwise engage with senior management of DIRCO during the course of our work, as well as to receive guidance and support from the DG. This report is greatly indebted to the senior officials who generously contributed their time and insights and to the constructive openness with which they did so.

We also appreciate the openness and willingness to engage of all the representatives of the universities and think-tanks who provided valuable information on domestic learning and training capacities relevant to the diplomatic academy and to possible partnerships with the newly established academy in the future.

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

**Diplomacy has always mattered. Today, it matters more than ever.** A strong diplomatic capability is essential for advancing South Africa’s national interests – **especially in the realm of economic diplomacy.**

**A strong diplomatic capability is essential for the growth and prosperity of South Africa’s economy.** If South Africa is to attract new inward investment, which is a central pillar of its economic growth and job creation strategy, those that represent the country must be well educated and trained, with the high-level skills necessary to cope with the demands of a highly competitive and highly complex world. This report builds on and overlaps somewhat with the work of the Foreign Policy Review Panel. The Panel refers to several aspects of the immense challenge, and strategic importance of modern diplomacy, including specifically the relationship between diplomacy and South Africa’s economic development and growth imperative and strategy.

**The intention to develop a ‘fully-fledged’ Academy is already a core element in DIRCO’s overall future strategy, but the Foreign Service Bill creates a new legal basis for the Diplomatic Academy and compels an upgrade of its capability and capacity.** The academy will be legally required to provide relevant targeted diplomatic education and training to a large number of public servants from across government. We see this as an opportunity as well as a challenge for DIRCO: part of the core business case for the new Academy positions it as an African Centre of Excellence, in service of South Africa’s core foreign policy goal – A Better Africa and a Better World, which is one of the government’s seven apex policy priorities, as announced by President Ramaphosa in his June 2019 State of the Nation Address.

**The President’s commitment to a better Africa and a better world, and his emphasis on the importance of regional economic integration, trade and investment accords with the National Development Plan:** “In order for South Africa to achieve its national goals of eradicating poverty, lowering inequality, creating jobs and making the transition to a resilient, low-carbon economy, foreign relations must be driven by the country’s domestic economic, political, and social demands, as well as our regional, continental and global obligations” (NDP 2012).

**The new academy can best serve South Africa’s foreign policy by preparing its diplomatic corps at all levels and functions to better understand the drivers of change in current international relations and how these could be managed in a manner that promotes the country’s essential national interests.** The practice of diplomacy will, therefore, demand greater responsibility in analytically and strategically identifying and promoting opportunities and building resilience in the conduct of foreign policy. **This is especially relevant when it comes to economic statecraft and President Ramaphosa’s emphasis on economic growth and inward investment.**

**We were also mindful of the ‘soft power’ potential of a well-run, prestigious and cutting-edge institution.** It is clear from the experience of other academies around the world that one of the main side-benefits of a successful academy is that opportunity it provides to a country to demonstrate knowledge leadership and to frame a regional and global agenda to influence other diplomats. Thereby, it can help shape diplomatic relations while also establishing valuable networks of practitioners from a region. This is a soft power opportunity that is currently under-estimated and under-used, but which a new academy could exploit to a far greater extent and effect. The work of the current academy has shown the potential in this respect, but it could be greatly enhanced and amplified.

**Diplomacy is a professional specialism that requires specialist training and learning.** In a turbulent world, establishing a modern fit-for-purpose new diplomatic academy is essential if South Africa is to:

- restore its ability to interpret, adapt and innovate on international norms, principles and regime management;
- rebuild its reputation in international relations and to once again punch above its weight in global forums;

- advance the interests of the country and the continent, as a leader in the defence of the principles of multilateralism and the international rule of law.

**What is the ‘Gap’ the new diplomatic academy can fill?** Our approach to our assignment was also informed by a detailed needs/gap analysis, which included a significant number of interviews with members of DIRCO’s senior management team. The analysis found that:

- DIRCO’s own performance was unanimously judged to be inconsistent.
- There are reduced levels of engagement and consistency within DIRCO, and a diminished culture of professional self-development.
- South Africa’s ‘waning influence’, particularly in Africa, was highlighted as a problem.
- Goals and objectives are regarded as not clear enough to direct or assess achievement.
- The rapid changes in international relations require more effective learning and adaptation.
- Training is judged to be generally good but assessed by some people in DIRCO as too generic and insufficiently specialist, implying that there is a need to sharpen its strategic relevance.

**Training cannot address all capacity challenges alone and some problems, such as a disproportionate number of political appointees to heads of mission positions, must be tackled by other means. Arising from the gap analysis, the following findings were made in relation to the potential value-add of the new diplomatic academy:**

- It should be tightly linked to the development, review, monitoring and evaluation of policy and be focused on building strategic capacity.
- It should be embedded in an effective human resource management and development system that could include entrance exams for cadets, linking career development to demonstrated competence in relation to specific requirements, as well as to continuous development processes based on performance evaluation and development.
- It should have high level in-house strategic curriculum development capacity closely linked to DIRCO’s policy and strategy development processes.
- It must have the scope to apply a wide range of modes and methods to stimulate learning in DIRCO and to include external international relations role players beyond simply training.
- Criteria linked to selection, posting and promotion should include demonstrated ability for professional self-development in order to institutionalize a culture of learning.
- Partnerships can be established with academic organisations able to provide the generic education required so that the new academy can strengthen and improve the professional development of strategically and vocationally relevant knowledge, skills and attitudes (KSA) for both cadets and for foreign service officers as they advance their career paths.

The gap analysis indicated that senior management see the value of the new academy in terms of:

- Learning and training programmes which ensure that South Africa’s international relations are conducted by **consistently professional and competent diplomats.**
- The need to improve **specialist and generalist knowledge and skills and ensure a balance between them.**
- **Significant improvement in much-needed high level language and learning skills.**

**Strategic Rationale:** the academy must represent a powerful combination of external and internal contextual drivers. Hence, an up-graded, fully-fledged and stand-alone diplomatic academy is not a ‘luxury item’: not only does the new Foreign Service Bill impose important new obligations on the government’s diplomatic training capacity, but strengthening such capacity is also critical for strategic reasons.

However, our report identifies a number of **'boundary conditions'** that must be addressed if the new diplomatic academy is to be a success. A commitment to diplomacy as a profession must be restored, alongside a revived culture of merit-based appointments and responsibility for continuous learning within DIRCO and the foreign service as a whole.

**Vision: we envisage a 'free standing' fully-fledged new Diplomatic Academy (which should ideally be housed in a separate physical structure/location if feasible)** that falls under the management and control of DIRCO, but which is semi-autonomous. It must have sufficient operational independence to drive and sustain itself as a Centre of Excellence with a nimble, entrepreneurial ethos and a single-focus commitment to professional training and learning. This will require cutting-edge programmes and content underpinned by an appropriate adult-learning philosophy and practice, so as to produce a new breed of agile, critical-thinking, diplomats fit-for-purpose to serve South Africa's national interest and navigate a pathway through a complex, uncertain world.

With this vision in mind, and in accordance with our mandate, we offer specific recommendations on the seven elements of our Terms of Reference:

1. We recommend that the **Objectives** of the new fully-fledged Diplomatic Academy should be to:
  - i. Establish a Centre of Excellence in Diplomatic Training and Learning for South Africa and the Continent of Africa;
  - ii. Provide training accompanied by targeted learning to enable South African diplomacy to better project an African agenda in international forums and in global crisis management;
  - iii. Assist DIRCO to formulate a strategic learning and development programme aligned to its policy and strategic objectives, to develop and deliver an effective curriculum and learning programme to achieve this and to continuously improve it based on consistent monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness;
  - iv. Train and assess graduate recruits to South Africa's diplomatic service;
  - v. Provide foreign service officers with professional career development opportunities aligned to DIRCO's strategic HRM&D needs, commensurate with their position in the diplomatic service and the skills required for them to serve South Africa's foreign policy goals in pursuit of a Better Africa and a Better World;
  - vi. Establish an effective adult learning philosophy and practice so as to provide a bouquet of cutting-edge content and programmes that can attract delegates from a wide market of state and non-state organisations and institutions;
  - vii. Support an organizational culture of critical reflection, learning, excellence and ethical public service in DIRCO, including the facilitation of wider learning and engagement (in collaboration with Public Diplomacy and Policy-making Branches);
  - viii. Provide diplomatic practitioners with a platform and space for critical reflection and learning on key strategic issues such as the 'national interest', regional and global norm development and issue management, thereby enabling the Academy to contribute to the intellectual and policy integrity and direction of South African foreign policy; and
  - ix. Enhance South Africa's 'soft power' presence as the diplomatic training academy of choice for diplomats from around the continent by providing African diplomats with a unique opportunity to build solidarity and networks of diplomatic practice.
2. **Content & Programmes:** We recommend that the Academy undertake a systematic needs analysis and curriculum design and development process, including the development of a framework for ongoing monitoring, evaluation and improvement of effectiveness. This is vital to ensure the ongoing relevance of the work of the Academy to South Africa's diplomatic strategic capacity needs. This process and the routine review processes should be led by an official with high level curriculum development qualifications and expertise. However, deriving directly from our analysis of the needs of a forward-looking, fit-for-purpose diplomacy and

the contemporary South African diplomat, we recommend that the following framework for training and learning be factored into the process of developing the content and programmes of the new fully-fledged diplomatic academy, especially in terms of foundational models:

- Cluster 1: Foundational – African Centeredness
- Cluster 2: Foundational - Domestic and Sub-Regional Understanding
- Cluster 3: Foundational – International Understanding
- Cluster 4: Foundational - South African Foreign Policy and Diplomacy
- Cluster 5: Foundational - Economic Diplomacy
- Cluster 6: Foundational - Media, Management and Public Diplomacy
- Cluster 7: Foundational - Diplomats' Skill Sets
- Cluster 8: Foundational - Administration and Management Training
- Cluster 9: Foundational - Leadership and Professional Ethics
- Cluster 10: Specialisation and Options.

**We strongly recommend that the Content and Programmes of the new academy be underpinned by a distinctive, carefully conceptualized and constructed adult learning philosophy and approach.**

3. **Capacity: High quality professional trainers and facilitators are essential ingredients for the success of the new academy.** For diplomacy to be effective in terms of promoting the essential tenets of the national interest the academy's philosophy, methodology and pedagogy, must be underpinned by the necessary institutional and human capability and material resource capacity commensurate with the complexity of contemporary diplomacy.
4. **Partnerships will be critical in meeting the capacity needs of the new academy and should be a pivotal part of the operational ethos of the new academy.** The Foreign Service Bill encourages partnerships – both domestic and international. Based on the extensive consultations carried out with forty (40) individuals and institutions across South Africa, it is clear to us that there is ample opportunity for the new academy to forge significant, sustainable, and meaningful partnerships with a diverse range of local experts – individual and institutional. We further recommend that a number of 'anchor partnerships' with South African academic institutions underpin the operational and intellectual ethos of the new academy.
5. **Accreditation:** We have reached a settled view that the answer to the question of how to increase 'portability' (articulation) of qualifications is not necessarily through further academic qualifications, but by providing opportunities for professionals within the South African diplomatic service to receive relevant skills-based training and other professional development from a credible and highly respected and renowned diplomatic academy that carries weight in the broader state and private sector markets. **Accordingly, we are clear in our view that so far as academic qualifications are concerned, the right approach would be to have appropriate partnerships with credible tertiary institutions of higher learning and not by creating a new tertiary institution.** The 'articulation' value of the academy to its 'graduates' will come from the prestige and reputation of the academy. If a certificate acquired from completing an academy programme can be an accredited asset that comes from association with a highly respected Centre of Excellence, then it will retain its career and professional weight and value. Moreover, in terms of internal incentives, it will no doubt be essential that successful completion of training and learning programmes at the academy will be a pre-condition for progression in the diplomatic service.

**Entrance Requirements:** Additionally, we recommend that an essential reform necessary both for supporting a renewed culture of learning and the 'supply line' for the new academy, is the establishment of an Entrance Exam for the diplomatic service.

6. **Legal and Budgetary Implications:** We believe that a business model can be established whereby the new academy's funding needs can be met by a mixture of cost sharing, cost recovery and donor support. Our strong recommendation is that in order to cost recover effectively, the new academy will need to have **sufficient independence** – notwithstanding that it must be “under the control and management” of DIRCO, as required by the Foreign Service Bill. This takes into account that the new academy could receive funds directly (rather than via the Treasury) and the need for it to be nimble in terms of partnerships, donor funding and an entrepreneurial modus operandi relating to providing training products and services. We therefore submit that the new academy needs to be sufficiently close to the department so that ***it can build capacity inside and not outside*** of the State. But sufficiently independent and autonomous to help ensure that it has the necessary agility, innovative and entrepreneurial ethos, and unwavering commitment to the highest standards. **Specifically, we recommend that the modality that best strikes a balance between these two imperatives is that of a ‘government component’ under the provisions of the Public Service Act.**
7. **Roadmap:** A key legal requirement for establishing a ‘government component’ is a Feasibility Study pursuant to the provisions of the Public Service Regulations 2016. This would be the pivotal element of the Ten Step roadmap that we set out for the establishment of the new diplomatic academy.

#### **Members of the Ministerial Task Team:**

**A/Prof Richard Calland (Chair), Ms Gemma Cronin, Prof Paul-Henri Bischoff, Dr Somadoda Fikeni, Amb. Mathu Joyini, Mr Aziz Pahad, Prof Garth le Pere.**

31 August 2019

## I. Introduction: Preliminary & Contextual Matters

### 1. Introduction

**This report is the product of a Ministerial Task Team whose assignment is to advise the Minister of International Relations and Co-operation on the establishment of a new South African Diplomatic Academy in terms of the letter and spirit of the Foreign Service Bill.** This idea behind the new academy is pathbreaking since it represents the first time since South Africa's transition to democracy that an effort has been made to develop the substantive, normative, and institutional contours for such a legally constituted diplomatic academy. The FSB anticipates that when fully functional, the Academy will inaugurate a new frontier in the training and professional development of a new cohort of diplomats who are highly attuned and socialized into the increasing demands and growing complexity of contemporary diplomacy.

**The report is sensitive to the increasing centrifugal tendencies across the current landscape of international relations and the extent to which there is a compendium of structural factors which must necessarily shape the content and programmes of the future, fully-fledged Academy.** It observes that the very foundations of the post-War liberal international order are coming under increasing threat and pressure amid growing division and polarization in global politics and in the conduct of international affairs. Global norms are being eroded and multilateral institutions are being further weakened by increasing cleavages, rivalry, and contestation about power, influence, and interest. The world is witnessing rising military tensions, disruptive trade and commercial relations, rapid ecological degradation, rising levels of global poverty, the abuse of cyber sources of hard and soft power, a turn to atavistic bigotry and racism, and intractable proxy conflicts.

**Such a challenging conjuncture in international relations represents what the report terms the 'VUCA world' characterized by volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity.** However, this backdrop is also auspicious because it is an opportunity to carefully reconsider the essential conceptual and empirical foundations of the Academy as mandated by the FSB. This has been accomplished through the work that the team of experts and authors of this report have carried out over a six-month period beginning in March 2019. The report is based on specific advisory and contextual considerations which guided the work and effort of the team in putting in place the general planning and organizational architecture for a new and fit-for-purpose Academy.

**Quite crucially, the report contemplates how the vision and modality of the new Academy will be forged in the crucible of South Africa's national interest.** The Academy must, therefore, become an important knowledge and policy broker in understanding the interface between South Africa's national interest *and* the changing needs and demands of diplomacy in a 'VUCA world'. Much effort and energy has thus been devoted to analyzing and identifying gaps and capacity challenges in the current structure and how these could inform an improved and fit-for-purpose Academy. Here, the report provides strong motivations for greater professionalization and specialization which are mindful of South Africa's domestic imperatives relating to growth and development, with specific reference to the objectives of the National Development Plan and the demands of economic statecraft. In this regard, there are synergistic linkages between the thrust of this report and the findings of the Ministerial Review Panel on foreign policy, especially with regard to South Africa's waning global influence and the corrective measures required through adaptation of its diplomacy; or recourse to what has been called 'smart power'.

**The report completes its recommendations by providing a 'roadmap' that will be instrumental in realizing the scope, ambition, and promise of the new Academy, as well as its institutional form and business modality.** This includes very specific recommendations and suggestions about its objectives; content and programmes; organizational capacity; partnerships with local and international training institutions; accreditation and entrance requirements for trainees; and governance and budgetary matters. Ultimately, we conclude, the onus



of success in establishing the new Academy will rest on visionary leadership that is capable, willing, and prepared to drive the process of making it the centre of excellence that it undoubtedly could and should become.

**2. Ministerial Task Team Composition & Mandate:** Appointed to commence work in late February 2019, with a six-month term ending 31 August 2019, the Ministerial Task Team comprises a group of South Africans with expertise in, inter alia, international relations, diplomatic practice, international law, human rights and public law, governance, human resources, and organisational development. The members of the Ministerial Task Team are: **A/Prof Richard Calland (Chair), Ms Gemma Cronin, Prof Paul-Henri Bischoff, Dr Somadoda Fikeni, Amb. Mathu Joyini, Mr Aziz Pahad, Prof Garth le Pere.**

**Our mandate**, as set out in our Terms of Reference (dated 6 November 2018), is to advise the Minister on seven matters:

- i. The “set of objectives of the envisaged Diplomatic Academy”;
- ii. The “content and programmes of the envisaged Diplomatic Academy”;
- iii. The “organizational capacity required to meet the needs of the Diplomatic Academy”;
- iv. The “co-operations and partnerships that the Diplomatic Academy may enter into domestically and internationally”;
- v. The “accreditation and recognition of qualifications of the Diplomatic Academy”;
- vi. The “legal implications”;
- vii. The Roadmap for the “necessary legislative, procedural, budgetary and organizational milestones”.

### 3. Key Internal Contextual Factors

#### 3.1 The Foreign Service Bill (“FSB”)

**The Foreign Service Bill creates a legal basis for the Diplomatic Academy.** Once the Bill is passed by parliament and assented to by the President, a Diplomatic Academy will be a legal requirement. Section 7 contains a number of important provisions that the Diplomatic Academy will need to adhere to and/or take into account in its planning. These are also, therefore, very important considerations for our assignment:

- The Diplomatic Academy is responsible for the “prescribed mandatory training for members of the Foreign Service” as contemplated in section 4(3) and for training of employees of the Foreign Service;
- Section 4(3) of the Bill states that a member of the Foreign Service may not take up a position at a South African Mission until such time as he or she has successfully completed the prescribed mandatory training requirements, met the prescribed requirements for such transfer, obtained security clearance from a competent authority and received the Director-General’s approval for the transfer.
- The Academy is also responsible for conducting tests and examinations as the Minister may prescribe and for issuing diplomas or certificates;
- The Academy “may cooperate” with any institution of higher learning and other experts in South Africa or elsewhere to achieve its objectives.
- The Academy may assist with training requirements of foreign states;
- The Academy may provide training to “to any other person, on the written request by a head of an organ of state”. Read with section 4(1) and 4(2) of the Bill, which require any public servant from another government department to receive training before taking up a position at a Foreign Mission, the effect is to significantly increase the demand for diplomatic training.
- Lastly, and very significantly in terms of the governance and modality part of our assignment, the section 7 states that the Diplomatic Academy is established “under the control and management” of DIRCO.

**The law requires an upgrade of the academy.** Our Terms of Reference notes the contextual significance as follows: “Given the magnitude and the specialized requirements of the Diplomatic Academy envisaged by the Foreign Service Bill...[the Task Team must] assist with the repositioning of the Diplomatic Academy to be able to meet the standards and requirements set out in the Foreign Service Bill...[and] be responsible for strengthening the professionalism and expertise of South Africa’s Foreign Service and DIRCO, to deliver on foreign policy goals and advance South Africa’s interests, and to further enable career paths through the public service, including turning practitioner experience into certified/accredited qualifications” (Task Team TOR paras 11 & 14).

### 3.2 Policy Review

**The opportunity to build a new, fit-for-purpose Diplomatic Academy should not be seen in isolation of the broader foreign policy context.** A “Foreign Policy Review” was conducted in 2018-19 by a Ministerial Review Panel chaired by former Deputy Minister Aziz Pahad (who also serves on this Task Team). It reminds readers of the importance and the complexity of the wide-ranging role assigned to modern South African diplomacy. But as a part of its ‘critical reflection’, the Review Panel made the following pertinent observations:

*South Africa has not lived up to its earlier promise. That the country has not sufficiently played the role it was expected to play or should have played in engaging a number of international issues. There is a general observation that there have been missteps which have reversed earlier gains that the country registered. As a result, strategic opportunities were missed resulting in decline of South Africa’s influence regionally, continentally and globally. There is a connection between the decline of South Africa’s external influence and the negative tendencies that have bedeviled our national politics. At times, we became so internally focused to the extent of losing sight of the bigger picture that had inspired the democratic transformation. Needless to say, South Africa’s external fortunes would always hinge on the extent to which the country advances [sic] its national renewal process. There are some institution specific challenges at DIRCO that have contributed to South Africa’s decline. This includes the tendency, within DIRCO to work in silos. At the same time, South African diplomats had to work in an ever-changing dynamic regional, continental and global environment. (Foreign Policy Review, Interim Report, paras 2.9-2.14).*

Among its institutional recommendations, the Panel urges DIRCO to focus on the calibre of its diplomatic representation abroad and observes that the effective conduct of diplomacy depends on missions which are at its coal-face and hence, they must always have clear mandates, guidance, and coherent views. This becomes especially critical in the area of economic diplomacy where sufficient training and understanding must be ensured.

**A strong diplomatic capability is essential for domestic reasons.** The Panel refers to several aspects of the immense challenge, and strategic importance of modern diplomacy, including specifically the relationship between diplomacy and South Africa’s economic development and growth imperative and strategy: “Heads of Missions must be fully and adequately appraised on all aspects of diplomacy. Because one of the national priorities is economic development, it is important to ensure sufficient training and understanding of this area. This is particularly so now with the ambitious target set by the President of the 100 billion USD of Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) to be attracted to SA. There must be close coordination with the President’s Investment Envoys. South Africa’s missions should also work actively to promote Investment-Led Trade on the continent.”

**Diplomacy is a professional specialism.** The Policy Review Panel also provides important guidance on the delicate subject of political appointments to the foreign service by stating that: “A proper balance must be struck between political appointments and career diplomats. That balance is currently too skewed in favour of political appointments. This has demoralising effect on senior members of DIRCO. It also reduces the attractiveness of DIRCO as an employer of choice and thus at times affects quality. Balance should also be struck with respect to diversity across its varied dimensions.”

### 3.3 Government Policy Priorities: The National Development Plan & Foreign Policy White Paper

**Diplomacy is one of seven Presidential apex priorities**<sup>i</sup>. Presenting his State of the Nation Address (SONA) at the start of the sixth democratic administration in June 2019, President Ramaphosa identified his government's seven apex priorities, including "A Better Africa and World". Ramaphosa told the National Assembly that:

*"An essential part of South Africa's growth strategy is the integration of our economy with those of our neighbours and the rest of our continent. The African Continental Free Trade Area will improve the movement of goods and services, capital and means of production across the Continent. Our revitalised industrial strategy focuses on the expansion of our trade and investment links with the rest of the Southern African region and the Continent at large. Within SADC, we will prioritise development of cross-border value chains in key sectors such as energy, mining and mineral beneficiation, manufacturing, infrastructure and agro-processing." (SONA 2019).*

**The President's commitment to a better Africa and a better world, and his emphasis on the importance of regional economic integration, trade and investment is strongly aligned with the National Development Plan:** "In order for South Africa to achieve its national goals of eradicating poverty, lowering inequality, creating jobs and making the transition to a resilient, low-carbon economy, foreign relations must be driven by the country's domestic economic, political, and social demands, as well as our regional, continental and global obligations" (NDP 2012).

Strong echoes of these principled matters are found in DIRCO's 2011 White Paper, *Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu* which provides substantive, normative, and conceptual parameters to guide South Africa's diplomacy:

*"The values that inspire and guide South Africa as a nation are deeply rooted in the long years of struggle for liberation. As a beneficiary of many acts of selfless solidarity in the past, South Africa believes strongly that what it wishes for its people should be what it wishes for the citizens of the world. Its national interest can thus be articulated as people-centred, including promoting the well-being, development and upliftment of its people; protecting the planet for future generations; and ensuring the prosperity of the country, its region and continent. In pursuing our national interests, our decisions are informed by a desire for a just, humane and equitable world order of greater security, peace, dialogue and economic justice. The values that inspired the creation of a free and democratic South Africa are enduring because they have transcended time and conflict. Equality, democracy and human rights were entrenched in documents such as the Freedom Charter, which emphasises that non-racialism, non-discrimination, liberty and peace, democratic organs of self-government and equality are essential to achieve the common objective of a "South Africa that belongs to all who live in it, black and white....At times, South Africa faces the challenge of balancing its national interests against global realities in a rapidly changing world. Our foreign policy imperatives will need to be able to address and manage these dynamics."*

**South Africa's moral infrastructure in foreign policy is an Afro-centric one which derives from the experience of national liberation and the objectives of Africa's renewal.** The Foreword to the White Paper thus emphasizes the importance of Pan-Africanism and South-South solidarity as anchors of the country's international engagements since both were formative influences in South Africa's liberation trajectory. These influences are complemented by other foundational norms of its foreign policy such as global equity and justice; building strong partnerships with developed countries of the North; and strengthening the multilateral system of cooperation and development.

Moreover and importantly, the project of *Building a Better World* is very much predicated on South Africa's quest to "endeavour to shape and strengthen our national identity; cultivate our national pride and patriotism; address the injustices of our past, including those of race and gender; bridge the divides in our society to ensure social cohesion and stability; and grow the economy for the development and upliftment of our people" (White Paper, 3). And as part of its own nation-building and democratic transformation process, the White Paper stresses the importance of

meeting international expectations for “South Africa to play a leading role in championing the values of human rights, democracy, reconciliation and the eradication of poverty and underdevelopment” (White Paper, 4).

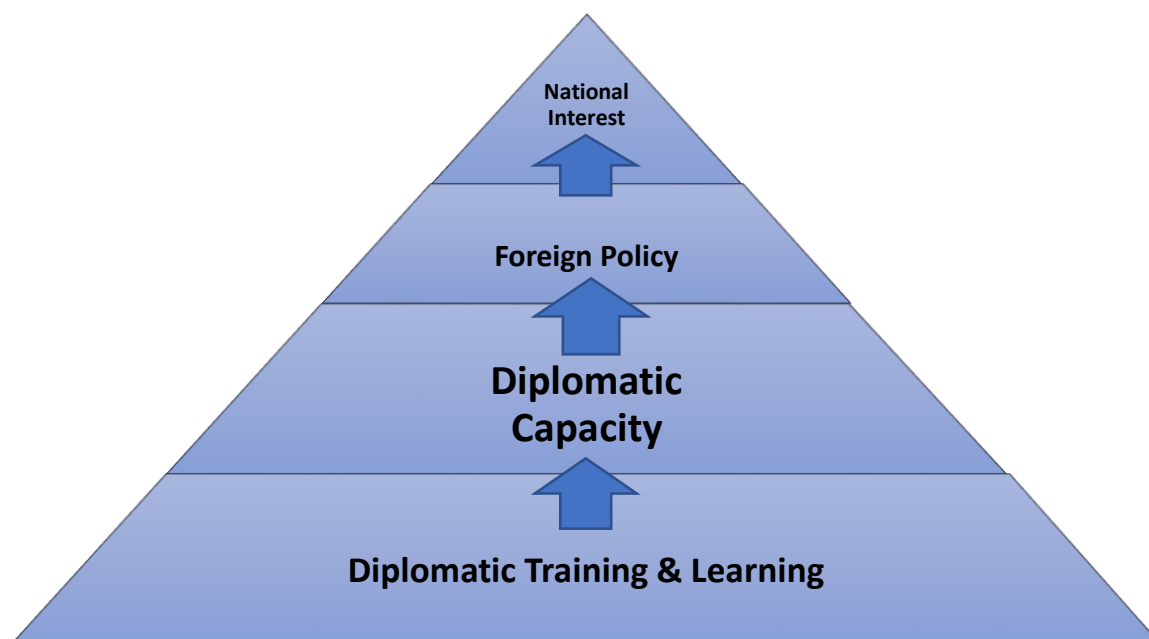
*Diplomacy needs to reconnect to his more idealistic sense of collective diplomatic purpose: the promotion of global co-existence.*  
Tom Fletcher, *The Naked Diplomat: Understanding Power and Politics in the Digital Age*, 2016.

### 3.4 DIRCO/DTRD Foreign Service Training Strategy

**The academy is a core element in DIRCO’s overall foreign policy strategy.** As our TOR notes, the new legal requirement created by the Foreign Service Bill is in keeping with the strategy of DIRCO’s Diplomatic Training, Research and Development branch (DTRD): “Auspiciously, the 2018/19 target is to ‘Develop a model for a fully-fledged Diplomatic Academy’” (our TOR, para 12). The Strategy was developed to guide the training offered by the Academy in the future, in particular to surface the competencies training ought to develop. It aims to ensure that training is ongoing, with offerings for various levels and for different career phases. The overall approach of the strategy is to focus on professional training, with key diplomatic work processes as central to the design of the training. The Strategy also indicates the need to balance different modes of delivery, ensuring a blended learning approach. Appendix 2 summarises DTRD’s current training offerings, plans and future strategy. We draw on DTRD’s current strategy at various points in this report, and reference it accordingly (the full DTRD Strategy document is attached, as Appendix 1).

## 4. Our Approach

Our approach to meeting our mandate was built on two fundamental pillars: First, a focus on South Africa’s national interest. Secondly, an emphasis on being clear about the question ‘training capacity for what?’ The two are interlinked in that as the graphic below represents, our view is that a diplomatic academy must be equipped to provide the training required for the country to have the diplomatic capability needed to serve its foreign policy and, in turn, its national interest. In approaching our assignment, we were acutely aware of the danger of assuming that ‘more training’ is the panacea for all manner of ills.



Hence, in determining the answer to the ‘**capacity for what?**’ question we invested substantial time and energy during the first phases of our work on two things:

- a) The Rationale - clarification of capacity required currently and in the future for effective diplomacy – both the internal and external dimensions; and
- b) A Gap Analysis – we wanted to be very clear about the gap that exists presently and the gap that will exist in the future. This takes full account of the increased needs for training imposed not just by the pressing demand for stronger diplomatic capability in key strategic areas such as economic diplomacy but also the additional legal obligations to train South African public servants across government in diplomacy (arising from the FSB, as outlined above). Accordingly, as set out in Appendix 5, we conducted substantial consultations with internal stakeholders on this issue.

**The National Interest is a vital, but dynamic, concept – and the Academy must not only serve but wrestle with it.** It is important to remember that national interest must be constantly defined and negotiated at the intersections between domestic policy imperatives and the difficult and complex challenges that arise in the global terrain. This requires a certain ideological orientation that derives from the calculus of pragmatism and idealism, both of which take account of objective conditions that exist or are unfolding. Therefore, it is important that the Academy provides a robust platform for understanding and interrogating South Africa’s national interest. In this regard, the national interest must:

- reflect long-term goals, values, and aspirations of the country and its citizens;
- advance the welfare of citizens and the security of the state;
- protect the country’s sovereignty and national territory;
- provide a clear and legitimate social purpose to be served;
- give clear guidance and strategic direction to policy-makers;
- provide consistency and coherence in policy management and execution; and
- give effect to those ideas, values, and beliefs from which South Africa derives its national identity.

**We are mindful of the ‘soft power’ potential of a well-run, prestigious and cutting-edge institution.** It is clear from the experience of other academies around the world that one of the main side-benefits of a successful academy is that opportunity it provides to a country to influence other diplomats and thereby, to help shape diplomatic relations while also building up valuable networks of practitioners from a region. This is a soft power opportunity that is, to our mind, currently greatly under-estimated and under-used, but which a new academy could exploit. This is a soft power opportunity that is currently under-estimated and under-used, but which a new academy could exploit to a far greater extent and effect. The work of the current academy has shown the potential in this respect – with programmes undertaken, for example, with the DRC, Burundi, SADC, FEMWISE Africa and CARICOM – but it could be greatly enhanced and amplified.

In addition, in order to investigate the potential for partnerships, again as set out in the FSB, we carried out an extensive consultation with a wide range of putative partners around South Africa, as well as some overseas - in terms of foreign diplomatic academies and the like. Although not exhaustive, this engagement has enabled us to conclude that there is a wealth of academic and practitioner expertise available in South Africa that could serve the delivery needs of a fully-fledged diplomatic academy. This process was supported by a very valuable bench-marking visit abroad, which led us to one of our key conclusions: that because the new academy must be focused on professional training and development, it must be staffed with effective professional trainers capable of developing and delivering a focused and relevant curriculum and consistent training philosophy and pedagogy (see Appendix 6 for a report on the Bench-marking research).

Appendix 7 is a DTRD-authored ‘typology’ of international diplomatic academy comparators), which reveals two things. First, there is a growing number of such academies – especially in the developing world/emerging economies, including in Africa, there are a number of brand new academies. Second, that there are essentially three modalities for diplomatic academies around the world: entirely in-house (such as Germany’s); entirely independent (such as Clingendael in The Netherlands); and various different types of ‘hybrid’ or semi-autonomous models. The trend has tended to be away from entirely in-house, towards the independent or semi-independent model. We kept this in mind as we completed our analysis and moved towards our conclusions and recommendations.

**A pivotal recommendation is that the new academy must be focused on professional diplomatic training and learning.** This is fundamentally important in terms of what we see as the purpose and ‘product’ of a strong diplomatic academy, namely, that it produces agile, multi-skilled diplomats with the professional attributes and outlook necessary to enable them to navigate a complex, dangerous world. This is in line with the approach adopted in the DTRD current and future strategy (see above), but needs to be enhanced and supplemented with new curricula and content.

**DIRCO’s buy in is essential for the future of the new Academy.** Lastly, in conducting our work, and in seeking to anticipate the future needs of DIRCO and the Academy, we have sought to work very closely with our colleagues in DIRCO and the DTRD especially. Our mission will come to an end soon, and while we are appointed by, and report to, the Minister, it is the department which must ‘live’ with the consequences of our recommendations and which will be charged, firstly, with establishing; and then, secondly, running the new academy. Hence, we regarded it as an utmost priority to seek to reach agreement about the vision and the long-term implementation and sustainability of the new academy, while recognizing that as an independent group of experts it might not be possible to find agreement with the department on every point.

## II. Rationale for a new Diplomatic Academy – the Why

### 5. The Why 1: External Considerations – Diplomacy in a ‘VUCA World’

*Diplomacy is hard when the rules of the game are in flux, when there are players willing to turn the chess board over, when the international system is being disrupted from outside, or, degraded from within. It is hard when tyrants and terrorists, pirate and persecutors, are setting the agenda. Diplomacy is hard in the periods when rival sources of power think that diplomacy doesn’t matter. Yet the periods when diplomacy is hardest are also the periods when it matters most. (The Naked Diplomat, 2016).*

**The rationale for a new South African Diplomatic Academy derives broadly from the rapidly changed and changing character of global society and the tectonic shifts in inter-state and international relations since the end of the Cold War.** Where South Africa locates itself at the nexus of these changes and shifts will depend on the quality, focus, relevance, and practice of its diplomacy *and* the strategic literacy and tactical intelligence of its foreign policy, especially relating to how its goals, priorities, and performance indicators are defined and achieved, with due regard to human and material resource constraints.

**The rationale for the new academy must further be understood in the context of three important systemic considerations.** The first concerns the strong currents of volatility, uncertainty, complexity, and ambiguity that have become the hallmarks and indicators of *relative instability* in the global order, the manifestations of which can be found in an eco-system of serious challenges – **the so-called ‘VUCA World’**. Here we can include poverty and unemployment, significant entrenched inequality, cybercrime and cyber security, racism and xenophobia, trade wars, demographic change, slow global growth, financial market turbulence, right wing populism, climate change, refugee crises, geo-political instability, terrorism, the Trump effect, and the BREXIT conundrum. This eco-system of challenges is rendered even more intractable and difficult to manage or control by a weak and often dysfunctional

multilateral system that is incapable of addressing most of these as urgent global issues that demand redress and collective action.

**The second consideration is the underlying logic of *relative stability* in the global order.** This has been characterised by a dramatic reworking of the architecture of international institutions in terms of the scope, range and intrusiveness of international norms, rules, and agendas. Complementary developments in this regard have been the growing pluralism in global governance, a system of international regulatory regimes, and normative injunctions which call for adherence to and promotion of democracy, development, peace and security, human rights, and environmental sustainability.

**The third consideration is that, since the end of the Cold War, the US has enjoyed sole superpower status and the conceptual and geographic West has featured very prominently in shaping and reshaping the contours of international affairs especially as far as anti-globalism, US-led wars, and regime change are concerned.** This is best exemplified by notions of interdependence, democratisation, globalised capitalism, free markets, and economic globalisation, which have provided a powerful vector force, drawing more regions, countries and societies into a dense network of transnational cooperation, exchange, and communication. *The emergence of new polarities* of power and influence as embodied in the BRICS countries are manifestations of growing forms of contestation in international relations which provide an alternate construct to Western hegemony and dominance. This has not only exposed the unfit-for-purpose nature of existing international institutions but indeed, has been a major impulse for new forms of global governance that are more cosmopolitan and inclusive, particularly in empowering developing and poor countries of the Global South. This points to an underlying existential dilemma related to serious structural, political, and normative deficits in current forms of global governance and multilateral institutions – all of which are struggling to cope with violent social disruptions, environmental degradation and the climate emergency, financial meltdown, rising levels of global poverty, and growing cleavages between and within rich and poor countries.

**Rethinking, reimagining, and reworking the basic roles and functions of the state and society in a common enterprise, therefore, becomes very important to the world of diplomacy.** This comes with greater responsibility for burden-sharing based on improving their diplomatic capacity for learning, innovation, and knowledge, on the one hand; and building formal and informal coalitions of normative persuasion, socialisation, and internalisation on the other. The ability to play these roles is dependent on making strategic interventions and developing workable policy options, crucially with regard to the regional and global nexus of influence, legitimacy, and authority.

**The new academy can best serve South African foreign policy by preparing its diplomatic corps at all levels and functions to better understand the drivers of change in current international relations and how these could be managed in a manner that promotes the country's essential national interests.** In this regard, it must be understood that diplomacy has become a high-risk undertaking in view of the various parameters we have attempted to sketch in the above rationale. The practice of diplomacy will, therefore, demand greater responsibility in identifying and promoting opportunities and building resilience in the conduct of foreign policy.

**This is especially relevant when it comes to economic statecraft and President Ramaphosa's emphasis on economic development.** For example, South Africa will be expected to provide strong leadership when the African Continental Free Trade Area becomes operational on 1 July 2020. It is one of the 54 African countries that have signed the agreement to create a single market for goods and services. Equally important, it is one of 22 lead countries that have ratified the various instruments of the agreement to make Africa the largest free trade area in the world in terms of the number of participating countries.

**The changing demands of diplomacy must also take account of the modern world of *exclusive* clubs with recourse to realpolitik, military capability, and geo-politics, characterized by ‘hard power’; and the post-modern world of *inclusive* networks which are shaped by images, influence, and persuasion, characterized by ‘soft power’.** Intrepid South African diplomacy must have the tools to negotiate its way between these two worlds in terms of what has been termed ‘smart power’. In this vein, what has been called ‘network diplomacy’ is of relevance since one of the primary roles of the foreign ministry and diplomats will be to serve and act as platforms and conveners that bring together multiple actors and resources to solve problems or address challenges. Such networking could be greatly facilitated by ‘digital diplomacy’ that takes advantage of new forms of communication and public diplomacy.

*Diplomats have always tried to shape world developments for the better, and we can do so again. We can now connect, understand, engage and influence in ways our predecessors never could. But we also need to understand the rival and disruptive forces that are competing with the efforts to co-exist. Diplomacy needs to reconnect with its sense of optimism and idealism. We need diplomats more than ever because the implications of diplomatic failure are more catastrophic than ever. The need is not for something to replace diplomacy, but for better diplomacy. (The Naked Diplomat, 2016).*

**Ultimately, foreign policy is purposive action and embodies the hopes, fears, and values of a country in relation to the wider world.** The moral of the story for the SADA’s mandate is to underscore how diplomats and the practice of diplomacy could be major agents of change. The new academy will need, therefore, to assist DIRCO with becoming a much more flexible, adaptable, and agile organisation in the conduct of South Africa’s foreign policy; how those at headquarters and missions, embassies, and consulates could best serve the country by enjoying greater autonomy, trust, ownership, and responsibility in decision-making; and what the boundaries of risk-taking and experimentation might be. This will require building skills in confidence, competence, and communication in what we term strategic literacy and tactical intelligence in the conduct and management of foreign policy.

**Hence, diplomacy matters more than ever.** The inevitable conclusion that we draw from this analysis of the trends is that the challenges that face diplomats are even more intense as well as intricate. Countries have to jostle for attention and for ‘strategic space’ within a multi-dimensional field of state and non-state actors, at a time of great fluidity and uncertainty in the global governance system. A sound reputation and astute positioning are needed, especially for an emerging market democracy such as South Africa’s. The quality of the country’s representation in global fora and amongst the myriad informal networks that surround formal diplomatic channels are critical. The imperative is to not only recalibrate the skillset of the modern diplomat but to rethink what it means to be an effective diplomat. This has significant implications for how South Africa recruits, selects, appoints and promotes its diplomats, which expose, as we decipher below, the current gap/need. There are several specific implications for a diplomatic academy, including:

- Being a diplomat is a tougher job and requires the best possible skill-based training throughout the individual’s diplomatic career;
- The management of diplomats will need to move from controlling action and behavior through detailed planning to relying on high levels of commitment and professionalism – this has significant implications for selection, training and ongoing development and will require consistently high levels of generic knowledge and skill as well as preparation to handle the technical demands of particular postings.
- Ensuring that the academy attracts the brightest and best is vital: DIRCO must retain the status of employer of choice, attracting the best candidates by the maintaining the prestige of being selected based on very high standards – meaning that the academy must be a sought-after destination for vocational training and learning.
- The entrance requirements and selection processes and systems should, therefore, be fit-for-purpose.



## 6. Implications for Forward-looking, fit-for-purpose Diplomacy and the Contemporary South African Diplomat

*“Within the complex and multifaceted world that is continuing to emerge, the demand for diplomats hinges on their ability to adapt, with a failure to do so pushing them into marginalization and irrelevance.”<sup>ii</sup>*

**Changing diplomacy recognises the urgent need to understand the expanding functions of diplomacy and the evolving role of the diplomat in what is a rapidly changing domestic and international environment.** A comprehensive approach to learning and training is needed to produce a diplomat who is adroit and effective in delivering national, regional and international objectives in the context of an appropriate and coherent foreign policy context. The aim is for the diplomat to pointedly work off a strategically focused foreign policy which combines strategy with tactics and a related policy framework in order to consistently meet foreign policy objectives. In doing so, the diplomat needs to demonstrate personal self-discipline and integrity, the preparedness to gather information and learn on an ongoing basis, innovativeness and effective and ethical leadership.

### **CHANGING DIPLOMACY I: MANAGERS OF COMPLEXITY IN INTERNATIONAL NEGOTIATION**

*Diplomats as highly attuned managers of complex international and transnational environments successfully engaging with both club and network diplomacy when involved in international negotiations*

Diplomats have to act increasingly as issue, culture and publicity managers in a highly complex (communication and negotiation) environment made up of a plurality of actors, issues, opinions and demands. Diplomats need to stay informed to orchestrate diplomatic initiatives: this demands intra-governmental networking, managerial, teamwork and organisational skills. Soft interpersonal skills which include active listening, emotional intelligence, diversity sensitivity and the ability to manage group dynamics may be considered as part of skills set.

- ‘Network Diplomacy’ and ‘Club Diplomacy’ face off against each other: The latter is based on a small number of players, a highly hierarchical structure, largely dependent on written communication and on low transparency; the former is based on a much larger number of players (particularly of civil society), a flatter structure, a more significant oral component, and greater transparency.<sup>iii</sup> The growth in the number of participants taking part in the negotiations, the number of issues that are now the subject of international negotiations, the diversity of negotiating styles of officials coming from vastly different political cultures and levels of development, and the technical complexity of the subject matters up for negotiation have combined to make the process of negotiation more elaborate, less predictable, highly technical, and more protracted.
- Transnationalism and formal and social media opinion-making. Private information and opinion (thanks to social media) competes with a formal media sector and informed public opinion (“establishment” views). Public opinion, the product of a formal public media sector competes against a fractious private opinion space. “The public is more sensitive to foreign policy issues and seeks to influence diplomacy through social media and other platforms; the way exchange between states, as well as the interchange between government and other domestic actors, progresses is influencing diplomacy’s ability to act legitimately and effectively.”<sup>iv</sup> The attitude and behaviour of individual ambassadors can influence not only the effects of public diplomacy programmes, but also the very existence or otherwise of such programmes. The use of social media is an emerging trend in public diplomacy programmes. High profile social media brands such as Twitter, Facebook and YouTube offer countries as well as individual diplomats the opportunity to reach wider audiences than ever before. Without great communication skills, the new diplomat cannot appeal to its constituency directly or through the media.

**CHANGING DIPLOMACY II:****NORM INNOVATORS AND CUSTODIANS TOWARDS BUILDING AND MAINTAINING INCLUSIVE INTERNATIONAL PEACE**

*Diplomats as norm innovators expanding a democratising, multilateral order and acting as custodians of peace in a volatile world of unilateralisms, arms races, trade disputes, conflict and war*

- Norm Innovation In a time of global shifts in power and proliferating crises where global leadership is contested in a fluid geo-political environment, emerging and existing middle powers have the opportunity to influence and shape global issues. Here diplomatic initiative is grounded on proposals to adapt norms or create new international norms. South Africa must build on earlier attempts to engage in norm entrepreneurship towards peace and the inclusive reshaping and democratization of the international multilateral order, regulation and law. For this to happen, research and innovation need to accompany diplomatic learning and experience.
- Averting war against technological change and interdependence Diplomacy is challenged by the fragmented social and political environment and the challenges to the authority of the state, the need to avert different types of conflict and engage in conflict mediation becomes increasingly important. This implies a greater dependency on intelligence sources to protect national security and the national interest, but also to mediate and bridge the gap when providing new alternatives to conflict and creating or advocating solutions and norms to guide these. The exponential advance of digital technologies and artificial intelligence within the context of the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution raises questions about the future of intelligence and data gathering and processing for cutting edge diplomacy. Moreover, the need to be mindful of preserving delicate and complex balances of power marked by economic and financial interdependence at the same time, calls for great diplomatic knowledge and skill.

**CHANGING DIPLOMACY III:****REPRESENTATION AND PROMOTION OF CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND OPPORTUNITY IN THE MULTILEVEL PROJECTION OF PUBLIC DIPLOMACY**

*Informed, credible, ethical and civic-minded diplomats, sympathetic to national diversity, acting as cultural ambassadors and open to the cultural sensitivities in others, use public and social media to effect in advancing the national interest, national image and economic opportunities including those for Africa's prosperity in a competitive and polarising world.*

- South Africa's diversity as a source of diplomacy, global reach and influence. In an era of identity politics and nationalism, the importance of culture and history need to be utilised for drafting effective diplomacy. South Africa's diversity lends itself to the systematic use of culture in manifold ways. Diplomats in acquainting themselves with South Africa's social history need to be able to make use of these global connections in formulating foreign policy to create, reinforce or strengthen our political, people-to-people, economic and security ties. In other words, the need for effective, the conscious use of cultural diplomacy as a potent tool of diplomacy is indicated.
- A commitment to public diplomacy is key in the context of economic diplomacy and as a democratic state to build people-people relations to sustain relationships. Public diplomacy campaigns need to promote interest and confidence in South Africa and strategic African development projects around the world. Historical, cultural, economic and political links with the rest of Africa, the Far East, Europe and the Indian sub-continent need to be cultivated, utilizing broad sections of the organized (South) African public, in this endeavour.
- Managing Informal vs Formal Media Representations. Far more people have access to information. Private, widely publicised information and opinion (thanks to social media) competes with a formalised media sector

and informed public opinion (“establishment” views). There is a plurality of news sources. The challenge: how to respond to informal media and how to formulate an official view to optimally satisfy different audiences and their publicity outlets in the context of competitions from illiberal, post-truth, agenda driven news outputs. “New and more open state activities need to be advanced that respond to the ways in which emotionalized publics who wish to participate in governance express themselves.”<sup>vi</sup>

#### **CHANGING DIPLOMACY IV:** **ENHANCING THE PARTICIPATION OF WOMEN IN FORMAL AND INFORMAL ACTS OF DIPLOMACY**

*The greater participation of women in diplomacy enhances holistic and sustainable approaches to the greater understanding and resolution of issues, including those of conflict resolution, peace-making and development.*

- The greater recognition of the role women can play in delivering on foreign policy objectives on regional and international issues is key to reaching more holistic and, as such, more inclusive and sustainable diplomatic solutions to building peace, environmental security and broad-based development. Greater gender representation and parity would seem to be a diplomatic resource (there is a strong correlation where women have been able to exercise strong influence in the drafting of gender provisions in peace agreements. This has increased the sustainability of peace agreements by 30%<sup>vii</sup>). As such, in terms of the social functioning of DIRCO as a foreign ministry, there needs to be institutional awareness and a response to every day diplomatic practice in terms of relationships, practices or behaviour patterns to activate women’s influence through appointment, participation, growth and advancement.
- Greater use of Track 1 and Track 2 diplomacy – where individuals, civil society and women’s groups play an important role – in the promotion of foreign policy objectives by a democratic South Africa, on issues promoting broad notion of peace, the preservation of the environment and addressing climate change, as well as all inclusive, sustainable development, on issues of conflict resolution, peace and development issues, needs to be encouraged and engineered by the diplomat. As such, South African missions need to have men and women diplomats engage more with individuals and organised society including women’s groups in host countries abroad.

#### **CHANGING DIPLOMACY V:** **CONSULAR DIPLOMACY: CREDIBLY SERVING THE INTERNATIONAL PUBLIC**

*Consular responsiveness enhances one’s international reputation as a democratic, credible and responsive state*

The consular element of national diplomatic power plays an essential, but often undervalued role in international relations even though the process of globalization places increasing importance on so-called “low politics”—trade, commerce, tourism, migration—all traditional consular areas of interest. “Visa diplomacy” is defined as the use of visa issuance or denial at an individual, group, and interstate level; it links an individual or group to its sovereign country and respective national policies. Denial or issuance at the individual or group level can have outcomes on overall reputation and interstate interactions.<sup>viii</sup>

#### **CHANGING DIPLOMACY VI:** **THE NEED FOR ADAPTABILITY IN TIMES OF EMERGENCIES AND CRISIS DIPLOMACY**

*Where the posted diplomat is complemented by or gives way to assist the shuttle/ crisis/ specialist diplomat*

Substituting the posted diplomat. There are instances where traditional diplomats are replaced or where diplomats rely on complementary participants. For example, roving mediators with specialist know-how are required who can be dispatched at short notice to a hotspot; businessmen “turned diplomats for a day” can be used to conduct what are ostensible business meetings on the fringes of multilateral meetings revolving around international commerce; scientists need to participate in international meetings regarding the dynamics and technicalities of climate change etc. As such, there is a need for individuals who are sufficiently specialized and able to represent the country’s interests on a specific issue to be assisted in delivering issue-based, effective diplomacy.

**LEARNING AND TRAINING AT THE ACADEMY OF DIPLOMACY:  
THE QUALITIES OF A PROFESSIONAL SOUTH AFRICAN DIPLOMAT IN  
THE SECOND QUARTER OF THE 21<sup>ST</sup> CENTURY**

**To have the bearing of an educated, accessible and democratic public representative of the South African state, who, with agility, in a persuasive and professional manner, is able to express a nuanced and impressive view in effective negotiation on strategic aspects of South Africa’s foreign policy and Africa’s place in the world.**

**An appreciation of being African and of African progress in the world and commitment to promote a progressive African ethos and ethical, values based - servant and sustainability based - leadership style.**

**An impressively informed and nuanced understanding of South(ern) Africa’s history, diverse society, democracy, the constitution and its values.**

**An ethos of self-worth, an appreciation of the indivisibility of humanity, human rights and human dignity.**

**A strategic understanding of South Africa’s foreign (economic) policy from within an African context.**

**An understanding of complex regional, international and global issues confronting present-day South Africa and its region and the skill to verbally and in writing articulate these.**

**The ability to diplomatically and flexibly seek pro-active, holistic solutions to situations at hand and to negotiate in unstable, high-risk, polarising and very competitive regional and international environments.**

**The skill to network and communicate in the pursuit of formal and informal diplomatic avenues.**

**Key words: Professional, trained, educated, disciplined, well presented; a listener, astute, confident, analytically articulate in both speech and writing; well versed in another global language and knowledgeable about major issues and at least one other region of the world; appreciates national, regional and global cultural diversity, is culturally sensitive and an instinctive bridge builder; demonstrates psychological self-discipline and endurance at times of strain and can crisis manage; identifies with ethical, servant leadership; demonstrates personal and inter-personal effectiveness; is theoretically and empirically grounded; civic and democratically-minded and accountable; inquisitive, interested in ongoing learning about specific areas of foreign policy interest; pro-active and calculating; a researcher and ideas innovator; truthful, empathetic, exudes integrity and convinces; assured and able to hold his or her own in any regional or international/global setting.**

### The evolving South African diplomat

In summary, a nation's diplomat, required to function as his or her country's eyes, ears and voice abroad, must be aware of national interests and values and how these relate to a foreign affairs strategy and the effective delivery of foreign policy (including on how to forge relations and negotiate), while able to read and interpret foreign politics, cultures and global issue sets. The diplomat needs to have intercultural and hospitality skills and needs to work well in crisis situations. For a diplomat from an aspirant middle power such as South Africa, an incisive understanding and deep insight of global politics and global issues interfacing with geopolitics, the politics of regions, how domestic and regional politics interface with foreign policy and its conduct is necessary. A diplomat needs to be aware of the domestic framework for policy-making and political/societal demands about governance across an extended spectrum of issue areas. There must be an appreciation of intra-governmental coordination on issues which touch on the international. An appreciation for how South-(ern) Africa's political economy evolved is of necessity. An appreciation of current economic trends, current and future sources of international economic advantage for the country and the continent, competition and conflict is needed.

## 7. The Why 2: Gap Analysis

*"We may have good public servants. But a good public servant is not necessarily a good diplomat – it's a very different thing."*  
Senior former member of DIRCO, and member of the Policy Review Panel, in conversation with the Chair of the Ministerial Task Team, April 2019.

**Where is DIRCO and its diplomatic training falling short?** Our investment in the gap analysis proved to be a wise one. Although not comprehensive, due to time constraints, one of the Task Team members (Gemma Cronin) led an extensive process of consultation with a substantial number of senior managers within DIRCO. This resulted in a rich and valuable assessment of current and future capacity gaps, as well as the enabling conditions for developing and maintaining required capacity (and can be found in full as Appendix 5). A large part of this document should be seen as a 'mirror' since it derives its findings from the interviews conducted with senior managers in DIRCO. These consultations with internal stakeholders focused on three areas:

- 1) The key factors enabling or limiting DIRCO's achievements in relation to South Africa's international relations policy goals and strategic objectives as well as key emerging challenges for the country's international relations in the future.
- 2) Key capacity and/or competency gaps that could be effectively addressed by the Academy, how these needs could best be addressed, and who else could or should partner the Academy in this.
- 3) What else needs to change to effectively enhance DIRCO capacity to achieve policy goals and strategic objectives and what are the key enabling conditions necessary for improved capability?

The following is a high-level summary of issues emerging from the gap analysis. The full analysis appended to this report provides a deeper understanding of the issues and constructive proposals emerging from the interviews with the senior officials.

### a. Current Key Constraints

The following summarises key issues raised by DIRCO's senior managers. The full report attached provides more detail and includes the views of external stakeholders.

**Improvements are possible and necessary with many active role-players.** Officials interviewed had diverse views of the current level of success of our foreign relations. Most indicated that DIRCO could and should do better although a few felt that what was being achieved was adequate. Officials also noted that DIRCO is not the

only player in influencing South Africa's foreign policy outcomes. The range of role players in the international relations sphere is rapidly expanding and includes government at all levels (national, provincial and local) and officials and others operating in diverse sectors (environment, culture, science, economy and trade were particularly mentioned).

**DIRCO's own performance was unanimously judged to be inconsistent.** A number of officials noted that our foreign relations practice is not always in line with policy and values. One official pointed out that our diplomatic service is far bigger than India's but less impactful. It was also noted that the inconsistency of our diplomatic practice is exacerbated by potential and actual incoherence deriving from so many diverse South African role players operating in the field without a clear understanding of our national policy and strategy.

**There are reduced levels of engagement, consistency and of a culture of professional self-development.** Officials noted that, in the past, DIRCO had conducted open and active intergovernmental engagements on foreign policy which had ensured that the needs and perspectives of a range of relevant departments enriched policy and strategy. It also helped ensure a more consistent understanding of our foreign policy, and particularly the values that inform it across government. A number of officials highlighted the lack of consistent application of appropriate values in practice and behaviour as diplomats. Areas particularly highlighted were gender, human rights, tolerance, equity, Ubuntu and dedicated service in the public interest. Officials also noted, in this regard, the erosion of a culture of responsibility for self-development, and preparing oneself to operate effectively and professionally in particular contexts through reading and networking. The same could be said about the practice of senior officials mentoring junior officials in these values.

**Waning influence.** South Africa's 'waning influence', particularly in Africa, was highlighted as a problem. A number of officials indicated that the loss of influence is not just due to changes externally but also due to the capacity of officials. Particular areas singled out where practice is regarded as uneven were consular services, briefings to delegations to lay a firm foundation for informed engagement, feeding reports into the system so that learning from the field can inform action and ensure responsiveness to opportunities, problems and so on. A number of people indicated that our trade diplomacy had been, and/or still was, a strength but this was not unanimously endorsed.

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*"We dropped the ball in multilateral engagement in Africa in the recent period."*

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**Goals and objectives not clear enough to direct or assess achievement.** A significant proportion of those interviewed regard South Africa's policy goals and strategic objectives as being inadequately clear, specific and purposeful. This was given as a reason for the contradictory judgements of senior officials on South Africa's foreign relations capacity, effectiveness and impact. They felt that a lack of clear strategy driving our international and regional engagements contributed to the inconsistency of performance. Many felt this extended to multi-lateral and bi-lateral contexts. This lack of clear goals and objectives has, according to some interviewees, meant that DIRCO is not clear enough about what capacity is required for effective engagement in specific contexts. Many indicated that it has also undermined capacity to assess effectiveness and impact in order to learn from experience. Only one of the interviewees felt strongly that the goals and objectives are clear and well documented enough.

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*"The basic problem is that we don't know what our objectives are specifically and have little discussion about what they should be and how well we are doing." And, "Our policy objectives are very generic – not clear expectations, except perhaps in Africa."*

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**VUCA challenges require more effective learning and adaptation.** The challenges of increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity (VUCA) in international relations were frequently cited and questions were raised about the extent to which we are adequately preparing officials to function effectively in this context. This context requires high-level diplomatic skills, flexibility, communication skills and a highly developed capacity for self-driven learning according to officials. A number of people felt that the culture and work practices of DIRCO had changed in ways that weakened capacity for learning and, therefore, capacity to respond effectively in a VUCA context. They noted diminished debate in DIRCO and between DIRCO and other government and non-governmental entities; an increased reliance on position in the hierarchy rather than open debate and robust engagement with the complexities. They felt that the increasing emphasis on compliance has undermined open and honest reflection, analysis, evaluation, and learning. As one official put it, evaluation, as the basis for critical discussion of performance, had been reduced to tick boxes in a bureaucratic process. Another indicated that his reports and the issues raised seldom get a response of any kind. A number of officials suggested that capacity for learning was diminishing in DIRCO and they saw this as particularly problematic in a world in which the capacity to respond effectively, flexibly, and intelligently to change is becoming increasingly essential.

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*“There used to be debates on policy issues and on achievement and direct engagement with heads of mission in the field – not any more, just tick box”.*

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**Current and future challenges for capacity: doing much more with less requires strategic targeting of high-level capacity.** Officials noted that the cost of the employment ceiling enforced by Treasury would mean cutting, rather than increasing staff. They noted that locally remitted staff had been reduced from around 2200 to 1400 over the last period and would have to be cut further. Many indicated that South Africa’s diplomatic capacity is too thinly spread and that budget cuts should mean that capacity is needed to be even more strategically deployed rather than simply trying to cover the same ground with less resources, and thereby spreading capacity ever more thinly. They also noted that the ratio of career diplomats to ‘deployed’ used to be set at 9:1 but was now around 1:1. This limits the scope for career diplomats and impacts on staff morale, thus eroding a culture of merit-based appointments and ultimately diplomatic professionalism. One official noted that senior officials’ influence over appointments in general has diminished.

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*“The increasing technical complexity of most diplomatic contexts meant that there needed to be a significant improvement in “aligning specific background, skills and preparation to postings allocated – especially [in relation to] language, regional [understanding], skills and experience”.*  
*“Language and depth of regional / sectoral knowledge and networks is getting more and more important.”*

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**Training generally good but too generic, need to improve strategic relevance.** Officials regard the current training programmes provided by the Academy as of a high standard – particularly the training for corporate services managers and for cadets but qualify this with questions about its adequacy and relevance to the context. Some took the view that the training is “too generic” and questioned whether the curriculum is adequately informed by monitoring and evaluation, analysis and review of policy and/or strategy.

**Training can’t address all capacity challenges alone.** Although there are significant capacity gaps in DIRCO, officials recognised that a number of the problems are beyond the control of the Academy. A range of interventions were proposed to ensure that capacity development through the Academy is strategically relevant and effective. Officials highlighted the human resource management and development processes as a particular obstacle to ensuring that appropriate capacity is deployed to particular contexts, but also to

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*“There is a big disjuncture between what we train people for and what we send them to do, for example, we send a cadet trained in political analysis to a context where finance and trade are the main issues. It is even worse with languages.”*

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ensuring that appropriate capacity is recruited and developed. The processes of “posting, career and performance development” were singled out. As noted above, they felt that there was inadequate analysis of strategic organisational capacity needs but also, that there was no effective and consistent job level assessment as a basis for identifying development needs. Career development is not adequately based on required competence or learning in the view of most of those interviewed. Many felt that improved integration of effective human resource management and development systems and processes with the Academy would not only help to enhance capacity, but would be a requirement for capacity development. The issues of consequence management, consistent merit-based appointments, and an effective leadership response to a perceived culture of entitlement were raised as vital to professionalising the diplomatic service. However, as many noted, effective capacity development would also require greater policy clarity and specialist technical support when required by particular events.

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*“We need to be scanning our own performance and emerging trends and working out how to prepare people.”*

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### **b. Addressing the Gaps: The Potential Role of the new Academy**

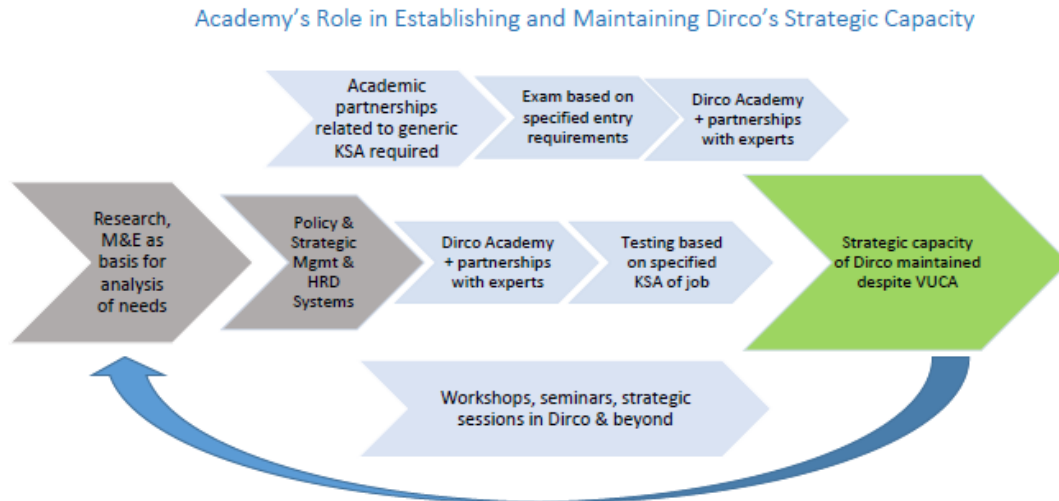
#### **Model**

Officials suggest that the model for the Academy needs to ensure that:

- It is tightly linked to the development, review, monitoring and evaluation of policy and be focused on building strategic capacity, in the context of the ‘generic capacity’ that can be developed by external organisations such as tertiary education institutions.
- It is embedded in an effective human resource management and development system that could include entrance exams for cadets, linking career development to demonstrated competence in relation to specific requirements as well as to continuous development processes linked to performance evaluation and development.
- It has high level in-house strategic curriculum development capacity closely linked to DIRCO’s policy and strategy development processes.
- It has the scope to apply a wide range of modes and methods to stimulate learning in DIRCO and for external international relations role players beyond simply training.
- Criteria linked to selection, posting, and promotion should include demonstrated ability for professional self-development in order to institutionalize a culture of learning.
- Partnerships can be established with academic organisations which are able to provide the generic education and training required so that the academy can focus on the development of strategically and vocationally relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes (KSA).

The following is a graphic summary of how the Academy should be embedded in the strategic processes of the organisation in order to ensure that relevant and adequate capacity is developed and sustained despite the increasing volatility, uncertainty, complexity and ambiguity of the challenges diplomats face.





### Specific gaps and proposals

Officials highlighted the following specific gaps that the Academy could and should address:

- **High level language and learning skills**

- i. Ensure diplomats posted have the required basic generic skills for any position by synchronising entry level requirements and in-house curricula, that is, through rigorously applying baseline requirements before selection and ensuring that the Academy is able to develop these skills to required levels in-house; those especially mentioned were report and speech writing, analysis, and synthesis;
- ii. Test whether officials have adequate ability to speak foreign languages as part of the appointment and selection processes. Foreign language training has been optional and not perceived as important, but fluency requirements have now been specified in the new Language Policy;
- iii. Adjust entry requirements to clear specifications of the required level of knowledge or skill as the current simple requirement of a degree is not adequate to ensure selection of those with real aptitude – especially writing and analysis;
- iv. Include demonstrated performance of skills as part of the selection process as interviews alone are not adequate to ensure selection of the best or even the required basic level of competence;
- v. Institutionalise an understanding that effective diplomacy involves a lot of writing, reading, analysis; as well as capacity for ongoing self-driven professional development since many officials lack these competencies.
- vi. Specify the requirements for selection to diplomatic track so clearly that candidates can ensure that their study programmes at higher education institutions adequately prepare them to succeed as applicants.

- Learning and training programmes must ensure that South Africa's international relations are conducted by **consistently professional and competent diplomats** who:

- i. Are highly skilled and experienced with extensive wide-ranging networks of experts and experienced role players they can draw on;
- ii. Can deal with complexity, use judgement and operate in the national interest in difficult contexts where policy does not directly dictate action;
- iii. Can handle policy tension and ambiguity;
- iv. Understand economics and the political economy of South Africa and the regions in which they operate – “much of the politics derives from the economics so diplomats must understand this area well”;

- v. Have a deep understanding of politics when working on trade issues;
  - vi. Are able to craft peace building initiatives and draw on range of partners to support this inside government and externally;
  - vii. Understand the technological revolution and its implications;
  - viii. Are career diplomats and committed to a particular career path, including areas of specialisation, understand what is required for career development and are self-driven to achieve it;
  - ix. Are skilled and experienced enough to handle the unexpected in complex environments;
  - x. Demonstrate capacity for self-development and read widely;
  - xi. Are comfortable and confident in situations of informality;
  - xii. Have high level communication skills, including active listening, and capacity to influence and persuade;
  - xiii. Can defend the public interest in environments characterized by high levels of VUCA and in the face of institutional pressure.
- We need to improve **specialist and generalist knowledge and skills and the balance between them:**
    - i. Technical areas where all diplomats need an improved general understanding, but where we also need specialists in areas such as environment, climate change, economy and trade, science, tourism and the new IT environment and its implications; security and privacy were highlighted;
    - ii. Need to ensure all diplomats have a deep understanding of the policy and strategic objectives related to key bi-lateral and multi-lateral engagements; there is a need for specialists in these areas with the expertise required by these demanding contexts;
    - iii. Need to offer career choices that enable diplomats to specialise and develop expertise in particular regions with language proficiency required to work in this context effectively – the Academy will need to gear itself for preparing officials for these career paths;
    - iv. Need corporate services specialists in some areas, such as people who choose a senior administrative and management career path that is not subject to rotation so that stable expert capacity is built in DIRCO's head office; to succeed, it must not be a career track that negatively affects promotion and benefits;
    - v. Need professional education and training experts who are not available for rotation and are permanently based at head office, but may visit embassies only as part of their professional functions such as needs assessments etc;
    - vi. Mentorship and formal on-the-job training should be formally required of senior officials and included in their training as well as performance reviews.
  - Implications for **frameworks and programmes:** capacity development needs to be tightly linked to clear policy and strategic objectives to enhance relevance and move the programmes from a focus on generic subject content to a focus on strategic capacity. This must include design, delivery, monitoring, and evaluation in terms of their contribution to the improved impact of diplomacy:
    - i. Conduct a systematic needs assessment and curriculum review process to enhance the relevance of current learning programmes to South Africa's international relations policy and strategy, including in relation to preparing officials to serve in specific regional contexts and technical areas;
    - ii. Develop standardised entry level competencies for programmes which would guide the selection of cadets and appointees to particular post levels and postings to ensure coherence;
    - iii. Develop and implement a monitoring and evaluation framework that assesses learning at four levels: individual satisfaction, achievement of learning objectives, job-level application, and finally contribution to organisational outcomes and impact;

- iv. Develop frameworks and programmes that address the need for greater balance between generic and specialized knowledge and skills for both the line function and corporate services officials based on defined career paths;
  - v. In-service and entry level education and training needs to be linked to set capacity requirements and institutional and individual performance review;
  - vi. Offer regional programmes in order to break down the SADC barriers and build common diplomatic initiatives;
  - vii. In-service training should be linked to individual performance assessment and organisational performance assessment;
  - viii. Training for heads of mission needs to be reviewed to ensure it is in line with the increasing demands of VUCA situations;
  - ix. If specialised knowledge is needed for a posting, plan for this by offering this as a potential career path and build it so no one is posted before they have developed the required capacity;
  - x. Address the problem that there is not an adequate connection between performance assessment and continuous education in the department;
  - xi. Apply a wider set of approaches to learning, extend the approach beyond a training focus to one that focuses on maximising learning and utilizes a range of modes and methods to do so, specifically:
    - a. Actively promote fora for open engagement as well as programmes that include experts, diplomats from other countries, etc. and that enable knowledge-sharing and network building;
    - b. Design active learning programmes: Including role play and skills practice etc especially where skills and attitudes are the focus not just knowledge and for the soft skills;
    - c. Use research to identify issues that officials should discuss or be aware of and initiate fora in which to do this or develop briefing materials for circulation.
    - d. Actively promote fora for open engagement as well as programmes that include experts, diplomats from other countries etc and that enable knowledge sharing and network-building;
    - e. Design active learning programmes, including role-play and skills practice, especially where skills and attitudes are the focus and not just knowledge;
    - f. Use research to identify issues that officials should discuss or be aware of and initiate fora in which to do this or develop briefing materials for circulation.
- **The numbers challenge:** There are three immediate challenges that the Academy is required to urgently respond to:
    - i. The implementation of the Foreign Service Bill: once passed, it will require that the Academy train officials from all departments with an international relations role and this will entail a significant increase in numbers as well as in the spread of technical areas to be covered;
    - ii. The new DIRCO Language Policy requires officials, at each post level, to achieve a specified level of proficiency through a specified number of hours of tuition in any of a very wide range of language options; up to now the acquisition of foreign languages has been limited and generally voluntary; and
    - iii. At the same time as preparing to meet these increase demands, the Academy will need to prepare for the possible reduction in DIRCO's overall establishment that may either directly affect the number of staff approved for the Academy or indirectly affect the Academy by widening the jobs/areas of responsibility for which officials must be prepared through training.

The Academy has already begun to respond to the language proficiency challenge through the development and implementation of a language policy. The organizational report annexed to this report highlights some of the implications, particularly for staffing, that are entailed in actually implementing this policy as well as the staffing implications of the Foreign Service Bill.

### 8. Enabling Conditions for a Sustained Positive Impact

The diplomatic academy is a part of a bigger organizational system, some of whose features represent potential obstacles to the success of the new academy if they are not addressed. The discussion above has reported the insights of senior managers, in particular, about how these groups of issues are related and what the specific challenges are. Causality is never linear and seldom simple, but the following represents, broadly, the implicit or explicit sequence of ‘causal’ linkages between factors influencing and/or limiting and/or diminishing DIRCO’s capacity and impacting on achievement.

This suggests that if the Academy is to improve capacity effectively and sustainably, attention must be devoted to the system as a whole. Although a number of issues we raise in this section are beyond a focus on the Academy, we submit that they are relevant in that they represent significant ‘enabling conditions’ for the effectiveness of the Academy. If they go unaddressed, they will limit the potential of the new academy to fulfil its important mandate. The graphic below is a simplified depiction of the systemic relationship between the various factors impacting on capacity noted by officials. Officials were unanimous in asserting that the Academy would not be able to impact on DIRCO’s capacity unless these issues and the systemic relationship between them was addressed. Almost every interviewee stressed the importance of tighter integration of the Academy and research unit with the broader policy, strategy and HRM&D systems and processes. Key areas mentioned were selection, promotion, mentoring, and performance review and development.



First and foremost, it is clear that there is an organizational culture problem, which has more than one facet. There appeared to be three primary ‘causes’:

- 1) The reduction of internal and external engagement with policy and strategic issues and the consequent disengagement of officials from questions about how best to serve the public interest, including active involvement in planning, monitoring and evaluation of policy, strategy and performance plans.

- 2) A range of limitations in the HRM&D policies, processes, and systems and particularly those related to appointment and selection, performance management and development, and reporting; there is a disconnection here from the Academy, including continuous development processes and capacity assessment prior to posting.
- 3) Perceived unfairness and lack of consistency in the application of existing HRM&D policies, processes, and systems.

**A key factor that has had a detrimental impact on DTRD is that it has not been permitted to fill the two posts for curriculum designers.** It is crucial that DTRD is able to employ at least one senior specialist in curriculum design who will be able to lead the curriculum design process under the leadership of the DDG: DTRD and the DG. As this needs to be a very senior expert, DIRCO may need to review the level allocated to these posts in order to attract the significant expertise needed to ensure that the education and training provided has a measurable impact on what DIRCO and other South African international relations role players achieve on behalf of the national interest. Effective curriculum design requires high-level skill and expertise and should be able to demonstrate the impact of the learning programmes on improved outcomes and impact. This would entail an important investment. If necessary, DTRD could consider hiring one highly experienced expert by amalgamating the two posts into a more senior post.

**Officials suggested that DTRD's emphasis on 'capacity for what' in all learning processes as well as explicit expectations about how capacity would be applied in the field and how the effectiveness of application would be assessed would help to build a greater focus on outcomes and impact in the national interest.** Interviewees noted that the Academy could place greater emphasis on building shared values, but recognised that many of the drivers needed to be addressed through the human resource management and development (HR&D) policies and systems, including how performance is managed and particularly how merit is understood, assessed, and rewarded. Many indicated that a key enabling factor for change in culture and capacity would be restoring trust in the fairness and appropriateness of the application of HRM&D systems. Trust would need to be deliberately restored with the trade unions, especially in the fair application of the merit principle and all HRM&D systems.

**It is interesting to note that, although there was a fairly high level of consensus and officials have a relatively clear sense of what is inhibiting DIRCO's capacity and effectiveness, the department's senior leadership and management have not been able to address it.** Even if those interviewed are the only senior officials who see these issues, and this seems unlikely, they have significant power by virtue of their positions to effect changes in DIRCO. However, many reported feeling marginalized and disempowered in what has become a difficult environment in which to challenge embedded interests. It might be useful for DTRD to initiate some discussion in DIRCO on the reason for this situation and its impact on capacity. It may be that officials have felt that their power to insist on good practice were curtailed in the past, especially in relation to policy, strategy, and HRM&D as well as to openly engage in discussion about what constitutes good practice. Additionally, as noted above, the relationship between senior management and the unions and the rebuilding of trust in the context of an undertaking to develop and apply fair and effective HRM&D policy and systems seems to be a condition for addressing the capacity challenges.

**Given the current requirement to do more with less, another key issue raised was the need to reconnect HRM&D to strategy through strategic capacity needs analyses.** These should feed into determinations around South Africa's international relations representation (possibly decreasing the number of missions and bolstering others), how available resources are focused, and into determinations about establishment size and composition. Finally, it should feed into strategies for ensuring adequate and appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes. This has been raised in much of the above discussion and is particularly urgent in a situation where added responsibilities must be taken on by fewer officials, as noted above. Officials interviewed expressed concern that DIRCO should

not simply try to spread capacity more thinly rather than determining how best to strategically develop and deploy available capacity.

In addition to these important points about professional career development and alignment with HRM&D, as well as progression through the foreign service, there are four additional relevant systemic considerations that should be taken into account:

1) The Quality of Recruits

**The supply chain into the diplomatic service is a critical factor in relation to the future quality of diplomats.**

The benchmarking undertaken indicates that most of the diplomatic services which are most highly regarded, including those in The Netherlands and Germany, have stringent entrance requirements, including assessment on the basis of an exam or series of exams. Even where, as in Germany, candidate diplomats are admitted to the diplomatic academy for training, their selection is not finalised until they have passed an exam at the end of a formal period of training. In the case of Germany, they remain on probation until they have demonstrated aptitude in a period of on-the-job training during which attitudes are monitored and assessed. Passing the exam will not be enough if attitudes are judged to fall short of what is required from a diplomat.

2) The Organisational Culture in relation to Learning

**DIRCO must become a learning organisation once again.** Evidence gleaned from the gap analysis indicates that DIRCO has declined as a 'learning organisation' – a trend that was confirmed by DTRD. In earlier days, there was far greater interest in learning and learning opportunities, such as brown bag lunches or symposia with visiting dignitaries or practitioners. However, this has been replaced by a culture of entitlement accompanied by an overwhelming preoccupation with foreign postings because of the financial benefits that come with these. Hence, in general members of the diplomatic service are only interested in training if it is directly related to foreign posting. In other words, the attitude to learning has replaced 'composite' learning with 'instrumental' learning.

3) Leadership

**A great deal hinges, therefore, on the leadership of DIRCO generally** – to shift the organizational culture by emphasising the importance of a culture of learning and professional career development. The leadership of the organization will need to invest political capital in supporting the diplomatic academy and ensuring that it is valued and respected. Incentives will need to be revisited, in line with the review of the alignment between training and HRM&D discussed above. Leadership will need to model the way forward in terms of a strong commitment to a professional ethos.

4) Strategic Capacity – Monitoring & Evaluation of training in terms of impact and how it adds to strategic execution

The Task Team endorse the view of an official that, if the curriculum and programmes of the Academy are to remain relevant, **the link between the Academy, including its research unit, and the policy and strategy processes of DIRCO, from development, to monitoring, reporting, review and evaluation need to be strengthened.** This needs to be driven by the most senior leadership, the Minister and DG, while DTRD would need to be embedded in the institutional processes of the organisation.

We concur with officials that **capacity development needs to be tightly linked to clear policy and strategic objectives to enhance relevance and move the training from a focus on subject content to a focus on strategic professional capacity in the design, delivery, and monitoring and evaluation of the courses in**

**terms of their contribution to improved impact of diplomacy.** The DTRD 2018 Foreign Service Training and Development Strategy (FSTDS) states that “The training model therefore ensures that training is carried out to enhance specific competencies” (para 7.2). In turn, the DIRCO competency categories are divided into four categories, namely: personal effectiveness (Meta), DIRCO functional competencies, Public Service (Generic Assessment Factors and Core Management Criteria) and Leadership (FSTDS para 7.2.2.2). In this context, it is clear to us that some members of senior management consider the training programmes to be too “generic”. By this, we understand them to mean either not sufficiently specialist or tailored to a particular position or responsibility in the diplomatic service, and/or as we note above, not sufficiently tightly linked to clear policy or strategic objectives, a weakness that is compounded by the absence of impact assessments.

**This critique invites a shift to a focus on ‘capacity for what’ will enable assessment of the application of learning and its impact on levels of achievement, thus ensuring that education and training are coherently linked to the performance management and development process.** This also helps to create a purposeful learning orientation that is embedded in serving the national interest. Officials could then become partners with DTRD and engage in discussions for further developing and adapting the relevance of the education and training programmes to the demands of the field. As noted, many interviewees reported a reduction in this kind of internal debate and engagement, and many linked this to a reduction in overall organizational learning and capacity development.

As the training management process outlined in DIRCO’s Foreign Service Training and Development Strategy suggests, **effective evaluation is essential for analysing whether training is achieving the outcomes expected at the level of particular jobs and the organisation as a whole.** The Task Team recommend that learning programmes are consistently and routinely evaluated at four levels and that the results be used to continuously improve their relevance and effectiveness. This will require that indicator frameworks for monitoring and evaluating learning outcomes are developed as part of the process of curriculum design and development. Kirkpatrick’s four level strategic training model provides a useful example of how monitoring and evaluation of learning should link individual learning to job and organizational performance. (reference??)

**Summary of the 4-level Strategic Training Model.**

LEVEL 1	Satisfaction:	Were trainees satisfied with the quality of their training?
	↓	
LEVEL 2	Learning:	Did trainees learn, or acquire the knowledge, skills, or attitudes the training was intended to convey?
	↓	
LEVEL 3	Application:	If they learned, did the trainees apply to their jobs, or at their workplace, the new knowledge, skills, or attitudes?
	↓	
LEVEL 4	Organisational Performance:	If knowledge, skills, or attitudes were applied, did that make a measurable difference to the performance of the organisation concerned?

Again, institutional processes and systems need to be developed to connect the Academy and the research unit to the needs of DIRCO, and other government entities with international relations roles. As we have noted, it will also be important for DIRCO to allocate enough resources to the Academy and research unit to effectively perform their roles in building required capacity. The full implementation of this approach would require, as we have proposed, that the Academy has a professional team of full-time, non-rotational facilitators and adult educators. Improved monitoring and evaluation of the effectiveness of education and training programmes in the organisation will help convince DIRCO that these investments are worth making, particularly in the current climate of tightened budgets.

## 5) Political Appointments to Head of Mission Positions

**A commitment to diplomacy as a profession must be restored.** It is clear that the very significant increase in the ratio of political appointees to career diplomats at the level of heads of mission has had very negative ramifications for DIRCO's organizational culture and morale. In this respect, we note the skewed nature of this ratio as per the findings of the Policy Review Panel (cited above). We learnt that whereas 20 years ago the ratio of political to career diplomat appointment was 1:9, in the last 10 years it is now at or around 1:1. This is important for our assignment since training should not be seen, as it sometimes is, as the panacea for all ills. Some problems relating to capacity must be solved by other means. So, in the case of the problem of political appointees identified by the Policy Review Panel, it is not appropriate to develop training capacity to meet the 'need' of political appointees who are not suitable and who should not have been made in the first place. This problem should be addressed, as the Panel states, by striking the proper balance and not by adjusting the training regime. In our view this is a necessary but not sufficient condition for the success of the future diplomatic academy.

## III. Modality of the new Diplomatic Academy - 'The What'

### 9. Vision and Modality for a New South African Diplomatic Academy

**We envisage a 'free standing' fully-fledged new Diplomatic Academy** that falls under the management and control of DIRCO, but which is semi-autonomous. It must have sufficient operational independence to drive and sustain itself as a Centre of Excellence with a nimble, entrepreneurial ethos. This must be coupled with and a single-focus commitment to professional training and learning, with cutting edge programmes and content underpinned by a pedagogical philosophy. Ultimately, it should produce a new breed of agile, critical-thinking diplomats who are fit for purpose to serve South Africa's national interest and who are able to navigate a pathway through a complex and uncertain world.

**By 'free standing' we mean physically and, at least in part, in terms of governance, leadership, and decision-making.** The law that establishes the new diplomatic academy gives it a statutory foundation, but in terms of accountability it also requires that it operate under the control and management of DIRCO. In the recommendations section that follows, we traverse the options available to meet these foundational conditions and offer a specific recommendation.

**In terms of the physical location, we envisage that the new Diplomatic Academy will be housed outside of DIRCO** – recognizing that this may well not be possible initially, and that such an aspiration may have to be a middle-to-longer term ambition – based on the following rationale:

- To serve the semi-autonomous, brand, and character of the Academy;
- To enable it to develop its own distinctive place in the market – as a Centre of Excellence;
- To enable it to more easily present itself to the African market by representing soft and not hard power (DIRCO's building is a 'hard power');
- To help ensure that when DIRCO foreign service officers come to the Academy for training that they are fully focused, not distracted, and 'fully off-campus'
- To help signal that the Academy is not just for DIRCO foreign service officers, but for other government department officials and for non-state and non-South African trainees.



## IV. Specific Recommendations in response to our Terms of Reference

### 10. Objectives

We recommend that the Objectives of the new Diplomatic Academy should be to:

- i. Establish a Centre of Excellence in Diplomatic Training and Learning for South Africa and the Continent of Africa;
- ii. Provide training accompanied by targeted learning to enable South African diplomacy to better project an African agenda in international forums and in global crisis management;
- iii. Assist DIRCO to formulate a strategic learning and development programme aligned to its policy and strategic objectives, to develop and deliver an effective curriculum and learning programme to achieve this and to continuously improve it based on consistent monitoring and evaluation of effectiveness;
- iv. Train and assess graduate recruits to South Africa's diplomatic service;
- v. Provide foreign service officers with professional career development opportunities aligned to DIRCO's strategic HRM&D needs, commensurate with their position in the diplomatic service and the skills required for them to serve South Africa's foreign policy goals in pursuit of a Better Africa and a Better World;
- vi. Establish an effective adult learning philosophy and practice so as to provide a bouquet of cutting-edge content and programmes that can attract delegates from a wide market of state and non-state organisations and institutions;
- vii. Support an organizational culture of critical reflection, learning, excellence and ethical public service in DIRCO, including the facilitation of wider learning and engagement (in collaboration with Public Diplomacy and Policy-making Branches);
- viii. Provide diplomatic practitioners with a platform and space for critical reflection and learning on key strategic issues such as the 'national interest', regional and global norm development and issue management, thereby enabling the Academy to contribute to the intellectual and policy integrity and direction of South African foreign policy; and
- ix. Enhance South Africa's 'soft power' presence as the diplomatic training academy of choice for diplomats from around the continent by providing African diplomats with a unique opportunity to build solidarity and networks of diplomatic practice.

### 11. Content & Programmes

**We recommend that the Academy undertake a systematic needs analysis and curriculum design and development process, including the development of a framework for ongoing monitoring, evaluation and improvement of effectiveness.** This is vital to ensure the ongoing relevance of the work of the Academy to South Africa's diplomatic strategic capacity needs. This process and the routine review processes should be led by an official with high level curriculum development qualifications and expertise. However, deriving directly from our analysis of the needs of a forward-looking, fit-for-purpose diplomacy and the contemporary South African diplomat, we recommend that a Framework for Training and Learning, such as the one we have developed and which is set out below and detailed further in Appendix 10, be factored into the process of developing the content and programmes of the new fully-fledged diplomatic academy. The framework could include the following foundational models (the appended full report unpacks these in greater detail):

Cluster 1: Foundational – African Centredness

Cluster 2: Foundational - Domestic and Sub-Regional Understanding

Cluster 3: Foundational - International Understanding

Cluster 4: Foundational - South African Foreign Policy and Diplomacy

Cluster 5: Foundational - Economic Diplomacy

- Cluster 6: Foundational - Media, Management and Public Diplomacy
- Cluster 7: Foundational - Diplomats' Skill Sets
- Cluster 8: Foundational - Administration and Management Training
- Cluster 9: Foundational - Leadership and Professional Ethics
- Cluster 10: Specialisation and Options.

We also recommend that the current knowledge, skill, and attitude gaps noted by the senior officials interviewed and summarized in section 8 of Part II above (and in more detail Appendix 5) be given specific attention in the recommended curriculum design process. These included the following points:

1. Ensuring that all appointees have the required reading, writing, and other communication skills, including required fluency in foreign languages, as well as a demonstrated capacity for self-driven learning;
2. The curriculum should pay particular attention to developing the appropriate leadership skills, culture, and values needed to support effective diplomacy in line with South Africa's foreign policy values;
3. Learning and training programmes must ensure that South Africa's international relations are conducted by consistently professional and competent diplomats by:
  - a. linking curriculum and learning assessment to competence requirements and performance assessment;
  - b. ensuring that there is an adequate balance between specialist and generalist knowledge and skills so that officials have a consistently high generic competence but also capacity required to perform in particular contexts whether geographic, technical (for example, climate, trade, economics etc.), bilateral or multilateral, diplomatic or corporate services track. etc.

**We strongly recommend that the Content and Programmes of the new Academy be underpinned by a distinctive, carefully conceptualized and constructed adult learning philosophy and approach.** One of our major learnings from the bench-marking exercise was the very impressive training philosophy that under-girds the Clingendael Academy's approach, which makes it one of the leading diplomatic academies with a specific focus on professional skills development and facilitated learning.

## 12. Organisational Capacity

**High quality professional trainers and facilitators are essential ingredients for the success of the new Academy.** For diplomacy to be effective in terms of promoting the essential tenets of the national interest (however defined), the academy's philosophy, methodology, and pedagogy must be underpinned by the necessary institutional and human capability and material resource capacity commensurate with the complexity of contemporary diplomacy.

**The Academy will require full time, non-rotational, professional curriculum designers, facilitators and adult education specialists** in order to ensure that the relevance and adequacy of the curriculum, training, and other learning programmes are maintained and adapted to the changing requirements of the field. Appendix 11 is a document compiled by DTRD at the request of the Task Team that sets out the capacity that a 'fully-fledged' new academy will require in the future. Additionally, it presents an indicative organigram and personnel budget.

## 13. Co-operation and Partnerships (Domestic and International)

**Partnerships will be critical in meeting the capacity needs of the new Academy and should be a pivotal part of its operational ethos.** As noted above, the Foreign Service Bill encourages partnerships – both domestic and international. Based on the extensive consultations carried out with forty (40) individuals and institutions across South Africa, it is clear to us that there is ample opportunity for the new Academy to forge significant, sustainable,

and meaningful partnerships with a diverse range of local experts, both individual and institutional. there is a deep and rich reservoir of local intellectual and academic talent from which the new academy can draw (The record of the consultations is set out in Appendix 5).

Accordingly, we make the following recommendations:

- a. **The new Academy should actively and purposefully pursue both domestic and international partnerships** and a partnership ethos should be a core feature of its operating modality, governance, and decision-making. Such partnerships may well be essential both for its success and its financial sustainability.
- b. **There is a deep and rich array of academic and practitioner talent in South Africa** that can be drawn into the delivery of the Content and Programmes of the new Academy – both in terms of individuals and institutions (see Appendix 10). Maximising the involvement of as much of this talent as possible will serve to strengthen the Academy by providing it with independent thinking and research that will help ensure that its training and learning is cutting edge, relevant, and innovative.
- c. **The idea of a forging long-term relationships with a set of ‘anchor’ academic partners should be explored.** We learnt from our bench-marking that a number of diplomatic academies, such as the German and Austrian, have semi-permanent partnerships with a single university. We envisage that the new Academy could create strategic partnerships with, say, 4-5 universities which have specific strategic purposes, such as:
  - **The University of Cape Town’s Mandela School of Governance & Leadership** – because of its stature as a place of learning for public servants on public policy and leadership, but also because of its new focus on trade and economic diplomacy under the directorship of Prof Faizel Ismail.
  - **The University of Pretoria** – due to its current, long-standing relationship with the current Academy, both in terms of its Masters in Diplomatic Studies (MDIPS) from which several senior DIRCO managers have graduated and its human rights, security, and mediation programmes.
  - **Rhodes University** – The School of Journalism and Sol Plaatje Institute offer learning and training opportunities on the African news landscape, news making cultures and news management in Africa, cyber-diplomacy and public diplomacy management and Media and Communication skills; The Department of Political and International Studies offers a dedicated postgraduate programme on African Diplomacy and African Peacekeeping (having educated diplomats in anticipation of 1994 in the past), offers first rate expertise on middle-powers in international politics, South African foreign policy and human rights, human rights multilateralism, Arab foreign policies and African security. The Alan Gray Centre for Leadership Ethics., Philosophy department and the Rhodes Business school offers expertise on African philosophy, norms, ethics and leadership.
  - **The University of Venda** – DTRD’s outreach and graduate talent search has revealed that students from the University of Venda tend to be particularly good and have often performed well in DIRCO.
  - **The University of the Witwatersrand** – which has the only dedicated Department of International Relations in the country. The Department has a highly qualified and diverse faculty component that covers theoretical issues, the process and practice of foreign policy, regional and continental matters, as well as discrete area studies such as the US, Europe and the Middle East. In addition, the Wits School of Governance has a strong focus on

constitutional issues, domestic policy, challenges of growth and development, the democratic transition, the functioning of institutions, and inter-governmental dynamics.

Special relationships should also be considered with think-tanks with a particular focus such as **ACCORD** (mediation and conflict resolution in Africa); **the Africa Institute of South Africa** (regional and continental organisations, youth and women, development and integration, Africa's international relations); **the Institute for Global Dialogue (IGD) and the SA Institute of International Affairs (SAIAA)** (BRICS, the UN system, climate change, SA foreign policy, China in Africa, SA/Africa relations with the EU and the US); **and the Afro-Middle East Centre** (the politics and history of the Middle East and North Africa). We note that relationships and partnerships already exist with some of the institutions – for example, with Accord, SAIIA and IGD – so there is a base and track record of collaboration upon which to build and strengthen, while adding to the range and diversity of partnerships.

- d. There are opportunities to be exploited in terms of partnership and co-operation with foreign diplomatic academies (noting, again, that cooperation exists with a number of diplomatic academies and these are currently being exploited for various programmes). These opportunities should be explored in greater detail as the new Academy develops, especially in terms of the gaps we have identified regarding home-grown knowledge and expertise – for example, Latin America. **However, we specifically recommend that the new Academy build on South Africa's existing, and long-standing relationship with Clingendael by forging a long-term formal partnership.** There are many things to admire about and learn from Clingendael's approach; it has worked closely with several other diplomatic academies, and it could be a very valuable partner for the new Academy as it crafts a long-term professional training strategy and philosophy. Apparently, the Foreign Service Training and Development Strategy is already significantly much influenced by the long-standing association with Clingendael - hence the focus in the 2018 strategy on professional skills and work processes.
- e. The new academy should continue to deepen existing co-operation with other governmental training academies in South Africa, including the National School of Governance, the Military Academy, and the Intelligence Academy, and the in-house training units of departments such as Department of Trade and Industry.

#### 14. Accreditation and Recognition of Qualifications

##### *Accreditation and Articulation 'Portability'*

We have reached a settled view that the answer to the question of how to increase 'portability' (articulation) of qualifications is not necessarily by providing further academic qualifications. Rather opportunities should be provided for professionals within the South African diplomatic service to receive relevant skills-based training and other professional development from a credible and highly respected and renowned diplomatic academy that carries weight in the broader state and private sector markets. Accordingly, we are clear in our view that so far as academic qualifications are concerned, the right approach would be to have appropriate partnerships with credible tertiary institutions of higher learning and not by creating a new tertiary institution.

**The 'accreditation' and 'articulation' value of the Academy to its 'graduates' will come from its prestige and reputation.** If a certificate acquired from completing an Academy programme has the reputation that comes from association with a highly respected Centre of Excellence, then it will carry the necessary professional weight and value. Moreover, in terms of internal incentives, it will be essential that successful completion of training and learning programmes at the Academy will be a pre-condition for progression in the diplomatic service.

**Alignment to human resource management and development including entrance requirements:** As most DIRCO officials noted, improvements in the work of the Academy would require an integrated response from DIRCO as a whole. We have proposed above that the linkage of the Academy to the policy and strategic processes of DIRCO should be tightened. In this section, we propose that the work of the Academy would need to be tightly integrated into the human resource management and development processes and systems of DIRCO to ensure alignment.

**Entrance Requirements:** Additionally, for the reasons advanced above, we believe that an essential reform necessary is the establishment of an Entrance Exam for the diplomatic service, both for supporting a renewed culture of learning and ensuring the ‘supply line’ for the new academy.

Although many of the human resource management and development issues raised by officials are beyond the scope of the Academy to address, they will continue to constrain DIRCO’s capacity and limit what the new Academy can achieve if they are not urgently addressed. Therefore, there must be:

1. Clearer specification and consistent application of human resource management and development policies, processes, and systems. This covers the whole spectrum of policies, systems, and processes from recruitment and selection to appointment, posting and promotion, mentoring and performance management and development.
2. Alignment and consistent application of job competence requirements in appointment processes as an essential requirement to enable the Academy to develop and implement curricula effectively. The Academy can only be expected to achieve required learning outcomes if the processes for selection of candidates for posts take into account what a generally adequate entry level competence would need to be.
3. Reinstating the two-stream career option to ensure adequate expertise at head office by enabling a specialist track for corporate services officials who will be head-office based. Selection of corporate services officials for posting to missions should take into account the high-level generalist skills required by corporate services staff in missions. This will enable the Academy to assume consistent entry level generalist skills and knowledge in those entering the relevant programme to prepare staff to serve in missions.
4. Reinstating the restriction on political appointments to bolster the development of career diplomats, with as much consistency in skills, experience, and expertise as possible.
5. Establishing and applying clear entry requirements that could be assumed by the Academy as the departure point for programme design. The Academy should be able to define and apply entry criteria, based on existing knowledge, experience, and skills that entrants to particular courses must meet in order to apply for and successfully undertake the training.
6. Clear specification of required pre-existing knowledge skills and attitudes and their application in appointment processes as a condition for ensuring relevant and effective internal education and training at all levels and in relation to specialist areas.
7. More effective use of performance management and development reporting as well as career planning to enhance self-driven learning by identifying specific continuous development needs and ensuring the relevance of programmes offered by the Academy.
8. Aligning organisational and individual performance systems to the Academy.
9. A closer linkage between human resource management and development and strategy through strategic capacity needs analyses, given current requirements to do more with less. Apart from informing training needs through clarifying what knowledge, skills, and attitudes are required, this would also assist in ensuring available resources could be more strategically targeted.

## 15. Legal and Budgetary Consequences

### 15.1 Budgetary

In defining the budgetary consequences for the new Academy, we take into account the personnel, operational, and capital costs (as per government budgetary frameworks). Given the fiscal crunch that the South African government is facing, our recommendations are grounded in budgetary realism. We must offer a clear pathway towards financial sustainability. Secondly, however, even if the academy was to remain as it currently is, there are significant budgetary implications because of the new mandate that flows from the Foreign Service Bill, especially in relation to the expanded definition of foreign service officers who must receive training. As noted above, significant new capacity will be required to deliver on this mandate alone.

#### Main Revenue Sources:

##### *i. Cost Sharing*

- **DIRCO, through its budget allocation (from National Treasury), should cover the basic costs of the Academy.** The basic costs will entail compensation of employees and the capital budget (movable and immovable assets). The movable assets will include furniture and all sorts of equipment required in the Academy, including IT.
- **In the short-term, we recommend that DIRCO re-allocate funding to the academy so that it can, at the very least, recruit experienced, expert personnel to fill key gaps in the core team** needed to develop the professional training and learning, and to develop the thinking in relation to training philosophy as well as programme and content that we have provided here. This will be essential for the feasibility study that will be required to be completed if our recommendation on the institutional form of the new academy (below) is accepted.
- In addition, provided that a credible pathway towards full financial sustainability can be presented, government should be invited to make an initial investment (spread over the next three-year MTBPF) to cover the (non-capex) set-up costs of the new Academy.

##### *ii. Cost Recovery*

**The costs of the training programmes – including development costs – should be shared across all those parts of government that receive diplomatic training, including DIRCO.** In addition, we believe that training programmes could be sold on a commercial basis to a wide range of potential clients, where it will not disrupt the core work of the academy, including:

- The UN Family – e.g. UNDP in Pretoria.
- Regional Bodies – e.g. AU, DBSA, SADC
- International Financial Institutions – e.g. World Bank.
- International NGOs--e.g. Oxfam.
- International Governmental Organisations – e.g. International Seabed Authority.
- Transnational Private Sector – e.g. Anglo American Group.
- African national diplomatic services.
- State Owned Enterprises--e.g. Eskom, SAA
- Domestic entities involved in International Relations work.
- Labour Federations – e.g. COSATU
- Business Federations ---e.g. Business South Africa.

**We recommend that a basic Proof of Concept for the business model should be conducted by the DTRD.**

This could happen before the end of the (extended) term of this Ministerial Task Team, if at all possible, since it falls under the remit of the so that its findings can be added to this report). Or, otherwise, it should form part of the Feasibility Study that will necessarily be conducted if the decision is taken to pursue a government component modality.

*iii. Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) and Donor Funding*

In relation to capital costs, particularly in the context of our recommendation that the new Academy should (a) be a ‘government component’; and (b) ideally, have its own physical structure, one option is to explore a PPP whereby the initial capital costs are provided by the private sector partner in the project.

*iv. Other Forms of Partnerships*

It is clear that other forms of partnerships will be needed to support the financial model. For example:

- Skills exchange programmes – such as the language training one that DTRD has with Columbia (Spanish language training in exchange for English language training); and the French Government.
- Formalised partnerships with other diplomatic academies, such as Clingendael.
- Trilateral cooperation potential donors such as The International Seabed Authority.
- Programmes such as The Women Peace and Security Programme that is funded by a grant from Norway.

**While there would be some political and diplomatic sensitivities that would need to be managed carefully, our recommendation is that the possibility of donor funding, at scale, should be explored.** While it may not be appropriate for the new Academy to attract donor funding for any capital expenditure or even set-up costs, donors could well be interested, however, in supporting the development of the sort of content and programmes that we outline above. This could be done by providing multi-year grants to enable the new Academy to ramp up to self-sustainability over, say, a three-year period as it establishes its brand and reputation and enters the market place.

Regardless of whether there is donor support, we recommend that the new academy develop and implement a clear system of monitoring and evaluation of learning programmes to enable it to assess impact, not least so that it can justify any additional investment in public resources.

## 15.2 Implications for Legal Modality

**We recommend that: the new Academy should have sufficient independence for it to be nimble in terms of partnerships, donor funding, and an entrepreneurial modus operandi relating to training products and services** – notwithstanding that it must be “under the control and management of DIRCO”. This sort of sufficient institutional independence will be essential if the new Academy is to be able to raise donor support or charge for services, where this is deemed by DIRCO to be consistent with the strategic interests of South Africa’s foreign policy and its diplomatic training and learning objectives, and to enable such funds or revenue to be received directly by the Academy rather than having to go via Treasury.

In terms of legal modality, there are a number of basic options that run along a spectrum with increasing degrees of autonomy and independence in relation to government control and management:

Branch of Government Department	Trading Entity	Special Service Delivery Unit	Government Component	Public Entity	Quasi-Autonomous	Private Organisation (For Profit or Non-Profit)
Entirely 'in house' (as is the case with the current academy, which is part of the DTRD Branch within DIRCO). The highly-respected German Diplomatic Academy is such an entirely 'in-house' body, albeit with a physically separate building & location outside of the Foreign Ministry.	Essentially 'in house'	Essentially 'in house'	Part of government, but with some 'stand-alone' independence	Outside of the Public Service. Separate governance, including Board, and with significant independence from government, but with government being the only share-holder.	Separate non-state legal personality, but with Government having a majority or 'golden' share.	Entirely Independent (such as Clingendael in The Netherlands)

*Note: Appendix 14 is a PowerPoint submission made by DIRCO to the NCOP in relation to the South African Development Partnership Agency (SADPA). It provides (in slides 14-24) further insight into the governance implications of some of these different models (up to and including Public Entities, but not quasi-autonomous or private organisations).*

Currently, the Academy falls under DTRD which is a branch of DIRCO. Hence, in terms of legal modality, it falls in the first category with the highest level of governmental control and management. For the reasons we advance above and because of the statutory status that the Foreign Service Bill will create for the diplomatic academy, **our recommendation is that a new legal modality requires greater autonomy** and that it needs to 'move along the spectrum' of modalities. Clearly, however, there is a limit to how independent of government the new Academy can be, given that its primary objective is to build strategic diplomatic capability for the South African government and the legal requirement that it fall "under the control of management" of DIRCO. Legally speaking, it may be possible to construct a governance design in which DIRCO/SA Government do have sufficient authority and power to pass the legal test imposed by the FSB – for example, by giving it a 'golden/majority share' in a private body (the far right of the spectrum). However, we do not think this would be wise choice. We submit that the new Academy needs to be sufficiently close to DIRCO so that **it can build strategic capacity inside and not outside** of the State. On the other hand, as we have recommended above, the new Academy needs to be sufficiently independent to preserve and guarantee its innovative edge as an African Centre of Excellence, as well as its distinctive personality and brand, and its quality and prestige.

**In striking a balance between the two principles – sufficient proximity and sufficient independence – we recommend that the option that appears to offer the best of both worlds is that of a 'government component'** – in other words, a 'departmental agency' – for the following reasons:

- i. As a component, the new Academy can develop its own distinctive brand and identity;
- ii. **It can contract with and enter into substantive relationships with a range of partners, clients, and donors**, where this is consistent with the strategic interests of South Africa's foreign policy and its diplomatic training and learning objectives;
- iii. **It can appoint its own Head who can provide the necessary leadership on a dedicated, permanent (that is, non-rotating) basis, and who will be the accounting officer.** The Head could either report to the DG while liaising closely with the Minister who will have political authority, or report directly to the



Minister. We recommend the former – i.e. reporting to the DG: DIRCO, to help ensure that alignment with policy, strategy and HRM&D is achieved and sustained.

- iv. **It's governance arrangements and decision-making will be buttressed by having a Board.** In the case of SADPA, the proposed governance of the Fund includes a Board of Trustees, who have the executive authority to determine allocations/disbursements from the Fund (according to the presentation made to the NCOP – Appendix 14). Whereas two other government components that are cited in the Note on Legal Principles (Appendix 12) – the Municipal Infrastructure Support Agency and the Government Pensions Administration Agency – have Advisory Boards. Significant thought must be given to the authority that such a Board should, whether executive or merely advisory. The Board will be important to ensure that the academy has the necessary level of independence and autonomy that we believe will be essential for its organizational agility, entrepreneurial ethos and intellectual innovativeness and prestige. It will need to be capable of providing relevant advice, expertise and policy linkages where needed, though its role will primarily be guide/determine curriculum design and development. We recommend that it should be composed of the following: DG: DIRCO; DDG: Human Resources; Other Senior Management/Leadership of DIRCO; Former Senior Diplomats or members of DIRCO; senior officials in government departments with significant international relations responsibilities such as DTI, DHA and even DEA; International Relations' Academics/Thought-leaders; Representatives of 'Anchor Partners';
- v. **Its budget allocation would be explicitly shown as a 'transfer to a departmental agency', and to that extent it is "ring-fenced"** and so would suit the proposed business modality best.

**The legal authority for the establishment of a government component is section 7A of the Public Service Act 1994** (as amended). Appendix Twelve provides a Note on the law and the legal principles that underpin a government component. It references six examples of government components, including one that falls under the executive authority of DIRCO, namely, the South African Developmental Partnership Agency.

An internal government memo (or part thereof), Appendix 13, usefully summarises information on the institutional forms available in the SA government, extracted and adapted from two presentations developed by the DPSA, one dated April 2010 and the other March 2011. It notes the following characteristics of a government component:

- adhere to governance arrangements applicable to the public service with conditions determined by the executive authority;
- accounts to the executive authority;
- the Head of a GC shall have the same duties and responsibilities as:
  - A head of a national or provincial department (PSA);
  - The accounting officer (PFMA);
- staff remain public servants;
- enable direct service delivery through a focused, ring-fenced agency under the direct control of a department or an executive authority;
- remains part of the State similar to that of a department;
- original, assigned and/or delegated statutory powers and duties;
- easier to set up: 9 to 12 months;
- transfer payment from principal department supplemented by levies charged in terms of legislation;
- cash accounting framework similar to department; and
- retention of income on conditions set by National Treasury.

As Appendix 12 sets out, there is a carefully governed process for establishing a government component, as follows:

- The **President** formally brings a government component into existence by **Proclamation in the Gazette** in the form of an amendment to Schedule 3 of the Act which lists government components, having satisfied

himself that the request complies with the provisions of the Act, Constitution and other law. The President acts “**at the request**” of an executive authority and “**on the advice of**” the **Minister of Public Service and Administration** and Minister of Finance in this respect. (S7(5-6));

- Only an “**executive authority**”, in this case the **Minister of International Relations and Cooperation**, can request the creation of a government component (S7A(1));
- The executive authority can only request the component to be created if a **feasibility study** is conducted and the findings of the study recommend the creation of the component (S7A(1));

In turn, there are regulations that govern how the feasibility study is conducted, namely in section 33 of the Public Service Regulations, 2016 [Government Gazette No. 40167] (also set out in Appendix 12), including an option analysis of organizational forms and the business case for the preferred option. Clearly, therefore, the next step – and a key part of our ‘Roadmap’ below – is that the legally required feasibility study is carried out.

## 16. Roadmap

What follows is a series of next steps that we recommend as necessary major milestones in the process of establishing the new Diplomatic Academy (noting that some will happen in parallel, and that in terms of timeline and precise sequence, there is a level of uncertainty that will need to be managed):

### Step One: by end of 2019

Ministerial Approval for the Concept (Vision and Objectives) and Modality of the new academy.

### Step Two: by end of 2019

Parliamentary passage of the Foreign Service Bill and Presidential Assent.

### Step Three: by end of 2019

Agreement to short-term allocation of additional (reallocated) funding for the personnel costs of establishing the new Academy (for example, its programme and content requires an experienced, senior curriculum designer).

### Step Four: by Q2, 2020

Appointment of core staff necessary for the successful establishment of the new Academy.

### Step Five: by Q3, 2020

Full, detailed budgeting of a defined organogram for the new Academy – including operational plan and costs, and personnel costs.

### Step Six: first half of 2020, complete by Q3, 2020

Conduct a Feasibility Study, as required by the Public Service Regulations 2016, in relation to the organizational form of the new Academy and the recommendation that it be established as a government component. This would include the development of a full business plan for the new Academy, including a marketing plan; and if not already conducted, a full proof of concept regarding the market opportunity we foresee for the new Academy.

### Step Seven: first half of 2020, complete by Q3, 2020, with a view to a MTBPS adjustment in October 2020

Consultation with National Treasury on the budget and prior to the finalisation of the Academy as component institution (in parallel with the Feasibility Study).

### Step Eight: Jan – June 2020

Consultation with potential anchor partners, including where appropriate Request for Proposals (RFP), for anchor partners, content and programmes, individual content delivery, and international partnerships.

**Step Nine:** *by end of 2020*

Feasibility/scoping study for moving of the new academy to a separate building – including specifications, options, budget consequences (CAPEX), funding modalities, and timeframe.

**Step Ten:** *by Q4, 2020*

Development of a full, two-phase ‘ramp up’ plan for the establishment of the fully-fledged new diplomatic academy.

## V. Conclusion

17. The successful execution of these proposed steps will enable South Africa to seize the opportunity to upgrade its diplomatic capability at a crucial moment in its own democratic and economic development, and at a delicate and volatile time in international relations. An integral dimension of its institutional evolutionary path is that the Academy grows into a centre of excellence that is grounded in a pan-African ethos as far as its pedagogy, methodology, programmes, and learning outcomes are concerned. To take full advantage of the opportunity, and to overcome the undoubted challenges that will face such a pathbreaking initiative, certain ‘boundary conditions’ that we identify in this report will need to be addressed effectively and without equivocation. Central to these is the question of institutional culture. While we believe that the Academy can play an important role, as other diplomatic academies do elsewhere around the world, in creating a culture of learning and critical self-reflection, as well as professionalism and career development, support for the new academy and its ambition will be needed at the highest departmental and ministerial levels. Ultimately, we conclude, the onus of success in establishing the new Academy will rest on visionary leadership that is capable, willing, and prepared to drive the process of making it the centre of excellence that it undoubtedly could and should become.

### **Members of the Ministerial Task Team:**

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31 August 2019

Appendices:

1. Foreign Service Training and Development Strategy
2. Note prepared for Task Team by DTRD on Current Diplomatic Training Strategy & Plans
3. Why 1 Rationale: Why a new South African Diplomatic Academy? The Changing Context of Diplomacy in a VUCA World
4. The National Interest: Conceptual and Discursive Considerations
5. Why 2 Rationale: Full Gap Analysis Report
6. Bench-marking Research Report
7. A Typology of International Institutes of Foreign Service
8. Domestic Partnerships – Selected Interviews on National Teaching and Learning Resource Needs and Indicators
9. DTRD Table of International Partnerships
10. Content, Programmes and Partners: A Proposal on Curriculum and matching national capacity
11. Required Capacity for an Envisioned Fully-Fledged Diplomatic Academy
12. Note: Government Components – Brief Evaluation of Legal Principles
13. Internal South African Government paper on Institutional Modalities
14. Establishment of SADPA: Presentation to the NCOP Select Committee on Trade and International Relations.

Additional Documents Consulted by the Task Team:

- Clingendael Institute. (undated), 'Documentation on Clingendael Institute, curriculum and pedagogy'
- Clingendael Academy. (undated), 'The integrated learning approach to diplomatic training: the example of training junior diplomats of the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs'
- DIRCO. (2011), 'Building a Better World: The Diplomacy of Ubuntu', White Paper on South Africa's Foreign Policy, 13 May 2011, Final Draft
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- DIRCO. (2018), 'Training and Research Programmes'
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- DIRCO. (2019), 'Presentation on Diplomatic Academy by DDG D'TRD, 26 February 2019'
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- DIRCO. (undated), 'Foreign Service Training and Development'
- DIRCO. (undated), 'Strategic Approach to Economic Diplomacy'
- DIRCO. (undated), 'Economic Diplomacy Training'

- DIRCO. (undated), 'Approach to Foreign Language Training'
- DIRCO. (undated), 'International Institutes of Foreign Service'
- DIRCO. (undated), 'Diplomatic Academy, Feedback Form-Diplomatic Training & International School'
- DIRCO. (undated), 'Mission Administration Course Modules'
- DIRCO. (undated), 'Post evaluation to action plan'
- German Federal Foreign Office. (2014), 'Guidelines on Personnel Development for Foreign Service Employees, (Personnel Development Strategy)'
- Public Service Act 1994
- Public Service Regulations 2016.
- SAQA, (2012), 'Registered Qualification: Mission Administration'.

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<sup>i</sup> The other six are: economic transformation and job creation; education, skills and health; consolidating the social wage through reliable and quality services; spatial integration, human settlements, and local government; social cohesion and safe communities; and a capable, ethical, and developmental state.

<sup>ii</sup> A.F. Cooper, *The Changing Nature of Diplomacy*, Published online [July 2016] |

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1093/obo/9780199743292-0180>

<sup>iii</sup> Cooper, A., Heine, J., & Thakur, R. (2013-03-01). Introduction: The Challenges of 21st-Century Diplomacy. In (Ed.), *The Oxford Handbook of Modern Diplomacy*.: Oxford University Press. Retrieved 6 Mar. 2019,

<http://www.oxfordhandbooks.com/view/10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199588862.001.0001/oxfordhb-9780199588862-e-1>.

<sup>iv</sup> V. Stanzel (ed), *New Realities in Foreign Affairs: Diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP Research Paper, Paper 11, November 2018.

<sup>v</sup> K. Dinnie, Three key challenges for public diplomacy, *Diplomat Magazine* <http://www.diplomatmagazine.nl/2013/11/03/three-key-challenges-public-diplomacy/> Access, 6 March 2019

<sup>vi</sup> V. Stanzel (ed), *New Realities in Foreign Affairs: Diplomacy in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century*, Stiftung Wissenschaft und Politik, SWP Research Paper, Paper 11, November 2018

<sup>vii</sup> K. Aggestam & A.Towns, The gender turn in diplomacy: a new research agenda, *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, Vol 21 (1) 2019, pp.9-28

<sup>viii</sup> K. Stringer, 2004. Visa Diplomacy. *Diplomacy & Statecraft*, 15(4), pp. 655-682.