FORTY-EIGHTH MEETING OF THE
COMMITTEE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF GOVERNMENTS AND ADMINISTRATIONS
(26–28 June 2018, Noumea, New Caledonia)

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AGENDA ITEM No. 7: **Report on human resources**

(Paper presented by the Secretariat)

Summary

1.   This paper presents an update of key initiatives being undertaken by the Secretariat's Human Resources Department (HR Department) from 2017 to 2018 to ensure its professional services meet the requirements of the Operations and Management Directorate's (OMD) business plan, the needs of programmes and divisions and the objectives of the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020.

2.   Efforts to build a fit-for-purpose Human Resources function focused on impactful operational and strategic delivery remain at the forefront of the HRD's planning.

3.   The HR Department has implemented or is in the process of implementing several projects to enhance the efficiency of its systems and processes. System development initiatives include a new online HR information system and a redesigned (automated) performance development system. Training programmes have been implemented across the organisation to fulfil SPC's gender mainstreaming strategy, the current Staff Regulations (2014) are being reviewed, and a full suite of HR policies are being drafted, with consultations with staff currently underway.

4.   The review of Staff Regulations is nearly complete. Rather than delay seeking approval from the governing body until CRGA 49 in 2019, the Secretariat proposes that any recommended changes to the Staff Regulations be submitted for approval out of session in December 2018.

5.   The HR Department is also actively engaged in enhancing SPC's competitiveness in the job market and its capacity to attract and retain talented people. Details regarding challenges, market trends and proposals to attract talent and remedy current gaps are covered as part of a separate paper (Paper no. 7.2).

Recommendations

6.   CRGA is invited to:

  i.   note progress in implementing the human resources work programme and key initiatives in alignment with the Operations and Management Directorate's business plan;

  ii.   endorse the proposal to submit the revised SPC Staff Regulations to CRGA members for review and approval out of session in December 2018.

Report on human resources

Purpose

7.   This paper presents a report on the HR work programme for 2017–2018 and key initiatives to achieve the priorities of OMD's business plan.

8.   It also presents a proposal to submit the revised SPC Staff Regulations to CRGA members for review and approval out of session in December 2018.

Background

9.   The OMD business plan was developed in accordance with the Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020. It provides a framework for the HR Department (and other OMD departments) to continue the transition towards a customer-oriented, streamlined and innovative team

10.   OMD contributes directly to the organisational objective of 'enhancing the capabilities of our people systems and processes'.[1] The focus of this objective is to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of internal services, systems, policies, infrastructure and management. It is central to OMD's business plan and guides the HR work programme and priorities.

11.   The following section of this paper highlights a selection of key HR initiatives undertaken in 2017 and 2018 in alignment with OMD's business plan and SPC's strategic plan.

HR policies and review of Staff Regulations

12.   Towards the end of 2017, a review of the Staff Regulations (2014) was undertaken and a full suite of HR policies was drafted, with staff consultations currently in progress. This has been a comprehensive and worthwhile process that should be completed by the third quarter of 2018.

13.   There were several factors behind the review, including the need to strengthen organisational compliance; ensure an employment governance framework that is up to date and responsive to evolving organisational and donor requirements; and enhance SPC's organisational culture through improved HR processes and transparency.

14.   CRGA has delegated authority to approve amendments to the Staff Regulations. Historically, any amendments to the Staff Regulations were presented to CRGA in November and, if approved, implemented in January the following year.

15.   The Secretariat would prefer to keep to this timing, given that the review of the Staff Regulations is nearing completion and it would not be prudent to wait until CRGA 49 (June 2019) to seek endorsement from the governing body. With that in mind, the Secretariat proposes that the revised Staff Regulations be submitted to CRGA members for review and approval out of session in December 2018.

Gender mainstreaming

16.   Gender equality is identified as a regional cross-cutting issue in SPC's strategic plan. Accordingly, the Secretariat has adopted a range of HR policies and strategies to progress gender equality and to

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[1] Pacific Community Strategic Plan 2016–2020, page 9.

integrate gender mainstreaming in its work and in the services provided to members. However, progress has been slowed by limited technical capacity within SPC to mainstream gender.

17. To address this skills gap, the HR Department, in partnership with the Social Development Programme, drafted a gender mainstreaming capacity development strategy (which is currently being implemented) to build awareness and capability across SPC and target the development and application of knowledge and skills.

18. Part of this work has included a significant review and rewrite of key HR polices, such as Gender, equal opportunity, recruitment and selection and Discrimination and harassment, and the development and deployment of organisation-wide training programmes on Domestic Violence. The programmes also include a strong focus on the Child protection policy provisions, awareness and support.

Replacement of the HR information system

19. Over the past two years, the Secretariat has reviewed its current system, HR Online, to assess its fitness for purpose and usability. There were several issues including an outdated user interface and functionality. It was therefore decided to implement a new HR system.

20. In addition to improved usability, the aims for the new HR system are more efficient HR administration, better data reporting capability, and provision of a central repository of personnel information.

21. Implementation of the new system began in January 2018. The work will continue throughout 2018 with the system planned to go live in October 2018.

22. Staff will be kept informed and given training and support to ensure a smooth transition to the new HR information system as it becomes available.

Redesign of SPC's performance development system

23. CRGA 46 approved the Secretariat's request to design and implement an SPC-specific performance development system (PDS), using a transparent process carried out in consultation with staff.

24. At CRGA 47, the Secretariat provided an update on implementing the revised PDS.

25. SPC's existing PDS was redesigned in consultation with staff. Changes to the PDS will be implemented gradually and will be finalised by the end of 2019. The following changes are already in place (effective May 2018):

- Linking of individual performance plans with SPC strategic goals and divisional objectives
- Automating the PDS system (available online)
- Fewer rating levels and clearer definitions
- PDS policy design

26. Staff will be able to use the online PDS system for the first time during the mid-cycle performance review in July 2018. Given the significant changes, the redesigned PDS is being implemented in phases during 2018–2019.

Training and professional development

27. According to the SPC Staff Regulations, Part IV, Regulation 17 – Training: 'the Director-General shall ensure that staff members are trained in subjects relating directly or indirectly to their duties and advancement, if he/she considers that it is in the best interests of the organisation'. This reference to training suggests training and professional development is valued in SPC, particularly if there is a perceived benefit for organisational performance.

28. As part of the PDS redesign survey (2016) and staff focus groups, a review of training and professional development, and other system components, was undertaken. It was clear from feedback that staff felt the Secretariat needed to improve its approach to training and professional development and integrate it as a valued component of SPC's talent management and development.

29. During 2017, as part of the OMD business plan requirements, the HR Department focused on actions to make training and professional development a central part of efforts to enhance organisational effectiveness and performance management.

30. Initiatives include new HR policies such as Learning and development and Professional development assistance. The learning and development component of the new PDS process has also been designed to enable more meaningful conversations and planning around professional development opportunities.

31. There has been a targeted effort to build senior leaders' awareness of, and commitment to, professional development. For example, the Director-General, sponsored by the Singapore Cooperation Programme, endorsed a nine-day course for twenty senior managers as part of a HR initiative aimed at building high performance teams to improve service delivery to member countries. The programme was highly successful and, in addition to the personal and professional growth of course attendees, has led to a number of improvements in processes.

32. The SPC Leadership Development programme, sponsored by the Director-General, began in 2016 and continued in 2017 and 2018. It focuses on identifying and developing potential future leaders and has helped raise the profile of the Secretariat's commitment to talent development.

33. Future initiatives include exploring a learning management system, developing a funding model to better support training and professional development activities, and making learning and development a 'business as usual' activity.

Recommendations

34. CRGA is invited to:

   i. note progress in implementing the human resources work programme and key initiatives in alignment with the Operations and Management Directorate's business plan;

   ii. endorse the proposal to submit the revised SPC Staff Regulations to CRGA members for review and approval out of session in December 2018.