

TERMS OF REFERENCE / JOB DESCRIPTION

Reference:	PG/COK/0653
Post Title:	Human Resource Specialist
Project Title:	Development of a Robust Performance Management Framework for the GoCI
Duty Location:	Office of the Public Service Commissioner (OPSC), Rarotonga, Cook Islands
Project Duration:	18 Months
Responsible to:	Chief Executive Officer, OPSC

Project Background:

The Government of the Cook Islands is presently engaged in a process of public sector reform, essential for boosting economic management to maintain growth. The public service as a proportion of the labour workforce has grown from 30% in 1996 to 31% in 2011¹, and it has been noted that the budget has tripled since the reforms with no corresponding improvement in the quality of service delivery. The assessment of the public service was endorsed by the current government when it assumed office in November 2010, signalling high-level commitment to further reforms. While earlier reforms were driven by a financial crisis, the current reforms focus on strengthening leadership; stronger performance based on clear output requirements; greater efficiency; empowerment of the outer islands; and public–private partnerships.

The new Public Service Act 2009 provides the legislative Framework for further progress in reforming and modernising the public sectors. Concurrently, the Government of the Cook Islands has since 2011 been conducting a functional review of the public service with the support of the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The ADB report released in 2012 recommended establishing clarity in ministry structures to deliver its mandated core and non-core functions, including improvements to national planning, budgeting processes and performance management systems. While a number of projects have been implemented since the review, very little has been implemented in terms of improving HRM and performance management systems to address performance across the public sector. A Capability Analysis assessment of the Cook Islands Public Sector in 2012 confirmed there were many capability gaps across the public sector which needed to be addressed using a team of specialists to provide multi-faceted training programmes across the public sector.

The Office of the Public Service Commissioner (OPSC) is mandated under Section 6 of the Public Service Act 2009 to appoint heads of departments, develop and promote personnel policies and standards, including performance management systems for heads of departments and the Public Service; to provide advice on the training and career development of staff in the Public Service; and to determine salary ranges for positions in the Public Service in accordance with the remuneration system approved by the Cabinet.

OPSC have been tasked with designing a “one for all” performance management system for all government agencies. The development of this comprehensive and robust HRM framework complements a broader public sector reform programme of improving public administration through legislative reforms and by establishing and institutionalising HRM strategies and policies to support public sector managers lead and

¹ Census data includes all Public Sector employees of Government Departments, Offices of Parliament, State Owned Enterprises, Public Entities and Ministerial Support Offices

manage a highly competent and engaged workforce. The output performance of 13 Public Service Departments at 30 June 2013 identified the following issues;

- overspending and lack of qualified audit reports
- poor recruitment choices and performance
- underdeveloped capability
- poor systems and processes

Given the capacity constraints within the OPSC, addressing these issues requires a broad range of public sector reforms which includes systemic reforms and human resource management strategies to enhance the performance of heads of departments and public servants and improve public sector productivity.

Project Purpose:

The purpose of the project is to embed improved Performance Management practices within the Government of the Cook Islands, facilitated by the OPSC.

The Project is ultimately expected to contribute to the improved performance of the Public Service in the Cook Islands characterised by the effective translation of Government mandates, strategies and plans into outputs delivering effective services and development outcomes resulting in high public confidence and satisfaction in the public service and Government.

Scope of Work:

The expert will work closely with 8 OPSC staff including the Public Service Commissioner and CEO- 1 male 7 female, 35 Heads of Departments – 26 male 9 female and 1,851 public servants – 966 male 885 female. The project will impact on direct beneficiaries including OPSC staff, public sector managers and senior public servants identified to receive training, coaching and mentoring. Key stakeholders, including Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) across Government, will also inform direction of the project and serve to build legitimacy for onward implementation.

Expected Project Outputs:

Output 1: Recruitment and retention strategies developed

Activities to include:

- 1.1. Support the establishment of a Human Resource taskforce of change champions to implement the system wide reforms
- 1.2. Review the existing recruitment policies and practices (including the Public Service Act) and propose improvement to a recruitment policy demonstrating best practice, and making alternative recommendations as applicable
- 1.3. Provide expert advice on identifying talent within the public service using the performance management system
- 1.4. Develop strategies to attract and maintain/retain a highly competent workforce
- 1.5. Support to the revision and preparation of job descriptions across government departments, agencies and stakeholders, including training on the importance of job descriptions as required.

Output 2: Robust Performance Management Framework developed and implemented

This should respond to the challenges facing the GoCI as identified in Output 1, and be 'institutionally designed' to be managed by OPSC. The Framework should link strategy and planning to performance

through setting clear expectations and commitments in the National Sustainable Development Plan (NSDP), sector plans, recruitment and appointment, business plans, work plans, project/initiative plans, individual performance agreements and development plans.

Activities to include:

- 2.1. Develop an effective performance management framework for the public service using job descriptions as the foundation to measure employee performance
- 2.2. Development of a standardised performance management matrix/system for all government agencies to use
- 2.3. Revision to the Heads of Departments' performance agreements accommodating the performance management framework
- 2.4. Training of the Human Resource Taskforce and key human resource staff within the OPSC on performance management
- 2.5. Providing training for Heads of Ministries and senior public sector managers on performance management
- 2.6. Undertaking of baseline Performance Review for all HOMs

Output 3: Human Resources framework and systems for the public service developed

This would be inclusive of the processes for: Induction; Health and safety; Training; Discipline; Dispute resolution; Termination; and Leave application.

Activities to include:

- 3.1. Development of the Human Resources framework
- 3.2. Creating guides and tools on the framework above

Output 4: Training, coaching and mentoring for public sector managers on the Human Resources and Performance Management Framework and Tools

Activities to include:

- 4.1. Develop induction programmes for Heads of Departments and public servants
- 4.2. Design and Delivery of training and mentoring programme and materials
- 4.3. Support to the HR taskforce (covering all persons across the public sector with a HR role)
- 4.4. Assessment of training and mentoring programmes and remaining needs

Implementation Arrangements:

The project has been requested by OPSC, Cook Islands. The expert will be based at OPSC working with, and supported by, counterpart staff. The expert will report on a day to day basis and provide direct support to the OPSC Chief Executive Officer. The expert will also consult and work closely with the Heads of Ministries.

The Governance and Natural Resources Division (GNRD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat will provide technical support throughout the project, which will be developed, managed and monitored by the Technical Assistance Unit (TAU).

The expert engaged under the project will be expected to ascertain baseline indicators at the start of the project upon which to judge project progress towards its objectives. These will be presented in the inception report, and will be reported against in 6 monthly progress reports, as well as in the final report.

Transfer of Expertise:

The Commonwealth Secretariat attaches particular importance to the transfer of expertise and knowledge to counterparts. The expert in his/her discussions with the Reporting Officer should draw attention to the need for key staff to be assigned as counterparts at the beginning of the assignment. This should be reported on in the Inception Report (due after two months). A training programme for key counterpart staff should be produced by the expert and agreed with the Reporting Officer. An update should be provided on this in the first Progress Report (due after six months).

Experience & Qualifications:

The successful candidate should possess the following experience and qualifications to be considered for this post:

Professional Experience

- Minimum of 10 years' experience in Human Resources in a management and/or advisory capacity working with senior management teams.
- Advanced competencies in: establishing HR systems, HR recruitment strategies, capability development and workforce planning, writing job descriptions and contract management, preparing framework programmes and policies.
- Proven experience of public service monitoring and evaluation experience.
- Extensive experience in the conduct of organisational/personnel assessments, capacity needs assessments, training activities and capacity building, preferably in the public sector.
- Proven experience in providing advice to senior-level government stakeholders.
- Strong Interpersonal and communications skills.

Desirable

- Experience of working on HR within the Pacific region will be an advantage.

Educational Qualifications

- Advanced degree (Masters Degree, MBA or equivalent) in Human Resources, Management and Public Administration, or other relevant subjects from a recognised and reputable institution.