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ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
ROYAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION



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Five Thematic Areas (5 TAs)

In the 12th Five Year Plan, RCSC's efforts will be to consolidate and firmly institutionalize the Civil Service systems that have been developed over many plan periods and in particular, the reforms introduced in the past. The systems that have been set up over the many years such as the Position Classification System, BCSS, and the MaX need continued consolidation and refining to ensure their efficacy and effectiveness with the changing times.

To begin with, at the start of the Third Commission's tenure, it carried out extensive consultations with civil servants in the *Dzongkhags*, *Thromdes* and Central Government Agencies to get a deeper understanding of the current issues. Any changes in the Civil Service system affects people and therefore, must be dealt carefully and with sensitivity. The timeline of the rollout of the various initiatives listed below will be weighed, prioritised and finally implemented at the right time. After hearing out the Agencies' concerns, the Commission deliberated intensively and distilled the areas of focus into the five thematic areas with the overall vision as detailed below:

Vision of RCSC: "Excellence in Service": A Professional, Accountable and Productive Civil Service delivering efficient and effective Services underpinned by Technology, Innovation and Empathy.

1. Right sizing the Civil Service

One of the core mandates of the Royal Civil Service Commission is to ensure a "Small, Compact and an Efficient" Civil Service. The size of the Civil Service has been a source of concern given the fiscal burden and other implications it has on the Government. As of June 2020, the size of the Civil Service was 31,278. Having the right size is also important to afford salaries to attract and retain the best and the brightest in the Civil Service. The following are the initiatives to right size the Civil Service.

i. Organisational Development (OD) Exercise

The objective of the Organisation Development Exercise and staffing exercise is to ensure right sizing of the Civil Service. OD Exercise uses McKinsey's 7 S framework to assess an Agency vis-à-vis its structure, systems, skills, strategy, staffing, shared values and style and presents any issues against this framework. The issues and recommendations emerging from the OD Exercise will be presented in three categories; i) those related to changes in structure at the level of Department and above; ii) cross cutting issues which require bilateral and multilateral Agency consultations; and iii) internal systems and procedures that the Agency itself can implement. OD Exercise will only be conducted for agencies that require a comprehensive review due to changes in mandates arising from Acts or urgent requirements/priorities.



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ii. Staffing exercise

Staffing exercise follows the OD Exercise but in agencies where the OD Exercise is not required to be carried out. It is done based on the request made by the Agency or the needs assessed by the RCSC. Staffing exercises allow the RCSC to rationalise HR numbers against our SOPs for staffing. This ensures vetting of existing staff numbers and requests for additional staff will be subject to a rigorous process of review.

iii. Reviewing certain positions in the Civil Service for greater efficacy and efficiency

Over the years, certain positions have become redundant or have a reduced workload due to changes in technology and the work processes. RCSC will review such positions in order to gradually phase them out if found redundant or look into ways to multitask them if services are underutilised. RCSC is also reviewing positions in the Supervisory and Support Category (SSC) that can take on greater responsibilities, thereby freeing-up the Professional and Management Category (PMC) to take on more strategic roles for greater utilisation of their analytical abilities. In this way, PMC numbers can also be reduced to some extent, as current workloads for routine matters are taken on by the SSC in the future.

iv. Leveraging new IT systems for efficiency gains

Many new “Whole of Government” IT systems have been developed or are in the process of being developed. Leveraging technology can bring us rich dividends in terms of rationalising HR numbers. The RCSC will work closely with agencies that have rolled out new IT systems to see the potential efficiency gains that it brings. Once the IT systems have been stabilised, RCSC in collaboration with relevant agencies will review the staffing numbers vis-à-vis the new systems.

2. Enhancing Service Delivery

Service Delivery is the *raison d'etre* of the Royal Civil Service Commission. The RCSC has instituted the Service Delivery Standards (SDS) during the last OD Exercise carried out by the Second Commission. The present Commission intends to strengthen these standards so as to bring service delivery to an acceptable standard both from the receiver as well as the provider’s perspective. The RCSC worked closely with the Public Service Delivery Division (PSDD) of the Cabinet Secretariat to enhance service delivery of Civil Service Agencies. The initial task was to work closely with a few key services of selected Agencies to review and develop/refine Service Delivery Standards (SDS). These activities will be piloted for a year and then subject to an assessment, which would include customer satisfaction surveys, focus group discussions etc. The assessment findings will be incorporated into the Agency’s targets in the APA/APT to ensure accountability. IT will be leveraged for efficient service delivery, as far as possible, but options for offline service delivery will also be provided given that not all citizens have access to computers and smartphones, nor can we assume that all are IT savvy.



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3. Strengthening the Bhutan Civil Service System

The Civil Service is guided and regulated by many systems, sub-systems, frameworks and guidelines for the purpose of performance management, transfers, career progression, and human resource development & management. These systems/frameworks/guidelines are based on the principles of transparency, equity, efficiency, effectiveness, and predictability to promote good governance in the Civil Service.

i. Career Progression System for Professional and Management Category

The Position Classification System on which the BCSS is based upon, if followed in its classical form entails every position in the Civil Service to be mapped at an appropriate Position Level. Hence, any career progression can happen only if there is a vacancy at the higher Position Level, meaning that the individual has to have the requisite competencies and experience to take on additional responsibilities. However, under the BCSS, the broad-banding of Position Levels from the entry at P4 or P5 until P2 allows civil servants to progress in their careers relatively smoothly, with the criteria being the number of years served, performance rating of good and a clean track record.

While many civil servants are expected to progress up to the P2 level, with limited P1 and Executive positions, the Commission expects some stagnation to set in after reaching the P2 position. Strategies to alleviate this stagnation must therefore, be explored and developed such as salary bands, special retirement schemes, lowering the entry position of technical graduates, etc. If such strategies are not planned and implemented soon, there is a very high risk of low motivation levels setting in as large numbers stagnate in the PMC which will impact service delivery and also bring in other negative impacts.

ii. Competency Based Framework (CBF)

The Civil Service Act of Bhutan 2010, mandates that the Royal Civil Service Commission builds and maintains the capacity and competency in the Civil Service. Therefore, the Competency Based Framework (CBF) for HR Development programme was launched in August 2018, recognising the need to have a structured and a strategic competency-based training needs assessment for all the positions in the Civil Service at any given point of time. The development of the Competency Based Frameworks for all Major Occupational groups (MoG) and Sub-groups (SG) is an effort to ensure a much sharper HR Development intervention. The Competency Based Frameworks will also facilitate the assessment of job sizes which in turn will compliment the performance assessment exercises as explained above in the Career Progression System and decisions related to succession planning.

iii. Specialist Management and Development Framework, 2020

The lack of a clear framework for assessing the requirement of specialists often leads to contentions that specialist positions are being granted solely for the career progression of the individual. The Specialist Management Framework was developed to address the issue of under-utilisation of Specialists. The Specialist Management and Development Framework, 2020 will ensure that a civil



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servant moving into the Specialist track and category are vetted against a more rigorous criteria of the Specialist Staffing Matrix and assessment of the potential of the candidate to take on the specialist role.

iv. Enhancing the Parenting system including Transfer Guidelines

Parent Agencies have been instituted in the Civil Service with the objectives to provide technical backstopping, ensure proper succession planning, professional development, and management of their staff in the respective Working Agencies. There are 13 Parent Agencies in the Civil Service today. In addition to their responsibility for transfers, the RCSC in collaboration with the Parent Agencies will develop proper succession plans and recruitment plans as well as capacity development programs aligned to the Competency Based Frameworks for parented MoGs and SGs.

4. Leadership Development and Management

Leadership is a pivotal requisite for any organization to perform and deliver their objectives. In the Civil Service, leadership positions are defined as those heading any Divisions, Departments, Agencies and Ministries.

i. Leadership Assessment and Development System (LeADS)

Amongst many critical elements that must be instituted to ensure good leadership and management in the Civil Service is the career progression and assessment system for civil servants aspiring to leadership and management positions. The Leadership Assessment and Development System (LeADS) is an effort in this direction and is detailed below:

- A robust system to assess and validate the levels of capabilities/competencies in line with international standards and our Leadership Competency Framework must be operationalised.
- A very critical component of LeADS is the services of Assessment and Development Centers (ADCs) which RIGSS and RIM are well placed to take on.

ii. Executive Management Framework

To ensure that there is “the right person for the right job”, especially for those in executive positions, the existing Executive Management Framework (EMF) will be reviewed and strengthened. Movement of Executives will be made strategically based on their performance, experience, background and competencies. Assessment of leadership abilities are currently made through their APA/APT scores and LFS scores. The Leadership Feedback System which was introduced in the FY 2016-17 needs to be further streamlined, especially, the scoring system so that the results are more statistically accurate. Once the LeADS is institutionalised, the Commission expects more detailed and objective assessments that would allow better management and succession planning for all those in the leadership positions.



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ROYAL GOVERNMENT OF BHUTAN
ROYAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION



Excellence in Service

5. Civil Service Wellbeing

The Royal Civil Service Commission (RCSC) as the Central Personnel Agency is mandated, among others, to maintain a safe and healthy working environment including health, safety and welfare of the civil servants as prescribed in Section 27(f) and 89 of the Civil Service Act of Bhutan 2010. It has to also ensure that civil servants can find meaning and fulfillment in a career worth devoting for most of their lifetime. In this respect, the RCSC must continue to look after the welfare of the civil servants from entry to retirement and in their post retirement period, wherever and whenever possible. Amongst the various interventions, the key ones are as follows:

i. Strengthening and expanding the corpus of the Civil Service Welfare Fund and increasing its menu of benefits.

Today the Civil Service Welfare Fund (CSWF) corpus stands at Nu. 113.736 million safely locked away in a fixed deposit for a six year period starting from 1 January, 2020. It has a current deposit account with a monthly inflow of Nu. 3.83 million and average monthly outflow of Nu. 1.59 million. The RCSC is continuously exploring various avenues to introduce additional welfare benefits to the civil servants under the CSWF.

ii. Reward and Recognition

As a form of reward and recognition, the dedicated Civil Service awards was introduced in 2013. With the introduction of the Managing for Excellence (MaX) and the Leadership Feedback system (LFS), there is sufficient objective data obtained through a rigorous process of assessment of an individual's performance and competencies at the Executive, PMC and SSC levels.

iii. Housing

A key challenge that many civil servants face especially in the urban centres like Thimphu and Phuentsholing is the high cost of accommodation. The challenges continue and tend to become worse after their retirement, especially, if one has not planned well and does not have a roof over one's head. The RCSC is seriously concerned about this aspect and is exploring all available options to facilitate a system of home ownership for the civil servants.

iv. Promoting healthy civil servants

As a country, Bhutan is facing the double burden of addressing the problem of communicable diseases while also seeing a sharp increase in the incidences of non-communicable diseases. The Civil Service being the largest employer in the country, would like to promote good health as an important element of a happy and productive workforce. It will continue its advocacy programmes for promoting a healthy lifestyle and a good work life balance. Through our Civil Service Support Desk, we will continue to help the civil servants with issues pertaining to substance addiction, family, mental health, sexual harassment in the work place, etc.