

SECTION 1 MAKING THE MOST OF STAFF

- 1.1 Ensuring non-discrimination in employment practices
- 1.2 Enhancing management training and development
- 1.3 Performance management and performance appraisal
- 1.4 Achieving a mission orientation
- 1.5 Improving workforce size control
- 1.6 Monitoring performance

1.1 Ensuring non-discrimination in employment practices

The most common forms of discrimination in employment are on the grounds of race, ethnic origin, gender or disability. At the time Zimbabwe became independent, provisions were included in the Constitution to prevent conscious and overt discrimination on any grounds. The Zimbabwe Constitution provides that "..... the Public Service Commission shall have regard to the principle that preference should be given to the person most efficient and suitable for appointment to the post."

The general interpretation of this provision is that it is illegal or unconstitutional to practise discrimination on any grounds. However, as in all public services, the fact that on paper there are no grounds for discrimination does not in itself mean that discrimination is not practised in Zimbabwe.

Non-discrimination in employment assumes that:

- there are equal opportunities to gain the prerequisite qualifications for all posts;
- there is no subjectivity in the selection system.

Zimbabwe uses university degree qualifications as the key to selection to senior public service positions and secondary school certificates for most other posts. Women students at the major university make up twenty-five per cent of the total and the drop-out rate for girls in secondary schools is much higher than that for boys. This suggests that, while there may be no discrimination for those who obtain high qualifications, the opportunity to attain these qualifications is heavily weighted in favour of men.

In an effort to overcome this disadvantage, the Public Service Commission, in selecting candidates for promotion to middle and senior level posts, has stated publicly that where candidates are of equal merit, it will give preference to woman candidates. The result of this policy is evident in the increasing number of women holding such posts in the public service.

There is no legal basis for any discrimination on grounds of disability. However, it would be difficult to argue that none exists and the Zimbabwe Association of Disabled Persons has been campaigning against discrimination in all fields of employment. In principle, the constitutional position quoted above also applies to disabled persons.

1.2 Enhancing management training and development

The context for change

Zimbabwe has seen particularly rapid changes in the public service. Since independence in 1980, the public service has not only grown rapidly, but there has also been a high turnover in various senior posts. In 1980, there was an exodus of white experienced public servants who were replaced by blacks, a sizeable number of whom had no public service experience. To meet the demand for increased and improved services, there was an increase in the number of ministries, and some of the old ministries were expanded. There was, therefore, a continuous shortage of managerial and other skills. The Public Service Review Commission of Zimbabwe, in May 1989 emphasised the importance of training in order to improve the capacity of the public service to deliver public services.

Post-independence efforts to improve management training included the following:

- A National Manpower Survey in 1981 which identified areas for priority training followed by Annual Manpower Reviews.
- The establishment of three national training centres responsible for training junior staff.
- The establishment of six provincial public service training centres for training and upgrading of competence in administrative and management skills.
- The designation of Management Development Advisors for each ministry. The role of these Management Development Advisors was to assist in the identification of training needs and staff development programmes.
- The creation of the Zimbabwe Institute of Public Administration and Management with responsibility for management training programmes. The Institute became an autonomous parastatal in 1993 when its role was expanded and it now provides training, research and consultancy to the public and private sectors.
- The introduction of loans and grants to individual public servants who undertake a course of study related to their professional development. Public servants may also be granted special leave from duty to undertake such studies.

- Agreements on a government-to-government basis (e.g. Canada, Britain and Australia) to provide for long- and short-term staff development courses abroad.
- Utilisation of training opportunities arising from Zimbabwe's membership of international organisations such as the UN, Commonwealth Secretariat, etc.

Implementing change

The National Training Policy for the Zimbabwe Public Service was released by the Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare in February 1995. The Policy covers the following:

- objectives and priorities for training at strategic level;
- management structures and allocation of responsibilities for training;
- training institutional structures and allocation of responsibilities;
- allocation and management of training resources;
- overall guidelines for determining training needs and prioritising them;
- the Management Development Programme for the senior ranks of the public service;
- the major elements of public service training, including new requirements for performance management;
- training methodology and support services;
- regional and international co-operation for training;

In bringing these elements together within one document, the intention is:

- to develop a concerted approach across the public service;
- to rationalise responsibilities;
- to improve training quality;
- to signal a government commitment to training.

Supporting material

- (i) **National Training Policy for the Zimbabwe Public Service Directorate of Training, Ministry of Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, February 1995**

- (ii) **Management Development Programme, IBID, March 1995**

1.3 Performance management and performance appraisal

The context for change

The Zimbabwe Government has accepted the introduction of performance management based on a revised annual performance appraisal system. The previous annual performance appraisal has been criticised over the years for its subjectivity. The various forms previously in use were completed annually by the "reporting officer" who was the immediate superior of the officer being reported on. The previous forms were not directly linked to the services being delivered by the particular section, department or ministry in which the officer being reported on worked. Reporting officers had an aversion to the task of appraising and when the appraisal forms were completed there was a reluctance to report negatively.

New appraisal forms are based on performance management and are built on agreed objectives between supervisors and subordinates.

Implementing change

In recent months the Public Service Commission decided to delegate some personnel/human resources management to ministries. This gives ministries increased sense of ownership and autonomy. Individual ministries and departments have their own service and clientele needs to which their management systems should respond.

This new approach was discussed at a workshop organised by the Public Service Commission in January 1994. The new performance appraisal system builds on locally determined targets and objectives of ministries. The system has the following objectives:

- to provide the manager and the subordinate with two-way communication and feedback;
- to provide every person with the opportunity to know what is expected of him/her;
- to identify training and/or development needs and further assess opportunities for future potential/promotability;
- to ensure efficiency and professional conduct;

- to answer the question "how am I doing" by providing a record of progress or difficulties and an opportunity for commending good work, pointing out deficiencies, and exploring possibilities for improvement;
- to reduce favouritism;
- to set agreed performance objectives for each person at the beginning of each appraisal period (e.g. annually) and provide feedback against these objectives at the end of the appraisal period;
- to assist in relating pay to performance.

Resistance to change was to be expected and has expressed itself in:

- the belief that some government services cannot really be measured in performance terms;
- a reluctance to plan ahead and a crisis management culture;
- the feeling by many junior public servants that they are at the mercy of their superiors who can interrupt their planned work schedule at will.

A revised performance appraisal form and supporting documentation was issued in June 1995. The new performance appraisal system introduces performance measurement based on previously agreed objectives between the subordinate and his superior. It offers an opportunity for dialogue between public servant and manager, and serves to identify obstacles to good performance. The new system provides a linkage between government objectives at national level, ministerial and departmental objectives and individual goals. There are plans to link the new Performance Appraisal system to all increases in salary as well as to performance awards. Although no final decisions have been made on the subject of performance awards, the following scenario might apply:

- those who receive ratings above a three (on a one to five rating scale – with five being the highest rating) may receive a normal increment to their salary plus a cost of living increase;
- those with a four rating would get the same increment as those with a three rating plus a performance award in addition to the cost of living increase;
- those with a five rating would get the same increment as those with a four except their performance award would be doubled.

- those with a rating of one would be placed on a three-month contract to improve their performance. If performance improves they would receive their normal increment. If, however, they did not improve, they would be released from the service.
- those with a two rating would be given a one-year contract to improve, with the same consequences as a one rating except that the judgement on their improvement would be determined after one year rather than three months.

Supporting material

- (i) Public Service Review Commission of Zimbabwe, May 1989
- (ii) Performance Management Workshop by Price Waterhouse Consultants presented to the Public Service of Zimbabwe, January 1994
- (iii) Guide to introduction of new performance appraisal system, June 1995
- (iv) Corporate Plans, various ministries (drafted between December 1994 and October 1995)

1.4 Achieving a mission orientation

Mission orientation is the sense of coherent direction and common objectives for personnel working in the same organisation, enabling the individual energy and initiative of personnel to be harnessed fully.

The context for change

The Office of the President and Cabinet initiated the writing of mission statements in all ministries and departments in order to focus all public servants on the core business of government. All ministries and their related departments and parastatals have now produced mission statements, which indicate why they exist and the range of services they provide.

A recent study revealed that managers were convinced of the need for clear and explicit organisational goals. Senior managers expressed the desire to set goals in consultation with their staff which should be periodically reviewed.

A mission orientation is designed to:

- clarify the purpose of the ministry or service in the minds of management, so that priorities are identified;
- ensure that staff are clear about the purpose of their jobs in meeting organisational goals;
- make clear the government policy of the day to avoid misinterpretation;
- strengthen in staff a sense of pride and belonging to an organisation with a purpose and direction;
- identify for each ministry or business unit, a target so that outcomes can be evaluated.

Implementing change

It is essential that key stakeholders and managers in the organisations concerned be committed to the concept of mission orientation.

Potential obstacles include the following:

- lack of training in mission orientation at middle and lower management levels;
- failure of management to take the results of orientation seriously;
- failure of senior management to show commitment.

The following stages in introducing mission orientation have been identified as necessary:

- senior management participation in facilitated workshops, including attendance at workshops for their subordinates;
- the focus of the workshops must be to establish where the ministry or department should be in five years' time;
- organisational aims should be clearly identified;
- these aims should be fully discussed with ministers and staff;
- the development of a full programme of publicity.

By following these stages, ministries within the Zimbabwe public service now have:

- "superordinate" mission statements – describing the overarching goals of all ministries;
- "subordinate" mission statements – describing the objectives of each department in a ministry in line with the corporate plan for their respective ministry;
- a list of desired outcomes – the changes which the ministries' activities are seeking to achieve;
- a list of the functions of the ministries – what they actually do to bring about those outcomes.

A permanent structure known as the Review Panel and comprising the Senior Secretary for Administration in the Office of the President, the Senior Secretary for Finance, the Senior Secretary for Local Government and Urban Development, the Secretary for the Public Service Commission, the Secretary for Public Service, Labour and Social Welfare, the Secretary for Foreign Affairs, the Head of

Administration for the Ministry of Finance, the Head of Planning for the National Economic Planning Commission, and the Head of the Monitoring and Evaluation Department in the Office of the President and Cabinet (as the Secretary), and chaired by the Chief Secretary to the President and Cabinet, has been established to monitor and review the progress of the administrative and economic reform programmes of government. The panel facilitates the pace of the reforms and ensures that the programmes undertaken by government are co-ordinated effectively through a Monitoring and Implementation Department in the Office of the President and Cabinet.

A National Forum (National Development Council) comprising government and private sectors will be established primarily to facilitate and increase the pace of dialogue and adoption of a shared vision between government and the private sector.

Supporting material

Corporate Plans for all ministries that include mission statements and strategic organisational objectives, 1994/95

1.5 Improving workforce size control

The context for change

In January 1991 the Government of Zimbabwe issued a policy document on the Economic Reform Programme. One element of this Economic Reform was the reduction of government expenditure, requiring a reduction in the public sector workforce. Salaries and wages represent the largest portion of government expenditure. The Government announced that it would reduce its 184,000 workforce by 23,000 by July 1995.

Implementing change

It was noted that, ideally, this exercise required:

- adequate monitoring of staff recruitment and exit;
- monitoring of service quality;
- improved salaries for those public servants who remain in the service.

The latter requirement has presented difficulties because of financial constraints.

Since the Government of Zimbabwe initiated the policy of reducing the public service, 18,000 public service posts have been abolished. By February 1996, the public service had been reduced by 23,552. This reduction was achieved by offering generous redundancy packages to those officers whose jobs were deemed inessential. The programme has attracted some controversy as it was not always the least productive who took advantage of the scheme.

The "right sizing" of the public service is a continuous exercise which will be achieved through on-going programmes of commercialisation, privatisation, efficiency and effectiveness measures and decentralisation. Under the decentralisation programme, the Rural District Councils are expected to assume greater responsibility for the delivery of selected social services, including education and health.

Supporting material

- (i) Framework for Economic Reform (1991-1995)
- (ii) Civil Service Reform: Fiscal and Budgetary Implications (Ministry of Finance)

1.6 Monitoring Performance

Improvement in performance can only be sustained if it is closely monitored. In an effort to assist heads of ministries in maintaining the momentum of the reform programme, the Public Service Commission of Zimbabwe now takes a direct interest in monitoring and supervising the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of civil servants. To this extent, the Commission has put in place a mechanism whereby each Commissioner oversees the functional and organisational matters in a specific group of ministries.

The Commission will focus on monitoring attendance of civil servants, processing performance appraisal forms, measuring performance and reviewing government regulations and procedures. This will involve random inspections, the installation of clocking systems, examining attendance registers analysing the possibility of abuse of sick leave.

Monitoring of the processing of appraisal forms would also involve the auditing of the whole performance appraisal system. The Commission would be able to determine the appropriate performance standards for the various tasks in ministries and ensure that the set performance standards are complied with by carrying out performance work measurement exercises.

Functional and organisational reviews will be undertaken to enable the Commission to establish areas of duplication or overlap of functions within and between ministries and take steps to eliminate them.

Some government policies and regulations are being reviewed in a bid to identify those that may negatively impact on the performance, efficiency and effectiveness of civil servants. For example, the policy on the engagement for profit by civil servants is under review.