

# **HUMAN RESOURCE STRATEGY**

**2003-2005**

**DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, SPORT AND TOURISM**

**JUNE 2003**

# **INTRODUCTION**

## **1. BACKGROUND TO DEPARTMENT**

The Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism was formed in June 2002, following the general election. The Department has responsibility for (i) the Arts and Cultural Institutions Divisions of the former Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands (DAHGI) (ii) the Cultural Institutions – the National Archives, the National Library and the National Museum, formerly part of DAHGI (iii) the Tourism and Sports' Divisions of the former Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation and (iv) the horseracing and greyhound industries, formerly within the remit of the Department of Agriculture and Food.

Staff numbers in the Department stand at 494 made up as follows:

Central Department – 148  
National Archives - 45  
National Library – 106  
National Museum – 195

## **2. DEVELOPING A HR STRATEGY**

Human Resource Management (HRM) is now widely regarded as a key function in modern organisations. Globally, there is now a significant move away from what might be described as the administration/industrial relations model to a more proactive and strategic HRM function. The public service modernisation programme/Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) fully recognises this shift and, as a consequence, HRM is firmly placed within the SMI process as a cornerstone for its effective implementation.

Under the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF), a specific link was made between payment of the final phase of the public service increase provided for under that agreement and progress on the modernisation of the civil service, including progress on the following HRM issues:

- Implementation of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS);
- Development of a Training Strategy in parallel with the implementation of PMDS;
- Preparation of a Plan for the Re-orientation of the HRM function;
- Development and publication of an integrated HR Strategy incorporating agreed and emerging central SMI recommendations.

The link between payment of wage increases for the public service and progress on modernisation has been strengthened under the most recent national agreement – Sustaining Progress. Under the terms of Sustaining Progress, the payment of the final two phases of the benchmarking increase and all of the general round increases is dependent in the case of each sector, organisation and grade, on verification of co-operation with flexibility and ongoing change, satisfactory implementation of the agenda for modernisation, including in the area of HRM (as set out in Sections 20-22 of Sustaining Progress for the civil service and non-commercial State sector) maintenance of stable industrial relations and absence of industrial action (from date of ratification - 26<sup>th</sup> March 2003) in respect of any matters covered by the Sustaining Progress Agreement. Payment is dependent on verification of satisfactory achievement of these provisions in accordance with Section 26 of Sustaining Progress

As part of the process of delivering on the modernisation programme, the former Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation had agreed a HR Strategy in October 2001 while the former Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands was well on the way towards finalising a HR Strategy.

In both former Departments, the process of developing a HR Strategy involved research of HR related initiatives under the SMI process and of best HR practice as well as extensive staff consultation through Partnership, through HR workshops in the former Department of Tourism, Sport and Recreation and through the use of focus groups in the former Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands which included a specific focus group for the Cultural Institutions.

The HR work carried out by both former Departments was taken up by a new HR Group within the Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism which included staff represented on the HR Groups of both former Departments. The terms of reference of the new HR Group, which has given rise to the current HR Strategy, were to "prepare a consolidated proposal for a HR Strategy, taking account of the work carried out in the former Departments of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and Tourism, Sport and Recreation".

### **3. CONSTRAINTS AND CHALLENGES**

The most immediate challenge facing us in the Department is the effective merging of a new range of functions and staff to support delivery of the Department's mission and goals as set out in our business Statement of Strategy for the period 2003-2005. We (the Department and the Cultural Institutions) must also prepare for the full implementation of the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997 which will give autonomy to the National Library and the National Museum and this poses particular challenges in the HRM area.

In terms of developing a HR Strategy and related HR policies, we can only do so within the concept of a unified civil service, where pay and conditions are determined centrally,

where recruitment is carried out largely at central level and where certain HR procedures are determined for the civil service as a whole. In the case of promotion and mobility, for example, there are constraints on the extent to which some of the aspirations of staff in Departmental grades within the Cultural Institutions can be addressed, specifically in the area of possible cross-stream movement, which can only be pursued, in the first instance, at General (Management/Union) Council level.

Finally, we, in common with the public service as a whole, are required to accelerate the SMI process against a background of budgetary restraint announced in Budget 2003 which will impact on staff and budgetary resources and this will have to be taken into account in progressing the various HR policy areas dealt with in the HR Strategy.

#### **4. HR GUIDING PRINCIPLE AND ORGANISATIONAL GOAL**

The principle guiding the HR Strategy is as follows:

- We value our staff as the key resource of the Department and we recognise that the achievement of the mission and goals of the Department is critically dependent on the commitment, effectiveness and hard work of staff at all levels.

The HR Strategy is fundamental to the achievement of the corporate/organisational goal for the Department as set out in its business Statement of Strategy 2003-2005:

- To support delivery of the Department's mission and sectoral goals, and provision of a quality customer service, through development, in line with the Civil Service modernisation programme, of enhanced organisational and support structures, staff skills and competencies.

#### **5. STRUCTURE OF HR STRATEGY**

Firstly, it is important to note that all actions contained in the HR Strategy and all references to "we" or "the Department" in the HR Strategy apply equally to the Cultural Institutions unless otherwise stated. In some cases, actions are identified as specific to the Cultural Institutions. The HR Strategy is divided into four sections within which individual HR policies and practices are addressed. The four sections are as follows:

1. Resourcing the Department to meet its operational needs.
2. Managing Staff Performance and Development.
3. Achieving Work/Life Balance.
4. Promoting a Positive Working Environment.

The four sections are followed by an Implementation Framework, which sets out the actions contained in the preceding four sections and the timeframe within which each action will be addressed.

## **6. PERFORMANCE INDICATORS AND REVIEW/MONITORING**

The extent to which the range of actions identified in the HR Strategy are implemented will be an important measure of performance. In addition, performance indicators for individual HR areas will be identified as these areas are developed in accordance with the HR Strategy.

Staff attitudes, a key indicator of performance, will also be monitored as part of the ongoing evaluation and monitoring of PMDS and will be reported on to the Partnership Committee and MAC while overall progress on implementation of the HR Strategy will be monitored every six months by the Partnership Committee.

In terms of the development of individual HR policy areas e.g. mobility, promotion etc, staff will be given further opportunities to contribute views as part of the Partnership process. Furthermore, where necessary and appropriate, certain HR issues may ultimately have to be dealt with in an industrial relations forum.

## **7. CRITICAL SUCCESS FACTORS**

There are a number of factors which will play a critical role in the Department's ability to successfully implement the HR Strategy. These include:

- Commitment/leadership of MAC and senior line managers on HR issues
- Effective relationships between line managers and job-holders, including in relation to PMDS
- Staff contribution, both collectively and individually
- Good internal communications
- Supportive Industrial Relations Climate
- Availability of staff resources to drive and input to implementation/policy development process.

## **SECTION 1- RESOURCING THE DEPARTMENT TO MEET ITS OPERATIONAL NEEDS**

In order to ensure that we as a Department can function effectively, it is essential that appropriate processes and resources are in place to (i) support and develop the HR function both within corporate services and at line manager level (ii) maximise the Department's input to the recruitment of staff and (iii) provide effective induction and probation procedures which will contribute to the successful confirmation of each new entrant's appointment and the commencement of the individual's career within the Civil Service. Furthermore, it is essential that there is a direct link between the business needs of the Department, as identified under the business planning/PMDS process, and the allocation of staff resources within the Department.

### **1. RE-ORIENTATION OF THE PERSONNEL/HRM FUNCTION**

The re-orientation of the HRM (Human Resource Management) function is understood to comprise three integral elements:

- Devolution of responsibility to line managers for the management and development of staff and for certain day to day HRM issues;
- A change in focus of the personnel section, moving from the current largely administrative role to one which acts as a source of advice and expertise for senior and line managers; and
- A skilling up of HR personnel through a formalised training process (professionalising HR) and a skilling up of line management to take responsibility for HRM at local level.

The Department will need to consider in more detail how it should approach the issue of the re-orientation of the HRM function, particularly in relation to the possible devolution of new HR functions to line managers. Managers already have a range of responsibilities in the HR area including in relation to probation, increments etc while the implementation of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) will also make a significant contribution to the strengthening of the line manager staff management and development function.

The primary consideration in determining the scope for devolution must be the achievement of greater efficiency and effectiveness in the overall management of the Department and in the operation of the functions themselves. The objective must be to provide managers with the necessary information to enable them to manage more effectively and efficiently. The re-orientation of the HRM function in the Department will also have to take account of the implications of the full implementation of the National Cultural Institutions Act 1997, which will give autonomy to the National Library and the National Museum.

## **ACTIONS**

1. Identify the current roles and responsibilities of line managers in relation to specific HR issues, including PMDS, and prepare appropriate guidelines and provide ongoing advisory support to assist line managers in carrying out those roles.
2. Prepare a revised plan for the re-orientation of the HRM function, which will also take account of the implications of the full implementation of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997.
3. Continue to encourage the development of specialist HR Skills in the Department, both within the HR Unit and at line manager level and taking account of the particular HR training needs of line managers in Departmental grades.

## **2. RECRUITMENT AND SUCCESSION PLANNING**

Increasingly, best practice points to the desirability of matching people's skills, experience and preferences to particular jobs because of the increasing complexity of Civil Service work and because better matches between jobs and people can improve performance and staff retention. Furthermore, there is a need for a more planned approach to managing succession planning, particularly in the context of comprehensive promotion and mobility policies.

Within the Cultural Institutions, specialist recruitment occurs for relevant Departmental grades. However, in the case of general service grades, recruitment is carried out centrally by the Civil Service Commission. The latter recruitment regime essentially obliges potential employees to apply for a "generic" job and accept employment in a Department where the next vacancy exists and, accordingly, this limits possibilities for matching people to particular jobs and for ensuring that the Department's skills'/experience needs can be met in terms of managing succession planning.

## **ACTIONS**

1. Within the constraints of the current recruitment regime, the Department will continue to optimise its relationship with the Civil Service Commission by providing as much information as possible, based on the job profile information emerging under PMDS, to assist in the filling of vacancies.
2. Review and assess the impact of the use of contracts in the employment of staff to perform core work in the Cultural Institutions and make recommendations in this regard.
3. Line Managers to identify any significant skills'/experience gaps emerging as part of the ongoing business planning/review and PMDS processes.
4. Skills' audit, which will be a source of information for succession planning and recruitment, to be carried out as part of the Department's Training and Development Policy. Issues such as procedures on access to the skills

- database, mechanisms for updating it and uses to which the database may be put will need to be addressed as part of the skills' audit.
5. Endeavour to improve the practice in relation to notice of departure from the Department to facilitate succession planning.

### **3. INDUCTION AND PROBATION**

This is essentially about the approach that is taken to dealing with new staff when they arrive in the Department and during the settling in phase including, in particular, during the probationary period. A structured and focused induction and probation process is considered highly desirable in terms of retaining staff in the Civil Service, maximising the contribution that staff can make to the job and in the identification and rectification of work performance issues.

#### **ACTIONS**

1. Aim to provide an Induction Training course for new staff within three months of their arrival in the Department. Numbers permitting, induction training courses will be open to other staff members who feel they may benefit from attendance.
2. Detailed implementation plan to be prepared setting out the procedures to be followed for dealing with all aspects of the induction process for new staff, including the identification of the specific responsibilities of line managers and HR Unit/Corporate Services. If necessary, implementation plan specific to the Cultural Institutions to be prepared.
3. Where possible, HR Unit to provide information on skills and experience of new staff to the relevant line manager.
4. PMDS to be used by line managers to clarify the roles of new staff and to improve communication, both formal and informal, with new staff, in relation to all aspects of performance management and development.
5. Ensure that the terms and conditions of probation and the procedures for monitoring probation are made clear to line managers as well as to new staff as soon as a new staff member is assigned to a section.

### **4. INTEGRATING HR PLANNING AND BUSINESS PLANNING**

The business planning process in the Department is intended to maximise the linkages between the activities of Units or Divisions and the Department's high-level goals. PMDS further underpins this process by linking the activities of individual staff members to the Division's and ultimately the Department's high-level goals. It is important that the information emerging under the business planning/PMDS processes is harnessed so that an overall perspective can be developed which will ensure that staff resources, in terms of numbers of staff and skills/experience, are allocated, as far as possible,

consistent with the business needs of the Department. This could also include consideration of the scope for pooling of resources at times of particular peak periods in individual areas of work.

## **ACTIONS**

1. Consolidate business planning as the primary reference for work prioritisation and staff resource allocation, including by putting in place a procedure to ensure that business planning information can be shared on a cross-Divisional basis.

## **SECTION 2 – MANAGING STAFF PERFORMANCE AND DEVELOPMENT**

The effective management of performance has been identified as a key principle underpinning the whole modernisation process in the Civil Service. Performance management is a broad term to describe the way an individual's work performance, career and development needs are managed. Central to this process in the Civil Service is the introduction of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).

### **1. PMDS**

PMDS is a process for establishing a shared understanding about what is to be achieved, how it is to be achieved, and an approach to managing people that increases the probability of success. It links the management of individual and team performance to the objectives of the Department, as set out in the Strategy Statement and Business Plans, by focusing jobholder/team activity around those objectives and by better monitoring of progress towards achieving those objectives. Full and ongoing implementation of PMDS is fundamental to the successful management and development of staff in the Department and is ultimately critical to the successful achievement of the Department's mission and goals. It is imperative, therefore, that a high priority is given at line management level to ensuring that PMDS is fully implemented and integrated into the work of the Department.

### **ACTIONS**

1. PMDS training for all staff (i.e. primarily Phase III in respect of staff of former D/Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, including the Cultural Institutions) to be completed.
2. First full cycle of PMDS to be completed throughout the Department as soon as possible after completion of training.
3. All staff to start the next cycle of PMDS in tandem with business planning process and thereafter on an annual basis.
4. Line Managers to ensure that PMDS process is rolled out and implemented on an ongoing basis in respect of their staff.
5. PMDS to be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis with regular reports to MAC and the Partnership Committee.
6. PMDS training to be provided to all new staff.
7. Senior Line Managers to ensure that implementation of PMDS is integrated into the work of the Department and acknowledged as an important activity in context of role profiles, performance reviews and business plans.
8. Develop system for in-house monitoring of compliance with PMDS.
9. Undertake PMDS climate study.
10. Develop system for on-going evaluation of PMDS.
11. Develop methodology and train staff for implementation of Upward feedback.

## **2. TRAINING**

A positive and proactive approach to employee development means that the role of training and development for all staff is one of the keys to ensuring effective, ongoing implementation of the PMDS. Indeed, General Council Report No. 1368, which sets out the agreement on the introduction of PMDS, committed all sides to a proactive approach in addressing the broader training and development needs of staff identified as part of the implementation of PMDS

### **ACTIONS**

1. A Policy/Strategy Statement on Training to be prepared, taking account of the various forms of training, e.g. formal, on the job and self-learning, and including policy on refunds of fees. The issue of up-front payment of fees for certain courses undertaken outside working hours will also be examined in consultation with D/Finance.
2. Detailed training programme based on training needs identified (i) for individuals in role profile forms/personal development plans (ii) at Divisional /Organisational level by senior line managers (iii) in HR Strategy (iv) in IT Strategy and (v) in QCS Plan, to be prepared and implemented both for the central Department and for the Cultural Institutions (latter may have specific training needs).
3. Ensure that adequate training is in place to support specific "horizontal" areas not covered by 2. above, such as Freedom of Information.
4. In line with central target, endeavour to achieve expenditure target of 4% of pay roll for training by end 2003, taking account of central budgetary constraints.
5. Review and Evaluate Training Policy and Programmes.
6. Skills' audit, which will be a source of information both on the availability of skills and on skills' deficits in the Department, to be carried out (see also recruitment/succession planning). Issues such as procedures on access to the skills database, mechanisms for updating it and uses to which the database may be put will need to be addressed as part of the skills' audit.
7. Programme of staff information sessions on work of various Divisions of Department, including work of Cultural Institutions, to be continued and maximum staff participation to be encouraged.
8. Line Managers to explore the potential for preparing work/best practice manuals in their areas of work.
9. Explore the possibilities for encouraging "mentoring" as a training mechanism.

### **3. MOBILITY**

A well-developed mobility/transfer policy is considered highly desirable to enable staff to obtain a range of job experience which will develop their abilities and help them to compete effectively for promotional opportunities. Mobility/transfer may also provide a solution in certain instances of underperformance where underperformance can be attributed to a mismatch of work and skills. The main challenge in the area of mobility/transfer is to achieve a balance between the need for specialist skills and staff experienced in specific areas and the need to ensure that staff have the opportunity to obtain a range of job experience which will develop their abilities and help them progress their careers.

#### **ACTIONS**

1. Develop a mobility policy for general service grades.
2. Examine the possibilities for providing mobility opportunities for Departmental grades, including the possibility of short-term transfers involving both general service and Departmental grades which could provide skills' development opportunities.
3. Explore the possibilities for mobility outside the Department.
4. Mobility/career planning to be discussed as part of implementation of PMDS at individual level.

### **4. PROMOTION AND RECOGNITION, REWARD AND FEEDBACK**

Promotion is regarded as a significant motivator in individual performance while the need to promote competent and capable people is just as important for the performance of the Department as is the recruitment of the right people. Unlike recruitment, however, the Department has a much greater input to promotion. In line with best practice and consistent with the approach taken under PMDS, the Department has been increasingly moving towards competitive competency – based\* interviews as a promotion mechanism. The competency approach allows the Department to maximise the linkages between the requirements of the grade and the organisational needs. The use of an open competitive approach also introduces greater transparency, openness and equality into the promotion process.

Performance-related pay is not a significant element of pay structures for civil servants, but progression through incremental scales as well as to higher scales is a form of recognition and reward for effective performance, although this connection is not always clearly made for staff. Furthermore, in an environment where performance-related pay is restricted, explicit acknowledgement by line managers of good performance and the provision of regular feedback is important for staff development and morale.

## ACTIONS

1. Review current systems of internal promotion and promotion related assessment for all grades, taking account of best practice including in the areas of equality of opportunity and PMDS and having regard to Sustaining Progress.
2. Prepare a promotion policy statement for all grades, including Departmental grades.
3. Ensure that all Interview Boards have a training/advice pack to include guidance on issues such as equality of opportunity and record-keeping.
4. Offer feedback to all promotion candidates.
5. Keep merit award scheme under review, through the Partnership Committee.
6. Line Managers to maximise PMDS as a mechanism for providing ongoing feedback to staff.
7. Ensure that line managers and staff are familiar with the conditions and procedures for awarding increments and for progression to higher scales.
8. Senior Line Managers to provide leadership in the area of recognition and feedback in relation to performance by staff.
9. Consider options for acknowledging length of service for all grades including Departmental grades.

\*Competencies are the skills, knowledge, behaviours and attributes which are required for the effective performance of the grade or post. The Civil Service Centre for Management and Organisation Development (CMOD) has prepared a Guide to Competency development in the Civil Service which is available from the Department's Training Unit.

## **SECTION 3 - ACHIEVING WORK/LIFE BALANCE**

The development of appropriate policies to assist in reconciling work and home life is important to underpinning economic, social and equality objectives. Such policies can serve a dual purpose of contributing to the needs of business as well as meeting the needs of employees with family or other responsibilities. The benefits include retaining experienced and trained staff, more motivated and productive staff and reduced levels of sick leave and absenteeism.

### **1. ATYPICAL WORKING**

Atypical working arrangements in the Civil Service include flexible working hours, work-sharing, term-time, teleworking and special leave. These schemes are in addition to statutory rights under parental, adoptive and maternity legislation. The challenge for management in the application of such arrangements is the achievement of a balance between the effective delivery of the Department's mission and goals and the needs of its staff.

#### **ACTIONS**

1. Ensure that information on the full range of flexible working options is available to all members of staff
2. Continue to facilitate applications for flexible working patterns consistent with the effective delivery of the Department's mission and goals.
3. Explore options for teleworking

### **2. HEALTH PROMOTION**

The promotion of the health and well-being of staff is a key factor in supporting work/life balance. It can also improve sick leave and absenteeism rates.

#### **ACTIONS**

1. Explore options for providing a health screening service for staff.
2. Provide appropriate training/educational courses to encourage good health practices e.g. stress management.
3. Promote the full range of services provided by the Employee Assistance Officer.
4. Examine best practice in the area of health promotion and, taking account of the latter, prepare an appropriate Health Promotion Policy Statement for the Department.

### **3. RETIREMENT**

A work/life balance should ensure that staff are encouraged to have sufficient interests outside work for a successful transition to retirement. Furthermore, retirement is a very important milestone and should be recognised and acknowledged as such.

#### **ACTIONS**

1. Identify training/education opportunities for staff in mid-career to reflect on work/life balance issues.
2. Provide opportunity for relevant staff to participate in a pre-retirement course.
3. Provide support to retired members and their families, on matters such as pensions, through the Employee Assistance Service.
4. Ensure that retirement occasions are acknowledged in an appropriate manner.
5. Explore opportunities for involving retired members in Departmental social activities and for utilising their experience for Interview Boards, Committees etc

## **SECTION 4 – PROMOTING A POSITIVE WORKING ENVIRONMENT**

A positive working environment is one in which all staff are treated with dignity and respect. Policies on harassment and bullying, health and safety, equality of opportunity, grievance and discipline and internal communications can all contribute to a positive working environment.

### **1. HARASSMENT, SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND BULLYING**

The Civil Service policy on harassment, sexual harassment and bullying is set out in a document entitled "A positive working environment" and is further supported by the civil service charter on "Dignity in the Workplace". The policy asserts the right of every employee to carry out his or her duties free from any form of harassment, sexual harassment or bullying.

#### **ACTIONS**

1. Promote awareness of Civil Service policy on harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.
2. Develop appropriate Departmental procedures, consistent with the central Civil Service policy, including an internal complaints procedure and training programmes, to deal with harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.
3. Promote awareness of the role of the Employee Assistance Officer in cases of harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.
4. Promote awareness of the Department's IT and e-mail usage policies which support a positive working environment.

### **2. HEALTH AND SAFETY**

Promoting a safe working environment, including by ensuring that the Department's legal obligations in this area are met, is an important element in ensuring a positive working environment.

#### **ACTIONS**

1. Ensure that the Health and Safety Statements of the Department and the Cultural Institutions are updated in consultation with Unions and staff and monitor implementation.
2. Reactivate staff/management health and safety committees (central Department and Cultural Institutions have their own Committees) to monitor health and safety issues and to make recommendations for action, including

in relation to matters such as resources, training, accommodation and risk assessment.

3. Ensure adequate flow of information and advice to the Cultural Institutions in relation to Health and Safety requirements, including by their representation on the central Department's Health and Safety Committee.

### **3. EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY IN THE WORKPLACE**

The Civil Service is committed to the development and implementation of improved measures to support equality of opportunity in recruitment, promotion and work practices. Together with the Civil Service "Gender Equality Policy", the document entitled "Diversity in the Civil Service" sets out the central policy on implementing equality of opportunity in the Civil Service.

Equality of Opportunity means that, in employment, no-one will receive less favourable treatment than someone else because of his or her gender, marital or family status, sexual orientation, religious belief, age, disability, race, or membership of the travelling community. Equality of opportunity means creating a working environment in which differences are respected and in which people are valued as individuals. Equality of opportunity requires the removal of barriers to the full participation in the workplace of those who have been excluded in the past.

There is no provision for positive discrimination in the Employment Equality Act 1998. In practice this means that, where there is a target for recruitment or promotion of an under-represented group, it would be unlawful to make selection decisions solely in order to achieve that target. Positive action is permitted under the Employment Equality Act 1998. Positive action allows targets and affirmative action initiatives to be introduced, for example, to facilitate an increased representation of women in senior management grades, in accordance with the civil service policy on gender equality.

Affirmative action in accordance with the civil service gender equality policy includes: having a formal open and transparent mobility policy which ensures that gender bias does not influence the assignment of staff; promotions, whether by competition or other agreed methods, are based on merit; staff are encouraged to compete in promotion competitions; assessment of suitability for promotion is based on the ability to fulfil the criteria for the grade or post; family-friendly working arrangements are provided to the maximum extent possible, consistent with the effective and efficient operation of the Department; provision of training to develop skills and competencies; gathering of factual information in relation to participation in promotion competitions.

#### **ACTIONS**

1. Promote awareness of and provide appropriate training on the Civil Service policy on equality of opportunity.

2. Prepare a Departmental statement on equality of opportunity.
3. Integrate the equality actions contained in the Civil Service policy on equality of opportunity with the relevant internal HR policies to ensure that such policies (e.g. promotion) are equality proofed.
4. Monitor (consistent with Data Protection legislation and the need to maintain confidentiality) the gender and age profile of applicants, participants and panellists in internal promotion and recruitment (latter applies only to Cultural Institutions) competitions and identify any trends emerging.
5. Prepare a report on career progression to the senior Departmental grades within the Cultural Institutions and make appropriate recommendations.
6. Endeavour to increase female representation as follows by end 2005:
  - in the AP grade from 41% to 45%
  - in the PO grade from 33% to 40%
7. Provide appropriate support and assistance to staff with disabilities, including in areas such as accommodation, equipment, training and by the appointment of a disability liaison officer (s).
8. Monitor target of 3% for employment of staff with disabilities.

#### **4. GRIEVANCE AND DISCIPLINE**

Clear policies on grievance and discipline, with which staff and line managers are familiar, are essential in underpinning a positive working environment.

##### **ACTIONS**

1. Promote awareness of Civil Service procedures on grievance and discipline.
2. Provide appropriate training, guidelines and advisory support to line managers in the application of grievance and disciplinary procedures.

#### **5. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS**

The ability to access and share knowledge and information and the availability of opportunities for staff to participate in appropriate discussion fora help foster an atmosphere of trust and partnership as well as contributing to the enhancement of work performance.

##### **ACTIONS**

1. Continue the circulation of MAC minutes to all staff.
2. Encourage staff participation in relevant committees such as Partnership and related groups.
3. Line Managers to hold regular business planning and review meetings with staff.

4. Programme of staff information sessions on work of various Divisions of Department, including Cultural Institutions, to be continued and maximum staff participation to be encouraged.
5. Maximise IT as a mechanism for information distribution and sharing and ensure that all staff have access to IT facilities e.g. e-mail.
6. Line Managers to ensure that PMDS is used as a vehicle for providing ongoing feedback to individual staff members.
7. Line Managers to explore the potential for preparing work/best practice manuals in their areas of work.
8. All personnel-related issues affecting an individual staff member to be communicated by HR Unit/Line Managers in an appropriate and timely manner.

# **IMPLEMENTATION PLAN FOR HUMAN RESOURCE**

## **STRATEGY 2003 –2005**

The Implementation Plan following identifies each of the actions contained in the HR Strategy and the time-frame within which each action will be delivered.

The Implementation Plan has been divided into two sections:

- the first section sets out the key HR actions which will require completion within a specific timeframe;
- the second section sets out the ongoing HR actions which will become part of day-to-day HR practice in the Department

Key HR actions to which priority must be given, primarily to meet centrally established Civil Service modernisation objectives, include:

- ***PMDS***
- ***Training and Development***
- ***Re-orientation of the HRM function***
- ***Equality of Opportunity***
- ***Promotion Policy***
- ***Health and Safety***

Progress reports on the overall implementation of the HR Strategy will be submitted to the Partnership Committee every six months.

## **SECTION 1 – KEY HR ACTIONS**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIME- FRAME</b>
PMDS training for all staff to be completed.	<b>March 2003</b>
First full cycle of PMDS to be completed throughout the Department.	<b>March 2003</b>
All staff to start the next cycle of PMDS in tandem with business planning process and thereafter on an annual basis.	<b>March 2003</b>
Reactivate staff/management health and safety committees (central Department and Cultural Institutions have their own Committees).	<b>April 2003</b>
Monitor the gender and age profile of applicants, participants and panellists in promotion and recruitment competitions (latter applies only to Cultural Institutions) and identify any trends emerging.	<b>Monitoring System to be developed by July 2003 for general service grades and put in place backdated to all relevant competitions since the formation of D/Arts, Sport and Tourism and continued on an ongoing basis thereafter. Further consideration will be given as to how data will be collected for Departmental grades in Cultural Institutions.</b>
Ensure that all Interview Boards have a training/advice pack to include guidance on issues such as equality of opportunity and record-keeping.	<b>Current training/advice pack reviewed in time for next internal promotion competition .</b>
Ensure that the Health and Safety Statements of the Department and the Cultural Institutions are updated and monitored.	<b>Commencing April 2003 through re-activated Health and Safety Committees.</b>
A Policy/Strategy Statement on Training to be prepared	<b>June 2003</b>
Detailed training programme to be prepared and implemented for the central Department	<b>Detailed training programme prepared July 2003.</b>
Identify the current roles and responsibilities of line managers in relation to specific HR issues and prepare appropriate guidelines and provide ongoing advisory support to assist line managers in carrying out those roles.	<b>July 2003</b>
Ensure that line managers and staff are familiar with the conditions and procedures for awarding increments and for progression to higher scales	<b>August 2003</b>

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIME-FRAME</b>
Provide appropriate training, guidelines and advisory support to line managers in the application of grievance and disciplinary procedures	<b>Guidelines by August 2003</b> <b>Relevant training to be built into detailed training programme</b>
Detailed implementation plan to be prepared setting out the procedures to be followed for dealing with all aspects of the induction process for new staff. If necessary, implementation plan specific to the Cultural Institutions to be prepared	<b>General Induction Plan, August 2003</b> <b>Cultural Institutions Plan, September 2003.</b>
Detailed training programme to be prepared and implemented for the Cultural Institutions.	<b>Detailed training Programme prepared September 2003.</b>
Develop system for in-house monitoring of compliance with PMDS	<b>September 2003</b>
Develop methodology and train staff for implementation of Upward feedback	<b>Sept-Nov 2003</b>
Provide appropriate training/educational courses to encourage good health practices e.g. stress management.	<b>October 2003</b> <b>Relevant training to be built into detailed training programme</b>
Identify training/education opportunities for staff in mid-career to reflect on work/life balance issues	<b>October 2003</b> <b>Relevant training to be built into detailed training programme</b>
Explore options for providing a health screening service.	<b>October 2003.</b>
Prepare a revised plan for the re-orientation of the HRM function, which will also take account of the implications of the full implementation of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997	<b>November 2003</b>
Develop appropriate Departmental procedures to deal with harassment, sexual harassment and bullying	<b>November 2003</b>
Undertake PMDS climate study	<b>December 2003</b>
Review and assess the impact of the use of contracts in the employment of staff to perform core work in the Cultural Institutions and make recommendations in this regard.	<b>December 2003</b>
Skills' audit to be carried out	<b>December 2003</b>
Endeavour to achieve expenditure target of 4% of pay roll for training	<b>Aim to meet expenditure target by end 2003</b>
Prepare a Departmental statement on equality of opportunity	<b>January 2004</b>

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIME-FRAME</b>
Develop a mobility policy for general service grades	<b>February 2004</b>
Examine best practice in the area of health promotion and, taking account of the latter, prepare an appropriate Health Promotion Policy Statement for the Department.	<b>February 2004</b>
Review current systems of internal promotion and promotion related assessment for all grades.	<b>February 2004</b>
Examine the possibilities for providing mobility opportunities for Departmental grades, including the possibility of short-term transfers involving both general service and Departmental grades	<b>March 2004</b>
Explore options for teleworking	<b>March 2004</b>
Prepare a promotion policy statement for all grades	<b>April 2004</b>
Explore the possibilities for mobility outside the Department.	<b>May 2004</b>
Prepare a report on career progression to the senior Departmental grades within the Cultural Institutions and make appropriate recommendations	<b>May 2004</b>
Explore the possibilities for encouraging "mentoring" as a training mechanism.	<b>June 2004</b>
Consider options for acknowledging length of service	<b>July 2004</b>
<p>Endeavour to increase female representation as follows by end 2005:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ in the AP grade from 41% to 45%</li> <li>➤ in the PO grade from 33% to 40%</li> </ul>	<b>Aim to meet targets by end 2005</b>

## **SECTION 2 – ONGOING HR ACTIONS**

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIME-FRAME</b>
Continue to encourage the development of specialist HR Skills in the Department.	Ongoing as part of implementation of Departmental Training Plan.
Optimise relationship with the Civil Service Commission, based on the job profile information emerging under PMDS, to assist in the filling of vacancies	Ongoing
Line Managers to identify any significant skills/experience gaps through business planning/PMDS processes	Ongoing
HR Unit to provide information on skills/experience of new staff to the relevant line manager.	Ongoing
PMDS training to be provided to all new staff.	Within three months of arrival of new staff member
PMDS to be used by line managers to clarify the roles of and to improve communication with new staff.	Ongoing
Line Managers to ensure that PMDS is used as a vehicle for providing ongoing feedback to individual staff members.	Ongoing
Mobility/career planning to be discussed as part of implementation of PMDS at individual level.	Ongoing
Senior Line Managers to ensure that PMDS is integrated into the work of the Department and acknowledged as an important activity in context of role profiles, performance reviews and business plans.	Ongoing
Line Managers to ensure that PMDS process is rolled out and implemented at individual level.	Ongoing
PMDS to be monitored and evaluated on an ongoing basis with regular reports to MAC and the Partnership Committee	Ongoing
Senior Line Managers to provide leadership in the area of recognition and feedback in relation to performance by staff	Ongoing
Develop planned approach to succession planning including by endeavouring to improve the practice in relation to notice of departure from the Department.	Ongoing

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIME-FRAME</b>
Consolidate business planning as the primary reference for work prioritisation and staff resource allocation, including by putting in place a procedure to ensure that business planning information can be shared on a cross-Divisional basis.	Ongoing following finalisation of business plans.
Line Managers to hold regular business planning and review meetings with staff	Ongoing
Terms and conditions of probation and monitoring thereof made clear to line managers and new staff immediately on assignment.	Commencing June 2003 and thereafter on an ongoing basis.
Offer feedback to all promotion candidates	Ongoing as each promotion competition takes place
Promote the full range of services provided by the Employee Assistance Officer.	Ongoing
Provide support to retired members and their families, on matters such as pensions, through the Employee Assistance Service	Ongoing
Ensure adequate flow of information and advice to Cultural Institutions in relation to Health and Safety requirements, including by their representation on the central Department's Health and Safety Committee.	Ongoing through re-activated Health and Safety Committee.
Ensure that information on the full range of flexible working options is available to all members of staff	Ongoing
Continue to facilitate applications for flexible working patterns consistent with the effective delivery of the Department's mission and goals	Ongoing
Ensure that adequate training is in place to support specific "horizontal" areas such as Freedom of Information.	Ongoing as part of implementation of detailed training programme.
Provide opportunity for relevant staff to participate in a pre-retirement course	Ongoing as part of implementation of detailed training programme
Ensure that retirement occasions are acknowledged in an appropriate manner	Ongoing
Explore opportunities for involving retired members in Departmental social activities and for utilising their experience	Ongoing
Promote awareness of civil service policy on harassment, sexual harassment and bullying.	Ongoing

<b>ACTION</b>	<b>TIME-FRAME</b>
Promote awareness of the Department's IT and e-mail usage policies	Ongoing
Promote awareness of and provide appropriate training on the civil service policy on equality of opportunity.	Ongoing as part of implementation of detailed training programme
Integrate the equality actions contained in the civil service policy on equality of opportunity with the relevant internal HR policies	Ongoing as individual policy areas are developed
Provide appropriate support and assistance to staff with disabilities	Ongoing
Monitor target of 3% for employment of staff with disabilities	Ongoing
Promote awareness of civil service procedures on grievance and discipline.	Ongoing
Continue the circulation of MAC minutes to all staff.	Ongoing
Encourage staff participation in relevant committees such as Partnership/related groups	Ongoing as vacancies arise
Maximise IT as a mechanism for information distribution and sharing and ensure that all staff have access to IT facilities e.g. e-mail.	Ongoing
All personnel-related issues affecting an individual staff member to be communicated by HR Unit/Line Managers in an appropriate and timely manner.	Ongoing
Aim to provide an Induction Training course for new staff within three months of their arrival in the Department. Numbers permitting, induction training courses to be open to other staff members who feel they may benefit from attendance.	Within three months of arrival of new staff member
Programme of staff information sessions on work of various Divisions of Department including Cultural Institutions	Programme to be continued to cover as many areas as possible
Review and Evaluate Training Policy and Programmes	Ongoing as individual training programmes carried out.
Line Managers to explore the potential for preparing work/best practice manuals in their areas of work.	Ongoing
Keep merit award scheme under review	Annually

