

FOREWORD

A strong and achieving public service is a necessary condition for a competitively successful nation. The Management and Training Services Division (MTSD) of the Commonwealth Secretariat assists member governments to improve the performance of the public service through action-oriented advisory services, policy analysis and training. This assistance is supported by funds from the Commonwealth Fund for Technical Co-operation. (CFTC).

Commonwealth co-operation in public administration is facilitated immeasurably by the strong similarities that exist between all Commonwealth countries in relation to the institutional landscape and the underlying principles and values of a neutral public service. In mapping current and emerging best practices in public service management, the Management and Training Services Division has been able to draw on the most determined, experienced and successful practitioners, managers and policy-makers across the Commonwealth. Their experiences are pointing the way to practical strategies for improvement.

The publication series, *Managing the Public Service: Strategies for Improvement*, provides the reader with access to the experiences and the successes of elected and appointed officials from across the Commonwealth.

Records management is becoming an important instrument of the management of change process upon which modern management principles and practices depend. The success of the public sector reforms that are taking place in many Commonwealth countries depends on the extent to which records and information have been organised and stored. They are instrumental in interpreting the past as well as forecasting and planning for the future.

The Secretariat has been receiving an increased number of requests from member states for assistance in the area of records and information management. This publication is intended as a contribution to the improvement of managing records. New methodologies have been explored, tested and implemented.

The series complements other MTSD publications, particularly the *Public Service Country Profile* series which provides a country-by-country analysis of current good practices and new developments in public service management. Our aim is to provide practical guidance and to encourage critical evaluation. The *Public Service Country Profile* series sets out the **where** and the **what** in public service management. With this new *Strategies for Improvement* series, I believe that we are providing the **how**.

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