



## GOVERNMENT OF KIRIBATI

GoK(12)DPF.2.4

### DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FORUM

*Tarawa, Kiribati*  
25 – 27 June 2012

#### AGENDA ITEM 2.4 Civil Service Reform Strategies

##### Purpose

1. This paper provides the issues surrounding the performance of the civil service in Kiribati and strategies developed to address these.

##### Background

2. Over the 32 years since independence in 1979 the Kiribati Public Service has grown from a number of 111 staff to 4,536 in 2011, not counting employees in the SOEs. The Government operates most services in the country and despite increasing private sector activity in wholesaling, retailing, land and sea transportation, the Government plays a predominant role in basic services such as health, education, telecommunication and others. Given this high reliance on the public service for essential services it is imperative that the performance of the public service is efficient and effective.

##### Issues

3. The main problem now faced is that the civil service is perceived to be ineffective. The main issues identified from studies and reviews done in the past are as follows:
  - The managerial framework within which the public service operates is based on concepts that are outdated and encourage complacency and in-competence.
  - Performance throughout the public service is deteriorating as can be observed from quality of output and complaints from clients of the civil service.
  - The size of the civil service needs to be rationalized to achieve the best use of resources.
  - Absence of accurate and timely data to inform good workforce planning and human resources development prioritization
  - The civil service needs to be up-skilled with the necessary capacity building programs for public servants in order to meet the wider public service needs.

3. To address the above issues a Reform Strategy has been developed and presented to Cabinet. This document attached as Annex 1 has been adopted as the way forward and will be implemented over the next four years, but more work is required to clearly set out envisioned outcomes and detailed activities to be pursued.

### **Recommendations**

4. The forum is invited to note the attached document and requested to consider providing appropriate support in development of a realistic strategic plan that will set out clear directives on how to progress in this area.

Government of Kiribati  
3 -4 April 2012

**Annex 1**

**Background**

1. Past Kiribati reform attempts over the last three decades have mainly been in the areas of financial management, including improvement of tax and revenue administration, and civil service improvement. Both these themes involved or will require legal strengthening and the broader cross-cutting governance issues, such as transparency and anti-corruption
2. In the early 2000 there was some work done to improve efficiency of the civil service and administrative policy framework. Examples of activities in this area included the placing of Secretaries on contract, introduction of new human resources management systems in the recruitment and selection processes, to name a few. In the area of transparency and accountability the introduction of the leadership code was one of the activities done, but this did not succeed.
3. A crude assessment of how we have progressed over the years show there has been improved performance in the financial management dimensions however there is little improvement in the revenue administration, good governance and civil service areas. This is the trend for many other countries where marked improvements are notable in financial administration and revenue administration and transparency but not usually for the civil service reforms and rare success for anti-corruption measures. This can be attributed to many reasons, including the lack of political will, unfocused direction and coordination and absence of a well accepted plan on how to progress forward.
4. In 2003 a general review of the public service was undertaken followed by another one in 2004 dealing specifically with conditions of Secretaries and improving the NCS. In 2005, a report was prepared by an AusAID funded consultant, Peter Breadmore, to offer further strategies to implement recommendations of the first two reviews.

5. The Breadmore report has not officially been adopted and little has been done to implement its findings. This could be interpreted to indicate there is no real need for improvement or perhaps the recommendations offered are too ambitious and un-practical for Kiribati or maybe there was no clear support for the reform process.

7. The public complaints and grievances expressed in Parliament and through other mediums is evidence enough that the Kiribati civil service is not performing to the expectations of its clients. Furthermore, economic constraints over the last decade compel us to do more with less. The size of the public service cannot forever continue to grow as it is not responding to the needs of the people. The findings of the reviews mentioned above point out important shortcomings in our administrative system and the civil service culture. Hence, we can confidently pronounce the clear need to transform the Kiribati civil service as it is vital for the long term well being of the country.

#### **HOW DO WE PURSUE SUCCESSFUL RENEWAL?**

8. Building on from the Breadmore report, the Public Service Office (PSO) has developed a draft plan (Annex 1) that sets out identified issues and challenges, possible strategies to address these and activities/actions to implement the strategies.

Some strategies of the reform was featured in the last Kiribati Development Plan 2008-2011 under the Governance Key Policy Area (KPA) but it was slow to get off the ground due to funding constraints as was evidenced in the unfunded projects of PSO since 2008.

9. It is also important to note that the Public Service Renewal agenda must not be pursued by PSO alone. However PSO must take responsibility for developing a strategic approach and must also kick start the renewal agenda. While recognizing that individual Ministries and Agencies focus on specific and technical areas relevant to their sectors, there are common Public Administration and Human Resources issues that require addressing right across the Government civil service. All public servants are responsible for the improvement of their performance and delivery. All Secretaries and Heads of agencies have a vital role to play in the process and the best way to make this process work is to build reform into Ministry and Department plans, as it is crucial to have an integrated whole of Government approach.

## **A STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

The following strategies are presented for consideration to be implemented within the next KDP period and beyond:

### **1. Improvement/Strengthened Legislative and Policy Framework**

#### *a) Review of Public Service Commission and PSO Functions*

- *Consider amalgamation of PSC and PSO*
- *Review of PSC Functions Act – expand role of PSC beyond appointments and discipline*
- *Devolving administrative responsibilities to line Ministries and Agencies*

#### *b) Introduction of Public Service Act*

The need for a PS Act needs to be determined.

#### *c) Establishing clear procedures and systems*

- *Revitalising National Condition of Service*

There should be a comprehensive review of the NCS in order to confirm clearly defined and enforceable conditions of employment and where there is a need for change, appropriate changes must be developed.

### **2. Improved governance and best practice systems and processes**

#### *a) Improved Customer Services.*

- Ministries to develop customer service improvement plan and the senior managers to make staff accountable for their duties.
- Clear standards of service for all ministries (service charters)
- Improving coordination of Government services on outer islands and Kiritimati
- Customer Service Improvement Plan
- Customer Complaints Handling System

#### *b) Integrated Performance Management Framework.*

- Development and implementation of a Performance Management Framework,
- Development and approval of the Code of Ethics / Code of Conduct and Professional standards.
- Job Descriptions to be reviewed and Performance Indicators to be included within Job Descriptions.
- Regular supervision, rewards and consequences for performance.
- Delegation of management responsibilities to reinforce the need for accountability and performance (including staffing and budget matters)
- Improving coordination of Government services on outer islands and Kiritimati.
- Induction training to be run for all new staff to ensure an understanding of rights and responsibilities.

*c) Rationalizing the Public Service*

- Restructure the public service into a lean, affordable and efficient service that is able to deliver.
- Ministries and agencies to rationalize and streamline the roles and structures to improve the machinery of government, remove duplication, reduce overhead costs and improve services.

*d) Development of Reliable Management Information Systems*

- Use of ICT in developing MIS
- IT standards and professional networking.
- Government wide network.
- Government portal and intranet.
- Full integrated human resources management systems to be used as a rich source of information for workforce planning activities.

### **3. Capacity Building Programmes**

The HR and Public Administration Professional Development programmes derived from the National HRD plan identify the following as relevant:-

- i. Financial Management and auditing
- ii. Policy Development and Implementation
- iii. Change Management
- iv. Project Management
- v. Human Resource Management
- vi. Customers Services
- vii. Performance Management
- viii. Job Evaluation systems
- ix. Records Management
- x. HR data collection and analysis
- xi. Leadership skills
- xii. Train the Trainers