

PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD 2017

ENTRY FORM

Theme:

*“Fostering creativity and innovation
to better respond to citizens’ needs”*

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INTRODUCTION

The Public Service Excellence Award (PSEA) is one of the many tools used to drive the public service towards becoming a more dynamic, customer-centric and highly performing institution. It encourages team work and a culture of excellence across the public service.

Its overall objective is to recognise and reward meritorious efforts of Ministries/ Departments and their respective Section/Division/Unit which have strived and travelled the extra mile to improve public service delivery and customer satisfaction in a noticeable manner. It is also a reliable instrument to foster innovative management practices in public sector organisations.

THE THEME

The theme chosen for the 2017 Edition of the PSEA is *“Fostering creativity and innovation to better respond to citizens’ needs”*. This theme is meant to give an added dimension to the ongoing effort of Government to enhance the quality of public service in line with Vision 2030 and the 3-Year Strategic Plan.

THE AWARD

The best three submissions will receive the Gold, Silver and Bronze Awards in order of merit. The Winners will also be offered cash prizes as follows:

Gold Award : Rs 100,000
Silver Award : Rs 60,000
Bronze Award : Rs 40,000

ELIGIBILITY

All Ministries/Departments or Divisions/Units are eligible to participate in the Award.

However, Grand Winners of the previous editions of the Award are not eligible for participation for the next two editions following the year of their award.

ADJUDICATION

A Panel of Jury will be set up to assess the submissions.

APPLICATION

Applications should be submitted on the appropriate Form which is available on the website of this Ministry at <http://civilservice.govmu.org>. Information provided by participants should be factually correct, comprehensive and concise.

A hard copy, duly signed by a member of Senior Management, and a soft copy of the submission should reach this Ministry by **31 July 2018**, at latest, at the following address:

Administrative Reforms Division

Ministry of Civil Service and Administrative Reforms

Level 10, SICOM Building 2, Corner Chevreau & Rev Jean Lebrun Streets, Port Louis

Tel: 405 4100 (PABX) - Extension: 10224 / 10225

Fax: 211 5047

Email: mcsa-ar@govmu.org

Website: <http://civilservice.govmu.org>

All submissions should be typewritten. **Handwritten or incomplete submissions will not be considered.**

NOTES FOR GUIDANCE

In their submission, organisations are required to bring forth their achievements for the past 12 months in terms of “**Best Practice**” (*as defined below*) and provide a substantive overview thereof so as to justify what qualifies them to be the potential winner of the Award. Organisations are encouraged to include written documentary evidence in support of their write-ups.

Definition of a Best Practice

A Best Practice is the implementation of a method/process/procedure/activity that has proven to work efficiently and effectively and produced remarkable results, and is, therefore, recommended as a model for other organisations to emulate.

For Office Use

Ref:

Date of receipt of Entry Document: / /

Date of acknowledgement: / /

ENTRY FORM

1. PROFILE OF ORGANISATION

Name of organisation : MAURITIUS FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE
PORT LOUIS FIRE STATION

Address : MAILLARD STREET PORT LOUIS

Full name (*Block Letters*) of Contact Person : ASHOKLALL RAMDHEAN

Post held by Contact Person : DIVISIONAL OFFICER

E-mail Address : aramdhean@govmu.org

Telephone Number : 57508412

Contact address, if different from above :
.....
.....

Name (*Block Letters*) and Signature of Senior Manager who validated the submission : (*NAME*)MANUN SEEGOOLAM
(*SIGNATURE*)

Telephone Number of the Senior Manager : 2122021 / 2122022

Title of the Best Practice : Implementation of Swift Water Rescue Team

Start date : 03 January 2017

2. AREAS OF BEST PRACTICE

Organisations are requested to submit a well-defined Best Practice that has contributed to make substantial changes/improvements in management practices inspired by a combination of any of the ten pillars below. (*Pillars concerned by the practice must be selected from the list below*)

<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Growth and Development <i>Public Sector business, programme and service delivery solutions that facilitate the inclusion of social and economic growth, keeping pace with the way society is evolving and are reflective of the diverse Nation we serve.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Business Transformation <i>Anticipation and responsiveness to the evolving client needs through modernisation and business transformation including the efficient use of resources and effort in developing a new workplace, culture and ethos.</i></p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Innovation and Acceleration <i>Making use of science, research, technology, innovation, institutional knowledge, data analytics, smart practices, shared information and knowledge for ideas generation and concept mapping.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Digital Transformation <i>Making use of technology, E-platforms (such as e-procurement, etc), tools and applications as an accelerator for improved quality service, efficiency, productivity, performance and results.</i></p>
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<p>Smart Process <i>Making use of objective-oriented systems to simplify and automate business processes to be forward-thinking, rapid, responsive and efficient.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Strong Governance and Institutional arrangements <i>Ensuring that the right oversight and guidance for good governance, compliance, ethics, integrity, transparency, accountability, legal, operational and performance frameworks are in place.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Performance <i>Ensuring greater coordination and clarity of objectives, goals, roles and responsibilities and performance outcomes and providing the right tools, resources equipment and physical environment to enhance efficiency, productivity and employee commitment and motivation.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Capacity Building and Capability Development <i>Developing capacity, capability and learning to ensure that employees are continuously adopting and developing new skills, capabilities and technical/behavioural competencies while giving high priority to digital skills.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Implementation <i>Planning, design and implementation of projects, programmes and priorities are integrated so that the right people, funding, resources, logistics, infrastructure are in place and there is a shared ownership of outcomes.</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Customer Satisfaction: The Bottom line <i>Improvement in customer experience and making public services efficient, transparent and equitable based on consultation and feedback from clients. The public and clients are at the heart of policy development, programmes, services and actions.</i></p>

3. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

3.1 Provide an executive summary of the Best Practice successfully implemented by your organisation. (Not more than 300 words)

Among its other technical rescue speciality the Mauritius Fire & Rescue Service (“MFRS”) includes a dedicated team that is trained and equipped to perform searches and rescues in the hazardous water environment. Swift water rescue is a subset of technical rescue dealing in white water conditions. Due to the added pressure of the moving water, swift water rescue involves the use of specially trained personnel, ropes and mechanical advantage systems that are often much more robust than those used in standard rope rescue. The main goal is to use or deflect the water's power to assist in the rescue of the endangered persons as in most situations there is no other easy way to overcome the power of the water. The memorable flash flood of 30 March 2013 made several victims and our department had to deal with the emergencies with the limited resources available at hand at that time. Due to urgency and to cope with the climate change since the year 2017, the Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service has created a Swift Water Rescue unit with the main aim of rescuing people in need during flooding, natural calamities, drowning at sea, dam and rivers. Port Louis Fire Station has a dedicated swift water rescue team in each watch (shift) to respond to water-related emergencies. The launching ceremony of the swift water rescue unit was held in October 2017 at Tamarin Fire Station by the Minister of Local Government and Outer Islands (Refer to annex I). Our personnel was given an advanced First Aid Course to assist persons/casualties in need. The MFRS has a multi-disciplinary team (Special Operation Division) in order to achieve its vision and mission. Actually, 57 firefighters form part of the swift water rescue team including male and female firefighters. Out of 57 swift water rescuers 14 have attained up to level II (an advanced training in swift water rescue). A Standard Operational Procedure (SOP) has been established to properly man each shift and same is put in practice following torrential rain and personnel of this unit is mobilised.

MOTIVATION FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE BEST PRACTICE

4.1 What were the problem areas faced by the organisation and how were beneficiaries affected? (Not more than 300 words)

Allocation of budget to this unit. Had to convince the Ministries to implement and allocate funds for this specialised unit.

Appropriate, suitable and specialised equipment had to be purchased including the Personnel Protective Equipment.

Specialist training of personnel had to be arranged with foreign trainer.

Liaison with local authorities for access of swimming pool.

Have a minimum manpower which is not sufficient.

Lack of transport facilities for attending training sessions.

Sometimes due to limited personnel, some staff could not be released to attend training sessions.

4.2 Describe the plan or strategy adopted to address the problem areas using the ten pillars at Section 2. List down and describe the main elements of the plan or strategy, focusing especially, on their innovative feature(s) and the expected or intended effects. (Not more than 500 words)

The Mauritius Fire and Rescue Service works under the aegis of the Ministry of Local Government and Outer Islands and funds were allocated to implement the Swift Water

Rescue Unit. Training had to be arranged to coach officers in order to make them qualify to be eligible for this unit. A thorough selection exercise was conducted after passing the swimming aptitude test which is the prerequisite for this unit. Moreover, budget was allotted to buy tools, ropes and specialized equipment while instituting the new Swift Water Rescue Unit.

List of equipment purchased (Refer to annex II)

Long Thermal Wet Suit
Short thermal Wet Suit
Floating Rope
Goggle
Helmet Water Rescue.

Pilot Knife
Water Rescue Boots
Life Jacket for Casualty
Personal Floating Device
Hood

METHODOLOGY

5.1 What were the quantitative and/or qualitative targets or key performance indicators that were set for the implementation of the Best Practice? (Not more than 300 words)

The service has taken the decision to make explicit our core organisational values as a means of putting into sharp focus the ethos of ‘how we do things’ which will underpin our relationships with the public, our partners and each other.

We respond to our key performance indicator that is to save life of the citizens in need during flooding.

To be more equipped to respond in flooding situation. Thus be in compliance with our new legislation (rescue people in dire conditions).The firefighters are fully conversant with the flood prone areas in the station area of Port Louis Fire. The firefighters are also conversant with other locations covered by the nearest fire stations in order to provide assistance if need arises.

The station formulated four main values which are:

- Service
- Improvement
- Respect
- People

The rollout of the Values Initiative will involve training for Group managers (O/Cs) and departmental heads who, supported by a member of the working group will conduct an exercise with each watch, station and department to determine the behaviours, both positive and negative, which will be the critical part of introducing a values driven culture.

5.2 (i) Describe in details the involvement of employees and, if any, other stakeholders in the identification of the problem areas. (Not more than 300 words)

1) Members of the MFRS were keen to respond positively to form part of the Swift Water Rescue Unit (SWRU). A selection exercise was carried out by Human Resource (HR) section and Training Division.

2) Expert from abroad came and gave specific training for swift water rescue and has been successful and members of the MFRS (including both male & female firefighters) benefited a lot from this training. Equal opportunities were given to each and every one to form part of this specialised unit.

(ii) How far were employees and, if any, other stakeholders involved in problem solving and decision making? (Not more than 300 words)

Members of the MFRS were involved through their Trade Union to join this unit.

An agreement has been made between the MFRS and the Mauritius Sports Council to cater for the availability of the swimming pool twice per week for ongoing training. Our dedicated swift water rescue team attend training when on duty as well as when off duty. Flood waters are extremely dangerous and should not be entered by anyone other than properly trained and equipped rescuers. As a preventive measure the citizens living or travelling in potential flood areas should monitor local information as well as from the National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Centre and follow evacuation orders given by the MFRS and SMF.

5.3 How was team work and team spirit fostered to achieve objectives? (Not more than 300 words)

A selection exercise was carried out to check the fitness of firefighters to be able to form part of the swift water rescue unit. A team of fifty seven motivated firefighters were trained. Intensive training was carried out by an expert French trainer. The fifty seven firefighters have been posted in strategic station for rescue purpose round the clock. There is a designated water rescue coordinator to ensure equipment and personnel arrive on scene as needed. The nature of water rescue is that we must train in the same hazardous environment in which we work. High level of hazard, widely varied conditions and perishable skills demand frequent training both for effective rescue and to keep our rescuers safe. As a small team that trains together frequently, we become confident placing our lives teammates hands. Thus, this makes us both safe and effective when its mission time.

5.4 What were the measures taken to ensure that resources were used optimally? (Not more than 300 words)

A programme of work has been formulated for the members of the unit. Once a week the firefighter forming part of swift water rescue attend swimming session. Outdoor training is carried out depend upon availability of personnel at station. Regular simulation exercises are carried out to check our performances. The officer in charge of the swift water rescue carry out swift water activity as per schedule program. Proper recording of all activities carried out at station in an appropriate register. Team briefing is performed on weekly basis to inform the staff about their work activities.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE

6.1 Explain how the Best Practice was implemented. (Not more than 300 words)

As the role of the fire and rescue service continues to develop in the face of changes nationally, Mauritius Fire & Rescue Service is changing the scope and breadth of the services it delivers to local communities. It does this in a variety of ways and is always striving to improve and contribute towards ensuring that Mauritius is a place where people want to live by 'creating safe and secure communities'.

As empowered by the Act of the MFRS, firefighters have been trained to carry out rescue in fast moving water. Training was also carried in Hazardous places such as dangerous bathing; example; at Maconde, Tamarin La Mecque, Albion, Le morne and even in brackish waters. Appropriate personal protective equipment was provided and then a swift water unit was implemented. Medical test (such as stress test, ECG, Lung function test, blood test....) was carried out to ensure that firefighters of the Swift water rescue team are physically and mentally fit to intervene in hazardous water environment.

6.2 How were obstacles/bottlenecks resolved? (Not more than 300 words)

For many years the service has been actively promoting and undertaking community safety work. This work lies at the core of our activities and, together with other stakeholders, will continue to develop as evidence shows this is the area where we are making a real difference. The service is building on the leading role it undertakes in partnerships to ensure that community safety issues are at the forefront.

At the beginning the personal protective equipment were shared among the firefighter due to shortage of personal protective equipment. Then after a proper allocation of budget from the Government each firefighter forming part of the swift water rescue team was issued with their own PPE and additional equipment was provided.

6.3 State specifically how the health and safety issues and environment-friendly concepts were taken on board while implementing the Best Practice. (Not more than 300 words)

Normally a Health and safety officer from ministry of Civil Service Affairs attends Fire station to sort out the Health and Safety issues.

Health surveillance are carried out on a frequency of every six month. Since we perform duty in hazardous environment lung functions test is carried to monitor the health and fitness of these firefighters.

After operational use all PPE and equipment are properly decontaminated by using eco-friendly detergents.

All defective PPE and equipment are returned to procurement section for proper disposal.

6.4 Explain the monitoring and feedback process during the implementation of the Best Practice. (Not more than 300 words)

Every six month an evaluation test is carried out by qualified instructors of MFRS to evaluate and monitor the performance of these firefighters of the swift water rescue unit. Twice per week the firefighters attend training and record is kept accordingly.

6.5 Name at least two risk factors that arose in implementing the Best Practice and explain those factors and/or risks briefly. (Not more than 200 words)

The main risk is drowning during flooding and during rescue operation at sea, dam or rivers. Also the panicked victims can cause harm to the rescuers. Rescuers can sustain injuries if hit by hard (Rocks) or sharp edge objects. Examples; branches, iron bars and other fixed obstacles or turbulent.

EVALUATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE

7.1 Explain how was the evaluation of the impact of the Best Practice conducted? (Not more than 300 words)

Close supervision of the members of the unit and the O/C is on call for any urgency or emergency matters. Every incident is recorded to monitor the performance.

Moreover, a SWOT analysis was conducted to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threat.

STRENGTHS

Staff – Mauritius Fire & Rescue Service has provided the required training to its staff. These particular strengths, which applied across all types of employees, were identified as:

- Adaptable, multi skilled and innovative
- Committed to the service with a desire to achieve
- A high level of dedication
- Contribute to a learning organisation

Leadership – Strong leadership is a feature of the way the service operates and again this is reflected in how we perceive ourselves:

- Good leadership with strong vision
- High profile organisation with a strong brand
- High level of trust from the public
- Developing responsibility at local level

External Perceptions – This is how we think those outside the organisation view Mauritius Fire & Rescue service

- A ‘can do’ organisation
- Work well with others, especially other stakeholders
- Improving media profile

WEAKNESSES

The Service has recognised that in some areas there is room for improvement to ensure an improvement in Service for the people of Mauritius.

Staff – In this context, it is not the staff themselves that are the weakness, but as a result of the following issues it means that staff are not as effective as they could be.

- Trying to do too much with limited resources
- Consultation methodology requires refining
- Training gaps and development opportunities
- Dealing with change management and succession planning
- Dependency on retained staff for majority of operational cover

OPPORTUNITIES

Partnerships - MFRS works closely with a variety of organisations within the county.

- Build on existing partnerships and form new partnerships to provide best value
- Participate in the Community Risk Reduction
- Further develop inter agency working

THREATS

Staff – These are threats that are staff related where issues are perceived to have an impact on staff.

- Working Time Directive
- Recruitment and retention of key personnel
- Resistance to change by some staff

Financial

- Funding pressures (Budget)
- Sustainability of external funding

7.2 Describe the impact of the Best Practice on the level of services provided to key customers and on the environment, society. (Not more than 300 words) (Please provide data by comparing targets v/s actual performance, before-and-after indicators, and/or other types of statistics or measurements)

Swift water rescuers are aware of the level of responsibility and the contribution for a quality service delivery.

Developing a performance culture.

Motivating staff in through financial incentives since it form part of a specialised unit.

Providing a better service delivery to the citizen.

In order to manage the considerable risk inherent to working around water (often aggravated by darkness and poor weather) the swift water rescue team relies extensively on training, procedures. Safety is absolutely paramount in everything we do. The team responds to emergencies as per the Key Performance indicators set out for structural fires that is within 12 minutes.

8. REPLICATION TO OTHER ORGANISATION

8.1 How can the Best Practice be replicated to other organisations? (Not more than 200 words)

Previously only GIPM & Coast Guards were attending such incidents. Following the proclamation of the new legislation (MFRS 2013) it was imperative to create such unit to respond to the need of the population or the society at large and to be in line with vision 2030. In a mayor incident the GIPM assists us .

8.2 Based on your organisation's experience, name up to three factors which you consider as indispensable to replicate the Best Practice. (Not more than 200 words)

A young and dynamic team form part of this specialized unit .The PPE and equipment issued by the Government to the swift water rescue team of MFRS is efficient and effective. The team has in mind to upgrade the unit by acquisition of new equipment such as river boards, underwater camera, specialized vehicle and Lifeboat and additional staff to increase the number of swift water rescuers.

Being the first responder to any emergencies we attend not only emergencies on land but also at sea. The team wants to upgrade from level 2 to level 3 as innovation. Furthermore, the officers forming part of this team will be remunerated by a special allowance as prescribed by the PRB 2016.