

**Consolidated Report**  
**on**  
**Performance**  
**Management System**  
**Quality Review**

# PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

## INTRODUCTION

In the context of modernization of the Public Service, the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms has been spearheading the implementation and sustenance of Performance Management System (PMS), which is one of the major reform initiatives undertaken by Government. It was introduced in 2006 with a view to inculcating a performance-oriented culture in the Civil Service, which is in line with its vision for “a professional public service committed to excellence”.

## Extension to whole Civil Service

The system was gradually extended to the whole Civil Service and was formalised in 2013.

## 2. Developments

- As from January 2013:
  - The Annual Confidential Report of 1963 was phased out.
  - The Performance Appraisal System, which is a component of the PMS, is the official instrument used to assess individual performance.
  - The grant of annual increment is performance-based.
  - Filling of Performance Appraisal Form (PAF) is mandatory; the reporting system of the Public Commission Service comprises, inter alia, the appraisal form used in the context of PMS.
- 2016: Introduction of Executive Performance Management Review (EPMR)
  - In July 2016, the EPMR for Supervising Officers (SOs) of Ministries/Departments became mandatory.

The EPMR applies to SOs of Ministries/Departments and ensures that the highest levels of the Civil Service are captured under the PMS. It requires SOs to report on their key commitments and on generic areas of management such as strategic management, management of public funds, people management, management of public sector reforms and management of projects. It also ensures that Key

Performance Indicators (KPIs) are developed for the main services and priority projects of respective Ministries/Departments.

### **3. Annual monitoring reports**

Since the formal implementation of the system in the Civil Service in 2013, a feedback mechanism has been devised to collect relevant information that helps to assess its effectiveness. PMS annual monitoring reports issued in September 2014, October 2015 and April 2017, have led to the identification of some important challenges ahead. These range from a lack of consistency in PMS implementation and poorly developed work plans (Performance Agreements), to mismatch between individual Performance Standards and organisational KPIs.

If left unaddressed, these issues may negatively affect the credibility and effectiveness of the PMS, and undermine the overall performance of the service as well.

### **4. PMS Quality Review**

Based on the findings of the monitoring exercises, a PMS Quality Review procedure was developed in 2016, focusing on the quality aspect of the system. It is a systematic approach geared towards PMS sustenance through quality improvements of various aspects of PMS.

The purpose of the Quality Review Exercise (QRE) is to :

- (i) ensure the quality and consistency of PMS implementation in the public service;
- (ii) ascertain compliance with set procedures; and
- (iii) ensure the quality of performance information generated through appraisal exercises.

### **5. Scope and Methodology**

For the purpose of conducting the QRE, a Quality Improvement Checklist (form) detailing all the verifiable steps and processes involved in the Performance Management Cycle (PMC), has been prepared. The Checklist facilitates the systematic gathering of information pertaining to:

- (i) definition of organizational and unit objectives ( Strategic/Action Plan);
- (ii) compliance with established procedures and timelines;
- (iii) contents of Performance Agreements; and
- (iv) quality of information generated.

A copy of the Quality Review Form comprising the Checklist is at **Annex I**.

A stratified sampling method has been adopted to carry out the exercise, relating to the PMC July 2015 to June 2016.

## **6. Ministries/Departments covered by the QRE**

The QRE was piloted at the Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms, and it proved to be a valuable exercise. It was, therefore, decided to extend it, in the first instance, to seven (7) other Ministries/Departments as follows:

- (i) Registrar General's Department
- (ii) Ministry of Business, Enterprise and Cooperatives (Cooperatives Division)
- (iii) Statistics Mauritius
- (iv) Prime Minister's Office (Home Affairs Division)
- (v) Ministry of Environment, Sustainable Development and Disaster and Beach Management
- (vi) Mauritius Fire & Rescue Services (Head Office)
- (vii) Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security (Head Office)

After completion of each of the exercise, a copy of the relevant report was forwarded to the respective Ministry/Department for necessary action at its end. The onus rests upon the organisation to implement the recommendations in order to bring improvements in the system.

## **7. Consolidated Report**

The exercise carried out in the eight Ministries/Departments revealed major issues that are common to all of them; these are, inter alia, poorly developed work plans, non-compliance to timeframe set for the different phases, and lack of commitment to the system, starting from officers at senior management level and cascading down the hierarchical levels.

It was, therefore, deemed necessary that a consolidated report of the findings in the eight organisations and the recommendations made, be prepared and circulated to all Ministries/Departments, so that it can be used as a guide to remedy the prevailing situation.

## **7.2 Timeline for different phases of PMC**

The appraisal period consists of three distinct phases, namely the Performance Agreement (PA), Mid-Term Appraisal and Final Appraisal. Each phase has its own importance. Performance Management involves much more than appraising and rating. It also includes planning the work (activities to be performed for the year including the standards), monitoring progress and developing the employee's potential to achieve the standards set. Hence, when all the sections in the PAF are filled at the same time, it defeats the purpose of performance management.

### ***Findings:***

- At this stage, several scenarios have been noted:
  - (i) Some officers have not complied with the timeframe set by the Ministries/Departments and PAs have been signed, and appraisals have been carried out, after the set timeframe.
  - (ii) The three phases of the PMC (PA, Mid-Term Appraisal and Final Appraisal) have been signed on the same date.
  - (iii) PA and Mid-term have been signed on the same date.

### **Recommendations:**

- Appraisers/appraisees should be advised to fill in appropriate sections of the PAFs within specific period indicated by management.
- Thrice yearly, after the completion of each phase of the PMC, strict monitoring should be effected at two levels; by the HR Section and by the Reform Cell Sub-Committee on PMS.
- Any non-compliance should be reported to management and the explanations, in writing, of the relevant parties, including the Heads of Sections, should be sought.
- After allowing for reasonable delay following expiry of deadlines, HR Section should query and seek explanations of appraisees for non-compliance through Heads of Sections who should make a thorough follow-up with officers concerned. Issuing reminder to each of these officers will avoid non-compliance problems which arise when they are being requested same verbally.

- The onus for completing the different phases of the PMC within set deadlines should be laid on the respective Heads of Sections who would hence be accountable for any non-compliance.

### **7.3 Filling of PAFs**

#### **Page 1 (first part) and Section 1: Personal Data**

These should be accurately filled in by the appraisee.

#### ***Findings:***

- (i) At the very outset, the PMC period has been wrongly inserted.
- (ii) The name/grade of either the appraiser or Next Level Supervisor (NLS) has not been inserted.
- (iii) In several cases officers have not filled in all required information, such as date of birth, date of posting, present appointment, posting (Unit/Division), and qualifications.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Appraisers should check, from the beginning of the PMC, the filled-in PAFs of their appraisees so that incomplete or wrong filling of PAF is detected, and remedial actions taken accordingly.

### **7.4 Performance Agreement**

#### **> Section 3: Work Plan**

The work plan which is the heart of the system needs to be well developed for each officer and aligned with strategic objectives of the Unit/Organisation. Key Result Areas (KRAs), Key Tasks (KTs) and Performance Standards (PS) set solid foundation for the performance review and help ensuring that officers are pulling in the same direction to achieve organisational goals and objectives.

#### ***Findings:***

- (i) Most work plans have not been properly developed or contain shortcomings ranging from inappropriate KRAs and KT, to general and vague PS. In some cases, PS have

not been provided. A lack of uniformity and consistency in the terminology used has also been observed.

- (ii) KTs have not been listed as specified in section 3 of PAF.
- (iii) PS have not been developed according to SMART principles and they have been confused with KTs.
- (iv) In some cases, officers have annexed additional sheets to PAF regarding performance agreement. These sheets have not been signed and dated by either appraiser/appraisee or both.
- (v) Some PAs have not been signed and dated.
- (vi) In a few cases, a fourth column was added to the work plan.

### **Recommendations:**

- Appraisers and appraisees should be advised to develop work plans congruent with the Units/Divisions Action plan, otherwise the implementation of the PMS will not serve its purpose.
- The HR Section of the Ministry/Department can play a pivotal role in providing technical support to appraisers and appraisees, that is, review and improve work plans with emphasis on:
  - Alignment with organisational's objectives
  - Grouping of activities/tasks
  - SMART Principles while setting objectives
  - Consistency of Terminology
- Appraisees should be advised to list KTs as specified at Section 3 of PAF (to be numbered as 1, 2, 3. . . for each KT)
- The attention of appraisers/appraisees should be drawn to the fact that their signatures on the relevant parts of PAFs and any annexed pages are mandatory.
- The PAF is an official document and it should, in no way be modified (e.g. by adding a fourth column to the work plan).

## ➤ **Competencies**

Competencies refer to elements of knowledge, skill & attribute that are directly related to effective performance. Six generic competencies have been provided and are applicable to all officers. The seventh one, Management Skills, applies only to officers performing supervisory duties. Four factors have been developed for each generic competency to guide officers towards a desirable behaviour pattern and to facilitate its rating according to the four-level rating mechanism. Specific competencies, including their four factors, can be added under 'Other', where the need is felt.

### ***Findings:***

- (i) An additional competency has been identified, but the four factors have not been developed.

### **Recommendations:**

- HR Section should advise officers to develop the four factors in case a specific competency has been added, under 'Other' at section 3, Page 4 of the PAF.

## **7.5 Mid-Term Appraisal**

The mid-term appraisal is generally held between mid-November to mid-December or at least three months after signing Performance Agreement. It is carried out during a formal meeting between appraiser and appraisee.

### ***Findings:***

- (i) Mid-term has been carried out after the specified timeframe.
- (ii) PA and mid-term have been signed on the same date.
- (iii) Appraisers/appraisees have not signed the mid-term.

### **Recommendations:**

- Appraisers/appraisees should be advised to fill in appropriate sections of the PAFs within the specific period indicated by management.
- Appraisers and appraisees should be advised not to undermine the importance of carrying out the mid-term. It provides a forum for discussing and recording progress



made on the Performance Agreement, as well as for identifying shortcomings/recognising achievements and agreeing on remedial actions, or even preparation of a PIP.

- HR Section should inform all officers to fill in, date and sign all relevant parts of their PAFs.

## **7.6 Final Appraisal**

### **Section 5 – Final Appraisal - Self-Assessment**

This part is filled in by the appraisee to enable the latter to assess his/her own performance. It is a means to enlist the involvement, and encourage active participation of the appraisee during the appraisal meeting.

#### ***Findings:***

- (i) Some appraisees have not filled in the relevant parts of the Self-Assessment.

#### **Recommendations:**

- Completing all relevant parts of the Self-Assessment is important, so that the appraiser is aware of the appraisee's point of view regarding his/her own performance.

### **Section 6 – Final Appraisal – Progress Discussed and Recorded**

This section is filled in by the appraiser, after having taken cognisance of the Self-Assessment of the appraisee.

During a formal meeting, both the appraiser and the appraisee discuss the performance of the latter, relating to the PMC and the appraiser rates the officer's performance accordingly.

#### ***Findings:***

- (i) KRAs and KTAs have not been listed as specified at Section 6 of the PAF; only KRAs have been listed for rating.
- (ii) Rating has not been allocated to all KRAs/KTAs as listed in Section 3 of PAF.

- (iii) The rating mechanism specified on the PAF has not been followed; intermediate values have been allocated when rating Key Tasks or Competencies. In one case, an appraisee was allocated a rating of '5' for a specific competency, thus resulting in wrong computation of the overall score of performance. Moreover, a rating '5' does not exist in the rating mechanism.
- (iv) Some officers have been rated for 'Management Skills' though they do not perform supervisory duties, whereas in other cases, officers performing supervisory duties have not been rated on that particular competency.
- (v) Appraiser has not rated appraisee for 'Customer Focus'.
- (vi) The overall score of performance was rounded to one digit after the decimal point. This may lead to inconsistency in the level of overall score allocated.
- (vii) The overall performance of officers have been wrongly ticked by appraisers.
- (viii) NLS has inserted a comment at section 6 of the PAF.

### **Recommendations:**

- Appraisers and appraisees should be informed that all KRAs/KTs as listed in the work plan, should be reproduced at Section 6 of the PAF (as A1, A2 ...). In case the appraisee is no longer performing any of the KRAs/KTs, the appraiser should insert a note, signed and dated by both appraiser and appraisee.
- Appraisers should be advised to allocate rating in respect to both KRAs/KTs and Competencies in **whole numbers** only, according to the four-level rating, as stipulated in the Guidance Notes on the last page of the PAF. Appraisers and appraisees are advised to read the Guidance Notes on the last page of the PAF, before filling in the forms.
- Appraisers and appraisees should be advised that:
  - 'Management Skills' under section 3, page 4 of PAF applies only to officers performing supervisory duties.

- 'Customer Focus' is a generic competency and is applicable to all officers. Hence, appraisers should allocate rating for same. Appraisers should rate all competencies with the exception of Management Skills, depending on its applicability.
- Computation of 'Overall Score of Performance' should be rounded to two (2) digits after the decimal point instead of one (1), (for instance, if the overall score is 3.19, the definition thereof is "Good" whereas, when it is rounded to one (1) digit after the decimal point, that is 3.2, it moves to "Excellent"), particularly when this impacts on the "overall performance".  
Reference can be made to page 18 of Booklet "Performance Management in the Civil Service, Understanding Performance Appraisal Forms and Performance Improvement Plans".
- Appraisers should ensure that they tick the appropriate box for the overall performance.
- The NLS should be advised not to insert comments at Section 6 of the PAF. However, he/she may discuss with the appraiser and the appraisee in case he/she is not agreeable with the ratings and comments given by the appraiser.

## **7.7 Signatures on Performance Appraisal Forms**

### ***Findings:***

- (i) Appraisers/ appraisees have not signed the relevant parts.
- (ii) There are cases where:
  - date and signature of the NLS were missing, and
  - the appraiser has signed as the NLS.

### **Recommendations:**

- The attention of appraisers/appraisees should be drawn to the fact that their signatures on relevant parts of the PAFs are mandatory.
- As defined in the Guidance Notes on the last page of PAFs, the NLS is the immediate supervisor of the appraiser. He/she is required to take cognizance of the overall performance of the appraisee and he/she also acts as Moderator whenever there is a

conflict between appraiser and appraisee. Therefore, an appraiser cannot also act as NLS. Appraisers and appraisees should be advised accordingly.

## **7.8 Training Needs Identification**

PMS is a tool that helps in identifying growth potential in employees. However, it was noted that appraisers do not seize this opportunity to specify development needs of appraisees. This information could be used by the organisation to prepare its training plan.

### ***Findings:***

- (i) When completing their self-assessment, officers have requested for training but they did not specify their area of interest. In some cases, appraisees have requested for a specific training but no recommendation was made by appraisers.
- (ii) Appraisers/appraisees did not give sufficient importance to this issue, and hence, the information generated was minimal.

### **Recommendations:**

- Appraisers should be sensitized on the link of performance management with capacity building. They should support the training and learning needs of appraisees if it would enhance their performance. In addition to shortcomings and strengths identified, they should also take into consideration the training needs mentioned by appraisees under Section 5 of the PAF, before making their comments/recommendations.

## **7.9 Performance Improvement Plan (PIP)**

The PIP is a tool for systematic monitoring of poor performance through which concrete corrective action is taken within an agreed timeframe.

### ***Findings:***

- (i) Full use was not made of the PIP to follow-up shortcomings, and in some cases where follow up was done, the appropriate form has not been used.
- (ii) Although shortcomings have been identified, no PIP has been developed.

(iii) In some cases, a PIP has been developed, but was not attached to the appraisee's PAF.

**Recommendations:**

- Heads of Sections should be apprised of the importance of continuous improvement under Performance Management, and hence PIP can be optimised as a tool.
- A PIP should be developed at any time during the PMC, when appraiser considers that the appraisee's current performance requires improvement after discussion with the latter. The HR Section should advise officers accordingly, and ensure that the PIP is attached to the relevant PAF.

**7.10 Change in posting/promotion**

***Findings:***

- Processes have generally not been followed in cases of change in posting and promotion. Appraiser/appraisee fails to close the PAF and to open a new one.

**Recommendations:**

- HR should advise officers regarding filling of Performance Appraisal Interim Report or closing of PAF as appropriate before assumption of duty in new posting or promotional post.

**7.11 Scrutiny of PAFs**

All filled-in PAFs should be meticulously scrutinised and remedial action promptly taken by the Reform Cell Sub Committee on PMS, at the end of each cycle.

***Findings:***

- (i) PAFs have not been carefully scrutinised and multiple inaccuracies and non-compliance issues have been detected.
- (ii) In some cases, information has not been inserted by the HR Section under Section 2 of PAF.

### **Recommendations:**

- A PMS Cell within the HR Section should be responsible for scrutiny of PAFs, monitoring compliance, including follow up and conducting quality review exercise.
- HR Section should, after the final appraisal, fill in Section 2 of PAFs of employees after proper scrutiny thereof and enter the information into the performance database.

### **7.12 Performance Database**

A performance database should be kept by all HR Sections.

### ***Findings:***

- (i) No performance database has been kept in some cases.
- (ii) Where a database has been kept, a scrutiny of same has revealed cases where information has not been correctly entered.

### **Recommendations:**

- HR Section should imperatively keep a Performance Database in respect of all its employees, so that decision-making becomes more effective and time is not wasted in retrieving data from PAFs each time required.
- HR Section should input correct information in the performance database.

### **8. General Recommendations**

- Officers of the senior management team should exude a sense of responsibility and ownership towards PMS, as it is a major reform initiative geared towards improving performance. As such, they should be sensitized to fill their PAFs so as to motivate their junior staff to follow suit.
- The Reform Cell of the Ministry should play a more proactive role in the implementation and sustenance of PMS. It should bring non-compliance issues regarding PMS in the management meeting of the Ministry, so that all Heads of Sections take the onus for corrective measures.