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MINISTRY OF CIVIL SERVICE AFFAIRS
AND ADMINISTRATIVE REFORMS
MAURITIUS

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Secretary for Public Service Affairs

Supervising Officers in Charge of Ministries/Departments

Staff Suggestion Scheme in the Civil Service

In line with the Reform Initiatives highlighted in this Ministry's Action Plan 2001-2003 "Towards the Modernisation of the Public Service", this Ministry is proposing to implement a Staff Suggestion Scheme.

2. The overall objective of the Staff Suggestion Scheme is to encourage creativity and innovation amongst public officers so that they can contribute effectively individually or as a team in the quality improvement efforts. The Scheme will provide an opportunity to draw on the potential and ability of creativity and innovativeness inherent in every employee, for the benefit of the whole Civil Service.
3. Details regarding the Scheme as well as guidelines for Awards are provided in the Annexes.
4. The financial rewards attached to the Scheme will initially be met from this Ministry's vote.
5. It would be appreciated if the officers at all levels serving in your Ministry/Department could be informed about the Scheme so as to provide equal opportunities for participation to every public officer. I welcome your views and suggestions on the scheme which may be forwarded to the Administrative Reforms Unit by 13 January 2003.
6. It is proposed to implement the Staff Suggestion Scheme as from Monday, 03 March 2003.

(D. P. Ruhee)

Secretary for Public Service Affairs

Copy to: Secretary to Cabinet and Head of the Civil Service

STAFF SUGGESTION SCHEME IN THE CIVIL SERVICE

Background

1. The Staff Suggestion Scheme is one of the reform projects in the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms' (MCSA & AR) Action Plan 2001-2003 "Towards the Modernization of the Public Service". It is a component of the Public Sector Initiatives for Excellence (PSIE) project which was initiated by the MCSA & AR. The Scheme provides numerous useful inputs to the quality improvement process of an organisation in the form of ideas which can be the basis for implementing quality efforts and increasing productivity in the Civil Service.
2. As part of its implementation process, the MCSA & AR had prepared a comprehensive working paper on the rationale and benefit of the Staff Suggestion Scheme in November 2001 and it was circulated to Supervising Officers of Ministries for their views and comments. Most of the Ministries had responded very positively to the implementation of the Staff Suggestion Scheme in the Public Service.

3. **Objective**

The Staff Suggestion Scheme aims at the following:-

- (a) assisting Ministries and Departments in implementing strategies for quality improvements in their respective organizations;
- (b) promoting and further enhance the ability of an organisation to new, creative and innovative approaches to improve the quality of its services to the public;
- (c) setting the evaluation criteria and scope of suggestions that will be accepted; and
- (d) formulating guidelines for recognition and awards for suggestions.

4. **Implementation of the Staff Suggestion Scheme**

Ministries/Departments are urged to introduce innovation or new ideas in all aspects of work to produce quality services. The Staff Suggestion Scheme is an incentive system to encourage public officers to make suggestions for improvement on Civil Service efficiency. Through the suggestion system employees are free to make concrete suggestions on seeking ways to eliminate the root cause of problems which arise in the course of their daily work.

1

5. The Staff Suggestion Scheme would be implemented at two levels:

(i) At Ministry/Departmental Level

Each Ministry/Department will set up its Staff Suggestion Committee to consider suggestions for improving its own operations and/or management.

Departmental Staff Suggestion Committees set up in Ministries/Departments will consider suggestions for improving and streamlining operations and/or management in Ministries/Departments. Apart from general suggestions, the Ministry/Department may select, in turn, a specific activity area or a work unit within the department as the "theme" for staff suggestions.

The Ministry/Departmental Staff Suggestion Committee should normally be chaired by the Head of Ministry/Department with other representatives. Depending on the 'subject matter' to be considered, other professionals or staff may be co-opted to the Committee as required.

The membership and terms of reference of the Ministry/Departmental Staff Suggestion Committee are set out in *Annexes I and II*.

(ii) At Central Level

A Central Staff Suggestions Committee will be set up in the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms to consider improvements having civil service-wide implications and proposals which concern all Ministries/Departments.

The Central Staff Suggestions Committee (CSSC) set up in the Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms will consider efficiency and improvement suggestions with service wide implications from all *employees* of the Civil Service. The Ministry will act as a focal point for the service wide suggestions as well as a repository of *innovative ideas bank* to review and internalise those suggestions and innovations that can be implemented by all Ministries and Departments in the Public Service.

The innovative ideas bank will be a database bank, which will contain innovative ideas, and suggestions that can be implemented service wide as well as suggestions implemented at the Ministry/Department level. In this context, Ministries and Departments are requested to forward all suggestions, which have been accepted and implemented at the Ministry/Department level for inclusion in the database bank.

The membership and terms of reference of the Central Staff Suggestions Committee are at *Annexes III and IV*.

6. Evaluation criteria/Scope of Suggestions

Suggestions directed towards the following objectives are welcome. The criteria, which will be used in evaluating the benefits that accrue from suggestions, are as follows:

- (a) improve or make the best use of resources, materials, energy or time;
- (b) improve process efficiency and service standards;
- (c) reduce paperwork, reduce repetitive work, simplify and improve office practice, procedures and forms;
- (d) attain higher efficiency by improving the morale of staff and motivating their interest in work;
- (e) eliminate or reduce wastage;
- (f) save costs or reduce operational costs;
- (g) improve quality of service or output or increase customer satisfaction; and
- (h) reduce corruption opportunities in office procedures and suggest ways to overcome the weaknesses identified, or corruption prevention measures.

A suggestion will not be normally accepted if it is:

- A grievance or a complaint relating to terms/conditions of service
- Criticisms directed at other staff
- A solution to a problem created by the officer himself, e.g. error rates, inefficiency.

7. Submission of Suggestions

Suggestions can be made individually or as a team. Suggestions submitted by a third party on behalf of the originator of the suggestions can also be considered. Suggestions should state a clearly identified problem and the particular solution proposed and the benefits to be derived.

Suggestions concerning a Ministry/Department should be sent to the *Secretary, Staff Suggestion Committee of the particular Ministry/Department* using the form as in Appendix A.

Suggestions with service-wide implications or relating to policy issues should be directed to the *Secretary, Central Staff Suggestions Committee, Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms*, using the form as in Appendix B.

These service wide suggestions may include those that:

- (a) Involve national policies;
- (b) Involve cooperation and numerous inputs from other Ministries and Departments for its implementation;
- (c) Involve a lot of resources in its implementation such as financial allocations and establishments; and
- (d) Can be implemented by other Ministries and Departments as well.

Where a suggestion involves more than one department, it should be addressed to the department of the major concern with a copy to the Secretary, Central Staff Suggestions Committee. Ministries and Departments should help their staff in sorting out the target department or whether it involves service wide, should they have any problems.

8. Processing of Suggestions

Upon receipt of a suggestion, it should be properly and promptly recorded, acknowledged and referred to relevant divisions/departments/bodies for comments before being considered by the Departmental or Central Staff Suggestions Committee. An interim reply should be given. When a decision is made by the Committee, the proposer(s) of the suggestion should be notified in writing as soon as possible.

9. Awards

The level of award for meritorious suggestions should be determined according to the guidelines set out in *Annex V*. For meritorious cases, a summary of the suggestion and a note on the award made should be placed on the officer's personal file/appraisal report form.

Awards could be presented by the Chairman of the Central Suggestions Committee or Departmental Staff Suggestion Committee, with suitable publicity, either through internal circulars, newsletters, or special announcements befitting the type of suggestion.

10. Publicity

The success of the Staff Suggestion Scheme depends very much on the Ministries and Departments collaboration to seek the co-operation of staff and management. The scheme should therefore be given the widest possible publicity and staff should be sensitized and encouraged to offer their contribution. The Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms will produce a pamphlet which will give a brief description of the rationale and benefit of the Staff Suggestion Scheme. These pamphlets will be available for distribution to the staff of the Ministries/Departments

11. Follow up on Implementation of suggestions

The Administrative Reforms Unit, Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms, will act as the Secretariat for Staff Suggestion Scheme Award. Ministries and Departments are requested to forward brief reports pertaining to the implementation of the suggestion to the Secretariat for follow up action and for inclusion in the database bank. The reports submitted should include three aspects, as follows:

- (a) The situation before the implementation of the suggestions/innovation;
- (b) The suggestion itself; and
- (c) The benefits obtained as a result of the implementation of the suggestion.

In certain cases, a team of officials may visit the Ministry/Department concerned and verify that the suggestion has been implemented and benefits have been realised as reported.

Membership of the Ministry/Departmental Staff Suggestion

Chairman:

Head of Ministry/Department
Principal Assistant Secretary/Deputy Head of Department (Alternate Chairman)
Ministry/Departmental professional
Desk Officer
Union representative

Secretary: Officer of the Ministry/Department

Annex II

Terms of Reference of the Ministry/Departmental Staff Suggestion Committee

- (a) To receive, consider and award suggestions which are related to the Ministry/Department, from individual members or any group of civil servants for:
 - (i) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the Ministry/Department;
 - (ii) improving the quality of service to the public; and/or
 - (iii) achieving financial savings/gains in revenue.
- (b) To promote the Scheme by various publicity measures at departmental level.
- (c) To follow up on the implementation of the suggestions accepted by the committee

Membership of the Central Staff Suggestions Committee

Chairman:

Secretary for Public Service Affairs, Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms

Other members:

Permanent Secretary- Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms (Alternate Chairman)

A representative from each of the following organisations:

- ☞ Prime Minister's Office
- ☞ Ministry of Finance
- ☞ Management Audit Bureau
- ☞ Federation of Civil Service Unions

Co-opted Members :On a need basis, depending on the subject matter, as decided by the Chairman

Secretary: Officer in charge of Administrative Reforms Unit

Terms of Reference - Central Staff Suggestions Committee

- (a) To receive, consider and award suggestions, with service-wide implications or those related to civil service from individual members or any group of civil servants for:
 - (i) improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the service;
 - (ii) improving the quality of service to the public; and/or
 - (iii) achieving financial savings/gains in revenue.
- (b) To promote the Scheme at service-wide level
- (c) To recommend and follow up on the implementation of the suggestions accepted by the committee.

Staff Suggestion Scheme - Guidelines for Awards

The type and level of award is determined by the extent of improvement in efficiency or effectiveness likely to be brought about by a suggestion based on the scope of suggestion outlined and the criteria for evaluation. In making such an assessment, regard will be given not only to financial savings but also to all potential benefits which adoption of the suggestions is expected to produce. Relatively simple suggestions may attract high awards if considerable benefits can be demonstrated.

Category of Award /Level of Award /Guidelines for Award

There are various awards and recognition that can be given and in various forms or combination thereof such as:

- (a) Letters of appreciation
- (b) Civil Service Souvenirs/ Departmental Souvenirs
- (c) Certificates of Commendation
- (d) Presentation of a medal or an award
- (e) Nominal Cash Awards based on the benefits to be derived
- (f) Recognition be recorded in the officer's personal file

In making such awards there is a need to determine what awards will really encourage public officers to come up with innovative ideas or practical suggestions to improve overall efficiency and effectiveness of the service. As a further motivation such awards could also be presented at a special ceremony to honour the recipient as well as publicity given in the Department's magazine and the Civil Service newsletter. In exceptional cases national awards could also be considered for 'meritorious service'.

Option 1 – Non- cash award/ recognition

Awards and recognition can be given in the form of certificates of commendation, letters of appreciation, medals, awards in kind and national awards as well recognition which will be recorded in the officer's personal file

Option 2 - Cash awards if these are decided upon

Symbolic cash awards can be given, based on the following criteria:

Nominal Award

Rs 1,000 where a suggestion is likely to bring about –

- (a) a minor improvement in service efficiency or effectiveness;
- (b) a minor improvement in the quality of service to the public; and/or
- (c) minor financial savings/gains in revenue of not more than Rs50,000.*

Moderate Award

Rs 2,000 where a suggestion is likely to bring about –

- (a) moderate improvement in service efficiency or effectiveness;
- (b) moderate improvement in the quality of service to the public; and/or
- (c) moderate financial savings/gains in revenue between Rs50,000 and Rs100,000.*

Substantial Award

Rs 5,000 where a suggestion is likely to bring about –

- (a) substantial degree of improvement in service efficiency or effectiveness;
- (b) substantial degree of improvement in the quality of service to the public; and/or
- (c) substantial financial savings/gains in revenue of over Rs100,000 - Rs1,000,000 .*

Very Substantial Award

Rs 10,000 where a suggestion is likely to bring about –

Very substantial financial savings/gains in revenue of over Rs1,000,000.*

* (Note : Financial savings or gains in revenue refer to either an estimated one-off sum or annual recurrent value)

Certificate of Commendation

Certificates of Commendation may be awarded in addition to cash awards or in isolation.

Staff Suggestion Scheme Form - For Continuous Improvements

To be submitted to the Secretary, Staff Suggestion Committee at Ministry/Department

Name of Officer: _____	
Position: _____	
Name of Department/Unit: _____	
Title of Suggestion _____	
Current Situation: _____	
Suggestion to Improve Quality: _____	
Benefits: _____	
Date:	Signature of Officer.....
<i>For Office Use Only</i> <i>Ref.</i> <i>Date received.</i> <i>Date acknowledged</i>	

Suggestion with Service-Wide Implications or Relating to Policy Issues

To be forwarded to the Secretary, Central Staff Suggestions Committee, Ministry of Civil Service Affairs and Administrative Reforms, 7th Floor, New Government Centre, Port Louis or email to: mcsa-arur@mail.gov.mu

a. Name of Officer _____
b. Ministry/Department _____
c. Type of Suggestion _____ _____ _____
d. Background of Suggestion _____ _____ _____
e. Description of Suggestion _____ _____
f. Benefits Accruing _____ _____
g. Cost Implications (if any) _____
i. Financial _____
ii. Establishment _____
iii. Others _____
Signature of Officer
Date:.....