

PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD 2018

ENTRY FORM



Theme:

*“Embracing Innovative Technologies and Processes
for Public Service Enhancement”*

PUBLIC SERVICE EXCELLENCE AWARD 2018

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 2018 Edition of the PSEA is *“Embracing Innovative Technologies and Processes for Public Service Enhancement”*. 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 **15 April 2019 at 16:00 hrs** 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 : Entomology Division, Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security

Address : Redit

Full name (Block Letters) of Contact Person : PREEADUTH SOOKAR

Post held by Contact Person : Principal Scientific Officer

E-mail Address : psookar@govmu.org

Telephone Number : 466 4983

Contact address, if different from above :
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Name (Block Letters) and Signature of Senior Manager who validated the submission : (NAME) REHANAH BIBI KUREEMUN
(SIGNATURE).....

Telephone Number of the Senior Manager : 466 1435

Title of the Best Practice : Minimising the Use of Pesticides

Start date : 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 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 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)

Pesticides are toxic chemicals which include insecticides, fungicides and herbicides are commonly used in Mauritius by farmers for the protection of their crops against insects, weeds, rodents and diseases. Without the regular use of pesticides, crop damage would be very high and the planter would suffer huge losses. Whilst tremendous benefits can be derived from pesticides, nonetheless, there is evidence that they can pose potential risks to human health and other life forms as well as unwanted side-effects on the environment, if they are not used properly.

The import of pesticides is controlled by the Dangerous Chemicals Control Act 2004. However, there was no control on how growers were handling and using pesticides. Planters were free to apply any pesticides at any dosage on any crop and without even respecting the pre-harvest interval prior to harvest.

With the rise in health problems partly associated with misuse of pesticides, there was a growing concern among the consumers regarding the quality and safety of our fruits and vegetables with regards to pesticide residues.

The Entomology Division came forward with the preparation of a legislation for the judicious use of pesticides. There were several brain storming sessions with different stakeholders for the drafting of the legislation. Finally, the Use of Pesticides Act 2018 was promulgated in the Parliament in September 2018. The main objective of the Act is to regulate, control and monitor the use of pesticides in or on any agricultural produce.

A Pesticides Regulatory Office has been set up within the Ministry for the implementation of the Act. Samples of agricultural produce are collected at harvest or upon import and sent for analysis of pesticide residues.

4. 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)

The main problem for implementation of this Act was a change in the mindset of the growers.

The Ministry was faced with lots of resistance from the farming community during the consultation phases for the drafting of the Act which started in 2017. This was mainly due to the wrong perception that the Act was being set up to prevent use of pesticides and was targeting only the small growers.

The growers were particularly concerned about banning of certain pesticides which were effective for the control of insects, diseases and weeds. Moreover, growers were also reluctant in changing their habits and dependence on pesticides for production of fruits and vegetables.

Pesticides were being used throughout the growing period notwithstanding whether there was any incidence of pest and disease or not. It was a common practice to apply any pesticide at any time during the crop cycle. Recommended pesticide dosage and pre-harvest interval were also not being followed.

Therefore, we had to face lots of challenges to educate the growers to eventually change their behaviours and perception regarding the judicious use of pesticides. In so doing, growers would be able to benefit in the long-term from their proper use with regard to improving agricultural production whilst at the same time protecting consumers and the environment.

In order to implement the Act, no provision was made for the appropriate Division and adequate human resource within the Ministry. To cater for this issue, the Pesticides Regulatory Office was created.

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)

Despite the mention for a legislation regarding the use of pesticides in Mauritius in the Dangerous Chemicals Control Act in 2004, no action was taken by the Ministry of Agro Industry and Food Security for implementation of such a legislation. The Entomology Division took the drive for coming up with this new legislation.

Once the policy decision was taken in 2017 for preparation of the Act, consultative meetings were held with different stakeholders to gather baseline information regarding current practices being adopted for the control of pests and diseases and the various control measures available locally. A technical committee comprising of members from different Ministries and agricultural institutions as well as the farming community was set up for drafting of the Act.

The committee addressed the situation by putting up the following questions:

What is to be done, why should it be done, how to do it, who are we targeting, when to do it and by whom?

This helped to get a baseline on the situation on use of pesticides in Mauritius and also created a problem bank namely:

1. Dosage of pesticides not being followed
2. Mixture of incompatible pesticides being used
3. Safety measures for handling and application not being followed
4. Pre-harvest interval not being followed
5. Increase in cancer incidence and other health hazards related to misuse of pesticides
6. Contamination of water
7. Development of resistance to pesticides
8. Effects on non-target organisms

Following several brainstorming sessions, the main objectives of the legislation were defined and agreed upon before the details of the Bill were prepared. The roles and responsibilities of the responsible Office to implement the legislation were clearly defined.

Finally, the Act was promulgated on September 2018 and the Pesticides Regulatory Office was created. Regular meetings were held with Top Management for proper implementation and follow-up regarding the Act.

The Office has been providing training and sensitisation programmes to growers, consumers and pesticide users.

5. 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)

1. Training of growers:
A training programme covering all aspects on pesticide handling, usage, application, safety measures to be adopted for production of safe produce

2. Sensitisation of consumers and stakeholders
Sensitisation on the legislation, the harmful effects of misuse of pesticides and benefits of the legislation
3. Drafting of the Bill
A timeframe for the drafting of the Bill
4. Collection and analysis of samples
Samples of fruits and vegetables to be collected and sent for analysis of pesticide residues
5. Timeliness in providing results to growers
Results submitted to growers on timely basis

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)

Regular meetings were held with Top Management and staffs to discuss on problems arising during implementation of the legislation and issues raised were addressed. Brainstorming sessions were also held with planters, importers of pesticides, importers of fresh fruits and vegetables, NGOs, consumer associations, representatives of Ministry of Local Government, Ministry of Health and Quality of Life, Ministry of Environment, University of Mauritius.

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

All Officers involved in the drafting and implementation of the Act participated actively in problem solving and decision making. Meetings were organised with stakeholders.

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

Everybody in our team was agreeable since the very beginning that the problem of misuse of pesticides cannot be solved by only one person. We should work as a team so as to be more effective in terms of quality of the task carried out, time and cost. We immediately realised that working as a team increased our individual productivity and workplace satisfaction. Being on the team was itself a source of motivation, status and pride for having been selected to participate. Our output as a team was higher in quality and quantity than individual performance. The credit goes to the team leader who always ensured that there was good communication and participation, clear identification and ownership of the team goal, and clear acceptance of each other's strengths and limitations in a manner that encourages positive working relationships. There were regular meetings over a cup of tea and some stacks.

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

We prioritised the different steps involved in the drafting and implementation of the Use of Pesticides Act depending on the specific objectives to be achieved. They were implemented in order of importance as follows: (i) Sensitisation of planters (ii) Awareness campaigns for consumers (iii) Meetings with importers of pesticides (iv) Meetings with importers of fruits and vegetables, (v) Drafting of Bill, (vi) Regular meetings with Officers of State Law Office to finalise

the Bill, and (vii) Implementation of the Act with the creation of the Pesticides Regulatory Office. We monitor the progress of the different activities vis-à-vis the Mile Stone Chart and recorded the action taken. Weekly plans and weekly reports were prepared by officers responsible for the different activities. The reports were discussed in monthly meetings or earlier if the need arose.

6. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BEST PRACTICE

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

The Act covers the judicious use of pesticides. There was constant sensitisation of framers for the adoption of best agricultural practices.

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

Bottleneck could be caused when key team members are absent or are on vacation. To solve this problem, team members have to indicate the period they intend to take vacation leave at the beginning of the year and a planning is done so that the vacation leaves of two officers do not coincide. All team members were equally trained so that they could handle the duties of the colleague who was on vacation.

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)

The Use of Pesticides Act 2018 has been implemented in order to minimise the use of pesticides which are known to be hazardous to human health and the environment. The Act provides for a list of pesticides to be used on a particular crop and the corresponding maximum residue limit

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

Feedbacks were obtained during the regular meetings held with the different stakeholders and growers. Field visits were also organised in farmers' fields. Issues raised were compiled and reports were prepared and discussed meetings held with staff of the Division and members of the Technical Committee. Data for the assessment of the best practices were recorded, analysed and reports prepared. The information was used for decision taking.

7. 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)

Data collected during meetings and field visits were analysed for decision taking.

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)

The Use of Pesticides Act is being implemented since September 2018. Benefits derived from the judicious use of pesticides include:

1. Safer foods with less pesticide residues for consumption
2. Decrease in pesticide related health hazards

8. REPLICATION TO OTHER ORGANISATION

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

The Best Practice could be replicated for reviewing of the Chemical Fertiliser Control Act of 1980 which is outdated and does not cater for biofertilisers and organic compost. A technical team could be set up to identify the loopholes in the existing Act and to come up with proposals for amendments and new regulations.

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)

The organisation should have the following:

1. Strong will and commitment
2. Human resource
3. Knowledge and experience