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| **Policy name (s)** | Succession Policy |
| **Policy number** |  |
| **Initial approval by the Board of Directors** | November 2023 |
| **Updated on** |  |
| **Legal framework** |  |
| **Other applicable policies and/or procedures** | Human Resources Policy |
| Succession Plans |
| Transfer of Knowledge Plans |
| RDN’s Critical Paths Document |
| Annual Performance Evaluation |

# Definitions

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| **Board positions** | Any elected board members or officers who are part of the organization’s Board of Directors. |
| **Competency** | A combination of knowledge, skills, and attitude. |
| **Employee** | An individual who is remunerated by the organization on a bi-weekly basis in exchange for achieving specific, pre-identified objectives and/or performing specific tasks identified in their job description. |
| **Executive positions** | Employees who report directly to the Board of Directors hold executive positions. |
| **Key position** | A position in the organization that has requires specialized knowledge or has an impact on the overall strategy, on services, or relationships with stakeholders. |
| **Management positions** | An employee who has other employees to supervise holds a management position. |
| **Professional positions** | Employees who do not hold executive or management positions hold professional positions within the organization. |
| **Succession** | The process of giving way to a new person in a given position and ensuring a stable environment is reached after the transition. |
| **Succession Plan** | A plan outlining the process of giving way to a new person in a key position in the organization. |

# Policy Statement

## Objective

This policy is designed and approved by the [Organization] to ensure that rules and guidelines are in place for all matters regarding the succession planning for board positions, executive, management, and all key professional positions within the [Organization].

## 2.2 Policy Statement

It is the policy of [Organization] to work towards hiring the most qualified, competent staff to lead the [Organization]. As such, this policy, designed to ensure replacements for key job incumbents in board and executive positions in the [Organization], in addition to other key and professional positions. It is the [Organization]’s policy to ensure continuity in key positions and essential operations, develop talent internally, encourage professional development, and maintain organizational culture.

The policy will ensure the [Organization] is prepared for an eventual permanent change in leadership – either planned or unplanned – to ensure the stability and accountability of the [Organization] until new permanent leadership is identified. The Board shall be responsible for implementing this policy and designates the implementation of its related procedures to the Executive Director.

It is the Board's policy to ensure a transparent, objective, equitable, and inclusive succession process is implemented across the [Organization].

# Roles and Responsibilities

For an effective implementation of this policy, the roles and responsibilities of members of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director, management team and each employee are outlined.

## The Board of Directors

The Board of Directors must ensure the mission of the [Organization] is upheld and that the [Organization] remains sustainable in the event of the departure of Board members or their sole employee, the Executive Director.

The Board of Directors is responsible for:

* Adopting the succession policy and approving the plans that emerge from it.
* Communicating with internal and external stakeholders when a selection process is launched and a change in leadership is eminent.
* Allocating the budgets required for implementing professional development plans for employees wishing to access management positions.
* Allocating the budgets required for implementing succession plans and the work of its committees.
* Allocating the budgets required for the exiting Executive Director’s salary and the new Executive Director’s salary to overlap and complete the Executive Director Transfer of Knowledge Plan.
* Designating a Nominations Committee to implement the succession plan for Board members (the Board of Directors may wish to establish clear Terms of Reference for this committee).
* Adopting the succession plans for the position of Executive Director.
* Designating a Selection Committee to implement the succession plan for Executive Director (the Board of Directors may wish to establish clear Terms of Reference for this committee).
* Regularly reviewing and updating the Executive Director’s job description.
* Evaluating the Executive Director’s performance annually, including developing the Executive Director’s professional development plan (the Board may designate an Executive Director Evaluation Committee annually, which must be composed of the president and two other board members).

Additionally, each member of the Board of Directors is expected to act as an ambassador of the [Organization], promote it to partners and to potential Board members. This will ensure that many highly qualified and competent candidacies are received when board seats become vacant. Board members are encouraged to support the Nominations Committee by asking interesting and interested individuals to send their curriculum vitae to the committee throughout the year.

Each board member is also expected to inform the Board of Directors, in writing, of a planned departure at least three board meetings before their expected departure date.

## 3.2 The Nominations Committee

A Nominations Committee is a permanent committee of the Board of Directors that meets once each year to review candidacies for vacant Board seats before the annual general meeting. The committee may meet for special meetings when a board seat becomes vacant. The Nominations Committee is composed of two board members, habitually the president and the vice-president, and the Executive Director. Any of these members may be replaced by another board member, by resolution of the Board of Directors. Terms of Reference for the Nominations Committee may be developed to ensure their mandate is well defined.

The Nominations Committee is responsible for:

* Meeting regularly once per year, two months before the annual general meeting.
* Meeting as soon as a board seat becomes vacant unexpectedly several months before an annual general meeting.
* Reviewing the Board Member’s Competency Checklist (see Annex 1) regularly to ensure it continues to align with the [Organization]’s needs and strategic orientations.
* Maintaining a bank of qualified candidates to fill vacant board positions.
* Assessing candidates for vacant board positions.
* Conducting interviews with potential candidates, as they see fit.
* Recommending new qualified and competent Board members to the members at an annual general meeting.
* Recommending new qualified and competent Board members to the Board of Directors when board seats become vacant during the year.
* Onboarding new board members, in collaboration with the Executive Director.
* Assigning a mentor to new board members.
* Concluding any business, as occasionally may be mandated by resolution of the Board of Directors.

## 3.3 The Selection Committee for the Executive Director

The Selection Committee is an ad hoc committee of the Board of Directors and meets, as needed, when it is time to select a new leader for the [Organization]. The Selection Committee is composed of a minimum of three board members: the president, the vice-president and one additional board member designated by resolution of the Board of Directors. The Selection Committee may also choose to hire an external executive search firm to support them in the selection process. The maximum number of individuals on the Selection Committee is five.

The Selection Committee is responsible for:

* Meeting within five days of the unexpected departure of the organization’s Executive Director.
* Meeting within ten days of the Executive Director’s announcement of an expected departure.
* Assessing the need for external support in the hiring process.
* Selecting an external executive search firm, if necessary.
* Reviewing the Executive Director’s Competency Checklist (see annex 2) every two years to ensure they continue to align with the [Organization]’s needs and strategic orientations.
* Determining if psychometric assessments should support their process.
* Assessing candidates.
* Conducting interviews with potential candidates.
* Recommending a new qualified and competent Executive Director to the Board of Directors.
* Onboarding the new Executive Director.
* Concluding any business, as occasionally may be mandated by resolution of the Board of Directors.

## 3.4 The Executive Director

The Executive Director (ED) must execute the wishes of the Board by developing plans and procedures to ensure the implementation of this Succession Policy.

The Executive Director is responsible for:

* Informing the Board of a planned departure six months prior to the date of departure, whenever possible.
* Communicating the contents of the Succession Policy to staff.
* Promoting the Succession Policy.
* Developing and implementing succession plans emerging from this policy.
* Supporting the different phases of succession planning (including diagnosis, competencies, and plan development) for key positions in the organization.
* Determining if psychometric assessments should support the process.
* Ensuring annual performance evaluations are completed for each employee.
* Ensuring professional development aspirations are included in each employee's annual performance evaluation.
* Reviewing and updating each of the management team’s job descriptions.
* Preparing an annual budget that includes professional development and succession planning expenses, for Board approval.
* Creating and implementing transfer of knowledge plans for the Executive Director position and other key positions in the [Organization].
* Evaluating succession plans implemented.
* Hiring new employees when positions become vacant, as per the [Organization]’s Human Resources Policy.

## The Management Team

The management team is composed of employees who supervise at least one other employee. The management team plays a key role in promoting this policy and ensuring the plans emerging from it are implemented and evaluated. The management team is expected to understand and communicate that participation in the succession planning process does not lead to a promotion. It contributes to increased competency, and professional development while ensuring the continuity of the organization.

Each member of the management team is responsible for:

* Informing the Executive Director of a planned departure at least three months prior to the date of departure, whenever possible.
* Reflecting on their professional aspirations and verbalizing them during their annual performance evaluation with the Executive Director.
* Completing an annual performance evaluation with each of the employees in their team.
* Asking each of the employees in their team about their professional aspirations.
* Developing and implementing succession plans (including diagnosis, competencies, and plan development) for key positions on their team, in collaboration with the Executive Director.
* Reviewing and updating each of their employees’ job descriptions.
* Creating and implementing transfer of knowledge plans for their position and other key positions in their team.

## Employees

Each employee is expected to reflect on their professional aspirations and share these with their supervisors. Employees may also be asked to participate in the development and implementation of succession plans and transfer of knowledge plans for their position.

Each employee is expected to understand that participation in a succession planning process does not guarantee a promotion.

# Succession Planning Process

Succession planning is a structured process that involves identifying and preparing potential successors to take on a new role within the [Organization]. This planning is an essential part of human resource management as it ensures continuity of human capital in any organization.

It is also an effective risk management practice for the Board of Directors, allowing them to adhere to their fiduciary duty and ensure the viability of the [Organization] in the event of a planned or unplanned long-term absence or departure.

The selection planning process includes identifying, recruiting, training and mentoring employees who are high performers or who have leadership potential. It is a people-centered, objective approach intended to ensure continuity in the organization. The process includes four sub-processes, the first of which is this policy. The second, third and forth are diagnosis, competencies and plans and are the delegated to the Board of Directors, for the position of Executive Director and to the Executive Director for other positions.

The succession planning policy and process provides individuals with an opportunity for advancement but does not guarantee a promotion. An objective selection process for vacant positions is still required to ensure equal opportunities for all employees who may be interested in advancement. The selection process also allows the Board to select the most qualified and competent person to support the [Organization].

Succession planning can be done with all the employees at any level. This policy includes provisions for the Board’s policy on succession and the steps required to complete a succession planning process.

## Steps for Succession Planning

### Diagnosis

The diagnosis phase of succession planning entails three main elements:

1. Identifying the organization’s short and long-term objectives.
2. Identifying key positions that:
   1. impact on the attainment of goals, or
   2. impact the delivery of services, or
   3. impact relationships with stakeholders, or
   4. are highly specialized.
3. Assessing employees’ interest in advancing within the organization.

It is an ongoing process, integrated into the [Organization]’s annual planning and annual performance evaluation of its employees.

When beginning the diagnosis phase for the succession of board members, informal discussions with members is necessary to assess their level of interest in governance. Members who are interested may be asked to submit their curriculum vitae to the Nominations Committee who is tasked with maintaining a bank of interested candidates and inviting them to observe board meetings or other related governance activities.

A rating system to diagnosis key positions may be used to identify:

1. Employees who are ready for, and interested in, a promotion, or members who are ready for a board position.
2. Employees who require more support to access a promotion, or members who require more support to access a board position.
3. Employees who are not interested in a promotion, or members not interested in a board position.

The rating system may be applied after each annual performance evaluation or after an employee has completed a training program. Board members may informally use this rating system to assess members’ interest following an annual general meeting.

### Competencies

The competencies needed to succeed in key roles today may differ from those required in the future. Assessing competencies involves assessing individuals’ skills, knowledge, and attitudes to determine if they are ready to take on key positions within the organization or on the Board of Directors.

Developing competency profiles for each key position and comparing individuals’ competencies against these will facilitate the succession planning process. The following rating scale may be used to assess individuals’ competencies:

1. Does not have the required competencies.
2. Partially has the required competencies.
3. Has the required competencies.
4. Surpasses the required competencies.

The organization may choose to use psychometric tools to assess skills and competencies prior to developing succession plans for key positions.

### Developing a Succession Plan

An individualized succession plan is developed for employees and members who obtain an **A3, A4, or B4** rating, whether there are vacant positions or not. The plan includes:

* A description of the knowledge and skills to be developed, with specific timelines and actions.
* A training program and other activities to help address the competency gaps.
* Access to a mentor within the organization or coaching outside of the organization.
* Shadowing opportunities to work closely with the person currently in the role they wish to access.

The Succession Plan includes a Transfer of Knowledge Plan containing key information and knowledge that must be transferred to the successor.

The development of a succession plan does not guarantee a promotion as these individuals may still be required to compete in a formal selection process.

### Evaluating the Succession Plan

The succession plan may be evaluated annually to determine if it is successful in preparing employees to fill key positions within the organization.

# Departure of a Board Member

A board position becomes vacant when a board member has completed their mandate, when the member resigns, or is no longer willing or able to attend meetings for any given reason. Determining the most appropriate successor for board positions is based on the competencies identified in Annex 1 and on the process adopted by the Nominations Committee.

The Nominations Committee is encouraged to maintain a bank of potential candidates who have competencies in governance to succeed exiting board members, as identified in the Succession Planning Process. These individuals may be invited to events organized by the Board of Directors, training sessions on governance intended for the Board or the organization’s annual general meeting.

## Planned Departure of a Board Member

### End of Mandate Succession Planning

When the Board of Directors begins planning their annual general meeting, they must identify which board members have completed their mandate to determine the number of positions to fill. The Board of Directors is encouraged to maintain a roster of beginning and end dates for each board position to ensure an efficient succession process.

STEP 1: The Nomination Committee meets two months before the annual general meeting to prepare a call for nominations from individuals with the competencies required to fill the vacant positions to apply. At this meeting, the Nominations Committee may wish to review the competencies in Annex 1.

The committee may review potential candidates from their bank of qualified and competent candidates, who have been assessed as **A3** or **A4** and invite them to:

* Attend the last two board meetings of the year, as observers.
* Complete a governance training program.
* Participate in the AGM.

The potential candidates understand their election is not guaranteed, as the members are ultimately responsible for the selection of board members.

STEP 2: The Nominations Committee meets one month before the annual general meeting to review candidates and prepare a list of qualified individuals to be recommended for election at the annual general meeting, including the list of **A3** and **A4** candidates. The Nominations Committee may choose to interview potential candidates before recommending their election.

STEP 3: The Nominations Committee presents the list of candidates to be presented at the AGM to the Board and makes recommendations.

STEP 4: The Nominations Committee presents the candidates at the AGM for the members to elect new Board members.

STEP 5: The Nominations Committee organizes the newly elected board member’s onboarding and assigns a mentor to support them and answer their questions.

### Resignation of a Board Member with Notice

Any board member may submit their letter of resignation before the end of their term. Their resignation is accepted by the Board of Directors at a regular meeting and the succession process to fill the vacancy begins.

STEP 1: The Nominations Committee meets within two weeks of receiving the resignation letter. At this meeting, the Nominations Committee may wish to review the competencies in Annex 1.

STEP 2: The Nominations Committee assesses the candidates within the bank of potential candidates. The Nominations Committee may choose to interview potential candidates before recommending their election.

STEP 3: The Nominations Committee recommends a new board member who has the competencies required to fill the vacant position until the next AGM. The Board of Directors adopts a resolution to fill the vacancy.

STEP 4: The Nominations Committee invites the new board member to the next meeting and begins their onboarding process.

STEP 5: At the next AGM, the Nominations Committee recommends that the new board member be elected.

## Unexpected Departure of a Board Member

When a board position becomes vacant unexpectedly, the Nominations Committee must meet as soon as possible after the departure is confirmed and recommend a new board member from the bank of potential candidates. The Board of Directors adopts a resolution to allow the new member to have all the powers of the administrators of the organization.

At the next AGM, the Nominations Committee recommends that the new board member be elected.

# Departure of the Executive Director

As the only employee of the Board of Directors, it is their responsibility to prepare the Executive Director’s succession. The Board of Directors may start the succession planning process outlined in this policy as soon as a new Executive Director is hired, to ensure continuity.

## Planned Departure

When hiring a new Executive Director, the Board of Directors stipulates the amount of notice required when resigning. This allows the Board to Directors ensure a smooth transition between the exiting Executive Director and the new Executive Director.

Upon receiving the Executive Director’s resignation, the Board of Directors:

1. Ensures the Executive Director Transfer of Knowledge Plan is up to date.
2. Communicates the selection process to internal and external stakeholders.
3. Designates members of the Selection Committee to begin the selection process based on the succession plans (there may be more than employee with a succession plan for the position of ED) in place (see Annex 3).
4. Supports the Selection Committee’s process for objectively select a new Executive Director.
5. Adopts a resolution to hire a successor 90 days (if possible) before the Executive Director’s departure based on the Selection Committee’s recommendation.
6. Provides resources to the Executive Director enabling the implementation of the Executive Director Transfer of Knowledge Plan.
7. Organizes a gathering to acknowledge the exiting Executive Director’s contribution to the organization.
8. Organizes an evaluation at the end of the new Executive Director’s probation period.

## Unexpected Departure or Extended Absence

The position of Executive Director should not remain vacant for more than two weeks. Whether this vacancy is the result of an unexpected departure or an extended absence, the Board of Directors must intervene.

As soon as the Executive Director position is vacant, the Board of Directors:

1. Designates members of the Selection Committee to meet within five days to:
   * Identify employees assessed as **A3** and **A4.**
   * Name an interim Executive Director for a period of 90 days among those designated as **A3** and **A4**.
   * Determine if a new ED can be selected from the internal candidates.
   * Determine if an external hiring process is required and if an external firm is needed.
2. Communicates the selection process to internal and external stakeholders.
3. Supports the Selection Committee’s process to objectively select a new Executive Director.
4. Adopts a resolution to hire a new Executive Director based on the Selection Committee’s recommendation.
5. Provides resources to the Selection Committee enabling the updating and implementation of the Knowledge Transfer Plan.

# Review of policy

The Board of Directors will review the Succession Planning Policy every three years and as required to ensure it remains consistent with the Board’s objectives and responsibilities. Annexes and succession plans emanating from this policy may be updated as needed without Board approval, so long as they are aligned with this Policy.

# Annex 1: Board Competencies

Each member of the Board of Directors is expected to demonstrate:

Integrity

Ethics

Political sense

Analytical abilities

Sense of duty and responsibility

Accountability

Strategic vision

Independence of thought

Together, the Board of Directors should be composed of members with the following competencies:

Governance

Legislative framework within which the [Organization] must navigate

Financial management

Human resources management

Knowledge of English-speaking communities

Knowledge of the Health and Social Services sector

Risk Management

# Annex 2: Executive Director Competencies

The competencies required to be an effective leader evolve over time. This non-exhaustive list should be reviewed by the Selection Committee each two years, in collaboration with the Executive Director in office.

**ANALYSIS**

Strategic vision

Learning oriented

Tolerance to ambiguity

**RELATIONSHIP BUILDING**

Understanding others

Self-control

Customer service

**INFLUENCE**

Capacity to influence

Decision-making

Courage

**ENERGY**

Entrepreneurship

Action-oriented

Self-confidence

Generally, the leader of an organization is expected to have the following personality traits:

Open to change and innovation

Personable

Assertive

Committed

Enjoys challenges

Manages stress effectively

Tolerant

Endures criticism

In the twenty-first century, leaders are expected to be:

Humble

Empathetic

Be emotionally intelligent

Be self-aware

Culturally aware

Inclusive

Transparent

# Annex 3: Template for an Executive Succession Plan

The following plan was developed on November 14, 2023 to promote the professional development of the Director of Operations. It is a succession plan for an executive position. Should the position become vacant, the Director of Operations may be eligible to interview for the position.

The succession plan will be evaluated on December 1, 2024.

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| Employee’s Name: | | Fleur Lesaffaires | | Current Position: | | Director of Operations | | |
| Rating: | | **A3** | | Position sought: | | Executive Director | | |
| Date of initial assessment: | | October 12, 2023 | | Date of Plan Development: | | November 14, 2023 | | |
| Date of last performance evaluation: | | | September 2, 2023 | | Date of plan evaluation: | | December 1, 2024 | |
| Objective | Specific actions | | | | Timeline and Resources Required | | | Indicators |
| To increase self-awareness as a leader | 1. Complete McGill’s online training course: [Search | SKILLSETS - McGill University](https://www.mcgill.ca/skillsets/channels/event/leadership-series-navigating-emotional-intelligence-292552) 2. Read The Leader's Guide to Emotional Intelligence by Drew Bird | | | | Until April 2024  Course: $750  Book: $50  Time to study: 2 hours per work week | | | * Passing grade * Summary of learnings from book * 360 evaluation results show increased self-awareness |
| To understand funding requirements | 1. Attend CHSSN retreat in April 2023 2. Participate in PCH webinar on Project Funding | | | | Time and travel costs to Quebec: $450 and 2 days  Time to review reporting in December with ED | | | * Completes report for CHSSN in April with ED |
| To allocate budgets to the Seniors’ team | 1. Attend l’Appui’s AGM 2. Mentorship with new-Brenda at CHSSN | | | | Time and travel costs to Quebec: $450 and 2 days  Zoom time for weekly mentorship session: 1 hour per week | | | * Prepares budget for Seniors Programming with Treasurer and ED |
| To improve presentation skills | 1. [What Are Effective Presentation Skills (and How to Improve Them) | Coursera](https://www.coursera.org/articles/presentation-skills) | | | | From April 2024 to September 2024  Course: $350  Time to complete course: 1 hour per work week | | | * Presents annual report at AGM in June 2024 |