

**SECTION 5 MAKING MANAGEMENT MORE EFFECTIVE**

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## **5.1 Management development**

It is an accepted principle that ministries/departments are responsible for training and developing their own staff. However, the Central Training Unit and the Co-ordinating Consulting Team of the Office of the Prime Minister have designed training programmes for middle and senior managers across the public service.

The main objectives of the training are:

- to provide managers with the tools to manage confidently and efficiently in an environment of change;
- to introduce managers to new concepts, techniques and practices in the management of resources (human, financial and technical); and
- to provide a forum for networking and the interchange of experiences.

There are other management programmes which are available to public servants although not exclusively. These are run by the University of the West Indies, the Institute of Business – affiliated to the University of the West Indies – and various private institutes which are generally affiliated to foreign universities. Access to these programmes is through individual administrative arrangements.

Quarterly meetings, chaired by the Minister responsible for Public Administration, are arranged for Permanent Secretaries and heads of departments. At these meetings, various aspects of change management are discussed. Monthly meetings of Permanent Secretaries are called by the Head of the Public Service to discuss management issues. There are also seminars run by the Central Training Unit and various private sector organisations, e.g. Chamber of Commerce, on topical issues which affect both the public and private sectors.

The team-building and retreat sessions which are conducted for the members of Cabinet from time to time are also seen as management development.

## **5.2 Improving management information systems**

### **The context for change**

Currently, information systems used throughout the public service are paper-based and manual. This has implications for timeliness, accuracy and retrievability of information. With the introduction of computerisation, steps are being taken to update and upgrade information systems. To achieve the vision of the public service which is highly responsive, client-oriented, flexible and adaptable, providing quality service and producing prompt results, the easy availability of up-to-date information is critical.

### **Implementing change**

The business of government is based primarily on information. Any proposals for improving the conduct of government business must also consider improving the management information systems. To this end, various computerised systems are being pilot-tested with a view to eventual introduction across the public service. These include:

- a Human Resource Information System;
- a Document Image Management System;
- a registry information system;
- an information system which will link agencies needing similar information, such as the Transport Division, the Inland Revenue Department and the Police.

The two major impediments to the success of this programme may be a lack of funding for the purchase of computers and the reluctance of the older managers to use the computer, or their tendency to view it only as a word processing tool for secretaries. The risk of unauthorised access to classified information is no greater than it is in manual systems.

It is accepted by the Government of Trinidad and Tobago that in moving from a manual to a computerised system in an organisation as large as the public service, it is important to ensure compatibility of hardware, both within and among departments, especially where networking is planned. Therefore the National

Information System Centre oversees the computerisation programme in liaison with client ministries.

The National Information System Centre advises on the sourcing and adaptation of software packages, implementation schedules and provides back up support where needed.

## **5.3 Devolution and delegation**

### **The context for change**

The development of a public service which is client-oriented, highly responsive to its environment, provides quality service and seeks the growth and development of its members, requires that some devolution and delegation occur. Ministries are being given responsibility for certain operations which influence their performance. However, the right to monitor the functioning and performance of ministries and to set standards in those areas which cut across the service remains at the centre.

### **Implementing change**

The new vision for a dynamic and responsive public service allows ministries greater individual freedom in certain functional areas, e.g. human resource management, financial management, estate management, supply management and information dissemination. The measures which are being instituted to ensure each ministry's ability to cope with increased responsibilities include:

- The setting up of human resource units in each ministry. This gives managers the opportunity to recruit appropriately and allows them to have more meaningful control over training, discipline, and development.
- The decentralisation of the Organisation and Management Division and the placing of O and M officers into each ministry department. This move provides managers with specialised management expertise in specific areas.
- The decentralisation of the procurement function into ministries to permit managers to control their purchasing portfolios in a more cost-efficient manner.
- The decentralisation of the property management function will allow ministries to choose their own accommodation and negotiate their rents instead of having this done for them by the Property Management Unit.
- The provision of a public relations/information sharing capability in each ministry.
- The establishment of Implementation (Change) Teams responsible for monitoring reform initiatives identified to advance the strategic objectives of the ministry/department's strategic plan.

- The recruitment of short-term consultants in areas where a skills need has been identified to advance the strategic objectives of the ministry/department.
- The strengthening of the top management structure of ministries by the creation of posts of Deputy Permanent Secretary in selected ministries. It is envisaged that this office would assist the Permanent Secretary by allowing increased emphasis to be placed on change management activities in addition to the increased responsibilities referred to above.

Ministries are also being allowed to choose their own accommodation and negotiate their rents instead of having this done for them by the Property Management Unit.

All functions for devolution are selected in close consultation and discussion with the senior managers in ministries. A clear understanding of objectives and guidelines relating to roles and responsibilities must be established.

## **5.4 Improving the management of external consultants**

### **The context for change**

There is a need to ensure that all consultants are appropriate for the job for which they are selected. Very often, consultants are selected to do assignments for which there are other consultants more eminently qualified, especially in terms of understanding environmental issues and appreciating the culture of the organisation. However, because of inadequacies in the selection process, the most appropriate person is not obtained. Sometimes, the consultants sound good on paper, but have little practical experience and come with their own agendas and predispositions. Quite often, the work of the consultant is not closely monitored with the result that there is distorted reporting, little or no transfer of skills and a waste of badly needed funds.

### **Implementing change**

In improving the management of external consultants, the aim of the Government of Trinidad and Tobago is to:

- improve the means for identifying consultants;
- improve the quality of consultants employed;
- improve mechanisms for improving the output of consultants; and
- ensure that a transfer of skills takes place.

A good consultancy must meet certain basic criteria. For example, the consultant must be able to handle relational matters, design organisational interventions, and implement "start-up" activities. He/she must provide evidence of having performed optimally in an operational capacity, as well as in a consulting capacity, in the specific field. He/she must also indicate how the required transfer of skills will be managed. Consequently, the mechanisms to be used within Trinidad and Tobago to improve the management of external consultants are:

- the pre-qualification of consultants, i.e. the designing of tight specifications which indicate the profile required to apply for the job;
- very detailed and specific terms of reference with precise delivery times;

- improved systems for monitoring the work of consultants by a multi-disciplinary in-house team headed by a specific officer of senior management status who will be held accountable for the deliverables; and
- careful selection of counterparts;
- a clear idea of the outcomes required;
- identification of the resources necessary for achieving the outcomes; and
- well defined ground rules for interaction between the consultants and the local staff to be established early.