

Public Sector Reform in Barbados

Public Sector Reform (PSR) Initiatives

PSR is vital if Barbados wants to compete in the regional, hemispheric and global environment. To this end, a number of significant reform initiatives to strengthen the public service and make it more professional were introduced.

REFORM OF PUBLIC SECTOR RULES AND REGULATIONS

New Public Service Act

Pension Reform

INVESTMENT SECTOR REFORM PROGRAMME

Enabling Environment for Private Sector Investment (EEPSI)

Anti-Money Laundering Authority

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance Review and Development System (PRDS)

Job Evaluation Exercise

Human Resources Management Information System (SmartStream)

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Humanised Management/Personnel Excellence Programme

Service Assessment and Improvement Programme

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING AND MANAGEMENT REFORM

Tax Administration & Expenditure Management Project

Financial Management Information System (SmartStream)

Performance and Performance Based Budgeting (PPBB)

Value-for-Money Audits

Accrual Accounting

E-GOVERNMENT

Education Sector Enhancement Programme (Edutech)

Automated Systems for Customs Data (ASYCUDA ++)

Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS)

Government of Barbados-Integrated Portal 2004

CONCLUSION

1. **REFORM OF PUBLIC SECTOR RULES AND REGULATIONS**

New Public Service Act

Start Up Date: 1999

In 1999, government set up a committee which was mandated to provide a policy framework for the preparation of a Public Service Act. Public sector rules and regulations have not been changed in any meaningful way in recent years. The new act would address issues such as:

- The accountability of public officers;
- The establishment of a code of ethics to guide public officers;
- Enhancement of the role and functions of the Services Commission;
- Improving the current mechanism for appointment, promotion, transfer, discipline and tenure of public officers;
- Modes of leaving the public service;
- Management of financial administration;
- Developing a succession-planning system together with a compensation management system that would attract, motivate and retain employees in the public service;
- A clear definition of what constitutes misconduct; and
- A mechanism for handling grievances.

Pension Reform

Start Up Date: 1998

Since 1998, the National Insurance Board has instituted a Pension Reform Programme which is expected to result in maintaining sufficient reserve funds to pay for benefits in the future.

For further information visit www.nis.gov.bb

INVESTMENT SECTOR REFORM PROGRAMME

The objective of this programme is geared towards increasing the competitiveness of the Barbadian economy and improving the climate for private sector investment.

Enabling Environment for Private Sector Investment (Eepsi)

Start Up Date: 2000

In today's world, business and investment decisions, whether national or international, are increasingly being made on the basis of information which is readily available on-line at the click of the mouse. International investors from the developed world are impatient for information and are no longer prepared to wait a day or two for faxed responses to basic information from a potential jurisdiction.

Also, citizens increasingly expect the same level of service from government as they do from other organisations. Communication with other public service departments is vital, but is presently limited to a paper system. This is not to the advantage of people in a globalised world who are unwilling to fill out lengthy forms, stand in long lines and wait days and weeks for a response from a government department. The Eepsi project seeks to deal with these issues in an effective manner.

In a nutshell, Eepsi seeks to facilitate the investment process within Barbados by linking fourteen (14) critical Government Ministries, departments and agencies in a single network. This revolutionary system will do away with the unnecessary red-tape and bureaucracy.

Anti-Money Laundering Authority

Start Up Date: 2000

The goal of this agency is to prevent or control money laundering and thus protecting the vital financial sector of Barbados. The Financial Intelligence Unit was created to carry out the executive functions of the Authority.

2.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

Performance management is the means by which public service goals are linked to individual target-setting, appraisal, and development. It provides a strategy for increasing efficiency by enhancing accountability and individual motivation, and improving communication to assist organisational change.

Performance Review and Development System (PRDS)

Start Up Date: 2001

The Government of Barbados recognises that to achieve its developmental objectives for the country it requires a fully responsive public sector that must be infused with new values; a sense of mission and purpose and totally imbued with a spirit of renewed professionalism.

At present, officers are appraised annually using an archaic and subjective form which is not based on specific aspects of the work performed.

One of the major aims of the PRDS system is to identify the strengths and weaknesses of officers in order that measures could be taken to offer them greater assistance in their effort to improve their performance.

The new PRDS will be conducted annually in four phases:

- Meeting between supervisor and employee to develop the employee's work plan (late March);
- First progress meeting (July);
- Second progress meeting (December); and
- Overall final assessment/performance evaluation meeting (March the following year).

The PRDS assesses/appraises performance in the workplace in relation to agreed performance standard. All members of the public service with the exception of the Police Force and the Teachers who have separate systems exist.

This system is being pilot tested in a number of agencies before full role out to the wider public service.

One proposed aspect of the PRDS is the 360-degree feedback appraisal model for senior managers. 360-degree feedback is an assessment process used to improve managerial effectiveness by providing the manager with a more complete assessment of their effectiveness, and their performance and development needs. The final decision on the 360-degree feedback appraisal model presently rests with the Head of the Civil Service and Committee of Permanent Secretaries. They would make the final decisions on:

- A subcommittee to manage the 360-degree feedback model in terms of objectives, design and communication; and
- Whether the Minister would be included in the panel of raters.

Job Evaluation Exercise

Start Up Date: 2000

Job Evaluation is a process meant to provide the organisation with a structured frame for determining job value. It is concerned with jobs and the fair and efficient compensation of these jobs. The Government of Barbados recognises that to achieve its overall development objectives for the human resources of the public service, it had to undertake a thorough study of all jobs within the service.

This exercise which started in 2000 was completed by a job evaluation committee under the guidance of Consultants from MNX Consulting Service from Canada.

This final report was completed in September 2003 and was based on scientific methodology and best practices in human resources management.

Human Resources Management Information System (SmartStream)

Start Up Date: 1999

The Personnel module of the SmartStream Human Resources began in July 1999 and the first payroll was run in November 1999. The systems were at first centralised at the Ministry of the Civil Service, Personnel Administration Division, The Treasury Department and the Data Processing Department. This new system allowed rapid access to information on officers assigned to the ministries or departments. Essentially SmartStream Human Resources manages human resources functions from hiring through termination including personnel administration and payroll and benefits processing. The personnel and payroll modules enable ministries to develop more efficient processes for hiring training and retraining of its workforce and management of information and processes for administering, calculating and disbursing the payment of wages, salaries and other forms of compensation.

The Personnel module facilitates the maintenance of information on the requirements, duties and compensation of each position within ministries and departments thereby affording ready access to this information. The module also provides activities to record and manage a wide range of information related to employee assignments, leave, qualifications and other personal data.

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Start Up Date: 1998

Since the introduction of the Employee Assistance Programme in the Public Service in 1998, the programme has developed quickly as a result of wide interest in the issues, which it addresses. Consequently, the programme has

been expanded to include all the services offered under an EAP according to the standards and practices of the Employee Assistance Professionals Association (EAPA). This programme is managed by the Office of Public Sector Reform, and administered by an EAP service provider Network Services Incorporated.

Humanised Management/Personnel Excellence Programme

Start Up Date: 2004

This programme was conceptualised by the Office of Public Sector Reform. The major thrust of this programme is to encourage a work-friendly environment in all public sector agencies. This would redound to healthy improvements in work-friendly relationships. The objective of the programme is to reduce the level of absenteeism in the work place and to promote a culture of performance in organisations.

In achieving this goal the office is also collaborating with the various Ministries/Departments that have chronic problems with sick leave and recommending assistance through the intervention of the Employee Assistance Programme.





The Office is working closely with the National Productivity Council, the Training Administration Division, the Unions (NUPW/BWU) and the Environmental Division of the Ministry of Health in order to share our resources in meeting the objectives of this programme. Consultation is always ongoing with other stakeholders such as the private sector, NGOs and various individuals to encourage feedback on our programmes.

Three (3) workshops have been held so far in this area for approximately 90 public officers.







Service Assessment and Improvement Programme

Start Up Date: 2003

This is another initiative from the Office of Public Sector Reform (OPSR). The basic objective of this programme is to establish quality customer services to:

-  promote the establishment of basic service standards;
-  raise the level of customer satisfaction with the delivery of public services;
-  identify any weaknesses in the delivery of quality services and make recommendations for their improvement; and
-  promote the effective use of the telephone as a tool for business communication.

Methods of Achievement are:

-  random telephone calls;
-  interviews of management and staff;
-  direct observation;
-  customer surveys;
-  training (workshops, counseling sessions etc) and;
-  monitoring and evaluation (including measurements) towards maintenance of standards.

So far over 250 public officers have been trained since this programme started on the 10th November 2003.

3.

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTING AND MANAGEMENT REFORM

Tax Administration & Expenditure Management Project

Start Up Date: 1993

The Government of Barbados has introduced a programme called “Tax Administration and Public Expenditure Management.” The project aims are:

- ✚ to strengthen the Ministry of Finance and the three (3) revenue collecting Department (the Inland Revenue Dept., the Customs and Excise and Excise Dept., and the Land Tax Dept.) in fiscal administration; and
- ✚ improve public expenditure management.

It should be noted that one of the main focus was the computerisation of the Treasury department and the related financial accounting and management activities of Government. The software package chosen for this computerisation effort was the *SmartStream Product Suite* developed by the software developers Dun and Bradstreet.

Financial Management Information System (SmartStream)

Start Up Date: 1998

SmartStream Financials provides a complete financial management system, organized around the fundamental activities or specific tasks that reflect the business being conducted by each department/ministry. This serves to enhance the productivity of the accounting processes and allows users to more effectively access and analyse financial information. The greatest benefit realised from the implementation of StartStream systems has been the discipline which it has brought to management of government’s financial processes.

Performance and Performance Based Budgeting (PPBB)

Start Up Date: 1996

In 1996, the government has introduced a system of Programme and Performance Based Budgeting (PPBB). PPBB aims to improve the budgetary and financial management systems of the Barbados Government. PPBB lays greater emphasis on the classification of the budget, and is viewed as forward looking. It also places greater emphasis on prior accomplishment and performance indicators.

Value-for-Money Audits

Start Up Date: 1998

In Barbados, the Audit General's Office is responsible for carrying out value-for-money audits in all government departments and agencies. The legal mandate to perform this type of audit is listed in section 26(3) of the Financial Administration and Audit Act. This section states that "the Auditor General may carry out examinations into the economical, efficient and effective use of resources of any Ministry or Department or any other entity required to be audited by him." It is important to recognise that the Audit Office does not have any power to enforce its recommendations. It is the responsibility of the management of the Ministry/Department to ensure that it is utilizing its resources in an efficient manner.

Accrual Accounting

Start Up Date: 2004

The Government of Barbados has committed itself to the transition from cash accounting to accrual accounting. Accrual Accounting recognises activities and transactions when they occur, even if payment has not been received from a customer or bills have not been paid by the business. This method provides a more accurate picture of what the organisation owns and owes in economic terms.

The Prime Minister and Minister of Finance has directed that, in keeping with developments in the international public sector arena, the Government of Barbados will move from a cash based accounting system to the introduction of full accrual accounting. In making this transition Barbados will become one of the first governments in the Caribbean to do its business using accrual accounting.





4. **E-GOVERNMENT**

Many governments have recognized that the application of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) to all levels of government is an important part of public sector reform. The Government of Barbados is committed to utilizing all new and emerging technologies to improve its competitiveness as well as enhancing the quality of services it provides to its citizens.

Education Sector Enhancement Programme (Edutech)

Start Up Date: 1998

This is a comprehensive education reform programme for the primary and secondary school in Barbados. The Specific objectives of the programme are to:

-  Repair and upgrade the existing school plant;
-  Provide teacher training to enhance pedagogical skills;
-  Achieve the desired balance between teacher-centred and child-centred approaches; and
-  Strengthen the capacity of the Ministry of Education to effectively manage the education system.

The **technological infrastructure** component of the Programme will allow for the equipping of all Programme schools with information and communication technology. Specifically, Programme schools will have teacher multimedia centres in classrooms, as well as PCs and laptops for the staff room. Moreover, at the primary level, classrooms from Classes 1-4 will be equipped with 4 or 5 computers, and there will be one computer laboratory for schools with less than 500 students, and two laboratories for schools with more than 500 students.






At the secondary level, each classroom for Forms 1-3 will be equipped with 6 computers. Each secondary school will also have specialist subject rooms outfitted with computers and other information and communications technology, as well as a computer laboratory equipped with 30 computers. The types of technology in the Programme include PCs, printers, digital cameras, scanners, plotters, science probes, electronic whiteboards, multimedia projectors and TVs.

The Edutech programme should result in the future generation of Barbadians being technologically savvy and highly skilled. This will result in increased demands for E-government services as well as provide a pool of highly skilled workers.

Automated Systems for Customs Data (ASYCUDA ++)

Start Up Date: 1993

The Customs and Excise Department implemented the ASYCUDA version 2 in 1993. The ASYCUDA project led to the simplification of procedures where eleven (11) different import and export declarations forms were replaced by the Single Administrative Document. The current ASYCUDA version 2.7 will be upgraded to the latest, ASYCUDA ++ version 3. The upgrade will enable the department to embark on full electronic document processing which will:

-  Reduce the cost of doing business;
-  Increase revenue collection;
-  Reduce turnaround times;
-  Improve trade data collection and retrieval; and
-  Generally enhance departmental efficiency and effectiveness.

Integrated Justice Information System (IJIS)

Start Up Date: 2002

The Attorney General's Office with the assistance of the International Development Bank (IDB) is undertaking a project to modernise the justice sector by improving court administration processes and enhancing access to justice in an effort to reduce the economic and social costs associated with crime.

The IJIS will encompass the reengineering of the justice sector agencies in order to achieve swift and efficient processing of cases through the system and will involve establishing a modern information exchange and document flow system with research monitoring capabilities, which would interface with a computerised court management system.

Government of Barbados-Integrated Portal 2004

Start Up Date: 2004

The Data Processing Department is developing an integrated portal designed to provide citizens and businesses with timely information and services in the easiest manner as well as streamline internal processes across government. The Portal when completed will provide services for, and information to, Government employees.

CONCLUSION

The above 'select' reform initiatives are a few of the major initiatives which reflect the two (2) broad aims of increased efficiency and effectiveness. While the public service must produce more from fewer resources, it must also ensure that their products are the right ones.

Successful reform programmes are powered by the determination to make public services more responsive to the people who use them. A re-conceptualisation of service users as consumers of public services has meant that passive recipients of services are increasingly seen as active customers and various attempts should be made to address them.

Finally, the Commonwealth experience has indicated clearly that successful reforms are built on a foundation of balanced organisational and altitudinal changes. A deliberate process of changing attitudes in step with reforming structures is therefore necessary. This is a critical role of performance management.

Paper compiled by Mr. Haseley Straughn, officer within the Office of Public Sector Reform 2004