PSC attends the CAPAM, benchmarks on Asia

Namibia will soon rank top on UN e-Gov rankings

Secretariat’s visit to Eastern Africa pays off

Working Ideas!
View Point!

Mr. Benhardt Kukuri, Deputy Permanent Secretary,
Public Service Commission Secretariat

The Secretariat of the Public Service Commission is an important conduit in assisting the Commission in achieving its stated mandate and objectives. The Secretariat consists of three Key Results Areas namely: 1. Staffing, 2. Monitoring and Evaluation and 3. Grievances, Misconduct, and Appeals.

In terms of Staffing it is important to be guided by the relevant enabling acts that regulate the entry and exit of staff members into the Public Service of Namibia. It is therefore important to ensure that all submissions before the Commission has been subjected to the litmus test of fairness and the best candidate for the job.

The Secretariat has also an obligation to ensure that decisions of the Commission are implemented by the various Offices/Ministries/Agencies and Regional Councils. As a result the Monitoring and Evaluation Division is tasked with ensuring this important tasks through compliance audits and also through following up on staff members complaints directed to the Commission across the Public Service.

A critical aspect in disciplinary control in the Public Service is the ensurance of procedural and substantive fairness in the management of disciplinary cases across Offices/Ministries/Agencies and Regional Councils.

As Head of the Secretariat my responsibility is to ensure that the team across the Key Results Areas are in unison and focussed on the task of serving the Public Service Commission. The job requires networking skills, a great deal of listening skills, reading and scrutinising, defending positions and articulating the Commission perspective and Decisions.

I found on board a well-functioning system brought about by my predecessor Mr. Morimunu Kavitjene who has become a household name in Public Service. The Secretariat of the Public Service Commission is there to serve the Commission and we will just do that to the best of our abilities.

This in-house newsletter is one way to serve the Commission by creating a broader public understanding of its core functions and educating both the public and stakeholders about relevant human resource related policy matters.

Enjoy the reading,
Happy Christmas and Prosperous New Year!

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THE PUBLIC SERVANT
The Public Servant is a quarterly newsletter published by the Public Service Commission and produced by the Public Service Commission Secretariat. The Public Servant is one of the channels through which information and news about the Public Service is disseminated in and around Namibia.

The editor welcomes news items, press releases, letters, feature articles and photos relating to public service matters. Any contributions and enquiries should be addressed to the editor.

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The statements and opinions expressed in this newsletter do not inevitably reflect those of the Public Service Commission or its Secretariat.
Editor’s Note

Shuu what a marathon year! Most of us will agree that everything was accelerating abnormally this year; days merging into weeks, months and a year pass by in a wink, or so it seems. In no time at all, its Christmas!

Was it because this year was filled with many dramatic activities including the World Cup in Brazil; the missing Malaysian flight the numerous deaths of our gallant freedom fighters, the chiefs or Nelson Mandela; was it because we were glued on our screens not to lose out on any bits of the news regarding the Oscar Pistorious trial; or was it because you have moved offices and landed yourself in a sizzling hot seat of endless deadlines in which you either had to shape-up or ship-out? Well, I guess we all have diverse conclusions. The latter, however, maybe relatively applicable to me.

I have never been exposed to a job where I had to start running where others have walked. In a normal circumstance, one’s first days at work are usually characterised by boredom, reading a lot of documents your supervisor advises you to read to help you slowly understand your job designation and the new working environment in general.

However, for me my first day as a Personal Assistant to the Public Service Commission (PSC) was straight to the boardroom. However, being a journalist and a good listener helped me carve my way through with minimal disappointments, or so I hope. It was a sharp learning curve.

This curve tossed me into the big shoes of Mr. Kayele Kambombo—a retired seasoned journalist, former Personal Assistant to the PSC and the founding editor of The Public Servant since April 2010. I am dignified to take this newsletter where he left it off to greater heights—with a creative twist and a youthful flair.

With that, welcome to the 11th edition of The Public Servant. In this edition, we will bring you interesting and informative stories relating to how Namibia plans to achieve Vision 2030 through comprehensive usage of ICT and valuable lessons from benchmarking trips to Eastern Africa, U.K and Asia.

Join us also as we unpack the findings of the recent Citizen Survey for the Namibian Public Service. The survey is aimed at improving service delivery in the Public Service. Coupled with that, in the article Working Ideas!, South African Chief Executive Officer for CPSI gives us tips on creative ways to building learning organisations for improved service delivery.

It is equally interesting to note that the preliminary Namibian Public Service Commission’s Report for 2013/2014 indicates that the Public Service is busy turning tables in implementing gender equality as more female staff members were trained last year across O/M/As.

Enjoy the reading as we further explore What on earth is Open-Source Government?

Rhingo Mutambo, CPRP Editor
A delegation of Public Service Commission (PSC) of Namibia led by its Chairperson Amb. Eddie S. Amkongo participated in the Biennial Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management (CAPAM) conference held in Putrajaya, Malaysia from 19 to 21 October 2014.

Apart from the Chairperson, the delegation was comprised of the PSCS Deputy Permanent Secretary; Mr. Benhardt Kukuri, Deputy Director for Staffing; Ms. Inga Ndaningina and Chief Human Resources Policy Analyst; Ms. Lydia Nguasena.

This event was held in collaboration with the Malaysian Administrative Modernisation and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU), and in conjunction with the Commonwealth Secretariat’s Forum of Public Service Ministers under the central theme of Public Service Transformation: A new conversation.

CAPAM’s Biennial Conference is a prestigious gathering of nearly 1000 senior civil servants, ministers, academics, public service practitioners and partner organizations from the Commonwealth nations. Hence, Namibia’s Deputy Prime Minister; Hon. Marco Hausiku and the Office of the Prime Minister’s Permanent Secretary; Ms. Nangula Mbako also grazed the event.

The conference agenda was designed to stimulate dialogue on topical issues, theoretical and practical knowledge exchange and networking to an international audience for the future across the Commonwealth member states.

Alongside CAPAM, the PSCS delegation also visited a number of public service institutions in the Southeast Asia countries of Singapore and Korea to benchmark on the recruitment policies, performance management, rewards and recognition, approach to attracting, developing and retaining expertise, online administration system and human resource management scheme of those countries.

PSC Chairperson Eddie Amkongo and Deputy Permanent Secretary Benhardt Kukuri met with the Chairperson of the Singaporean Public Service, Mr. Eddie Teo and the Chairperson of the Malaysian Public Service Commission; Mr. Tan Sri Mahmood Adam as well as officials from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), Korea Institute of Public Administration and Ministry of Security and Public Administration.

In Korea, the Chairperson met with the First Vice Minister of the Ministry of Safety and Public Administration (MOSPA); Mr. Park Kyoung who was fascinated by the growth of bilateral relations between the two countries.

Part of the benchmarking visits, particularly to MOSPA in Korea, was to benchmark on Korea’s advanced system in the information and communication technology for digitalizing public services. The team also learned a great deal about how the Korean government deals with staff promotions.
In the satisfactory rating survey, known as the Citizen Survey for the Namibian Public Service, indicates that Namibians are generally happy with various government services across Offices, Ministries and Agencies (O/M/As).

The survey was facilitated by the Office of the Prime Minister and conducted between 30th October and 15th November 2013 as baseline study for the Performance Management System (PMS). This simply means it provides results on service delivery across the Public Service against which future service delivery improvements can be measured. Twelve O/M/As that are deemed to have direct contact with the public participated in the survey.

A total of 1 683 individual customer questionnaires were administered and a further 386 business customers provided a statistically confident sample.

The Efficiency Charter Unit Deputy Director, Mr. Licius Mbaindjikua said “the samples for both individual citizens and business customers reflect the views of the Khomas Region as the seat of Governance and Public Service Administration and excluded the other Regions due to budgetary constraints. However, it was a first attempt to solicit citizen views on service delivery and government hopes to get a broader representation base in the future by extending the survey to other Regions”.

The citizens scored the Ministry of Mines and Energy at 70% while the Ministry of Labour and Social Services scored 65% the highest on the individual citizen ratings while the business communities scored the Ministry of Mines and Energy the highest on service delivery with 62%.

The survey revealed above average satisfaction ratings from both citizen survey (54%) and business customers (50%).

The range of results from individual Ministries were, however, from low to 44% to a high of 70 on the individual citizen ratings while the survey recorded a low of 34% and a high of 62% for business customer ratings.

Interestingly, the survey findings also revealed that both the individual citizens and business customers are of the view that government Offices, Ministries and Agencies are doing good in the information provision exercise. The Charter’s Information principle scored the highest with 62% on the individual citizen ratings, while the business front felt government is doing 60% good on this principle.

The business community also felt that government is doing well on the Courtesy and Helpfulness principle of the Charter with 54%. The individual citizens scored this principle at 60%.

On the contrary, the citizens and the business community were not satisfied with the quality of service, conditions of public facilities and the manner in which consultations are conducted.

The business customers scored the quality of service at 43% and felt that the principle of Non-discrimination which compels government to ensure that services are available and provided equally and fairly to all, was at 47%.

The individual citizen’s satisfaction ratings scored the Charter’s principle of Consultation and Participation and physical condition of public facilities such as public toilets at 43% and 45% respectively.

The study also revealed that the demographic difference (especially age and gender) of participants both the individual and business customers influenced the results. It is, thus, interesting to note that citizens over the age of 43 were significantly more positive about public service delivery than the younger citizens. Males are more positive about service delivery than females.
Prime Minister Dr. Hage Geingob is adamant that with the launch of Namibia’s e-Government Strategic Action Plan and other government ICT initiatives, the country is on its way to the top of the United Nations e-Government index rankings.

The Prime Minister made this remarks when he launched the e-Government Strategic Action Plan for the Public Service of Namibia (2014-2018), on 16 September 2014 in Windhoek.

Currently, Namibia ranks 8th in Africa on the United Nations e-Government index2 Survey of 2014, which he says “is an improvement from the previous position of 10 in 2012”. Namibia ranks 17th in the world.

The foundation for the e-Government initiative has been laid through a number of ICT developments that have taken place both within the government and the country as a whole.

Some of these initiatives include the implementation of the Integrated Financial Management System by the Ministry of Finance, the Human Capital Management System and Electronic Documents and Records Management System by the Office of the Prime Minister and the National Population Registration System mainly implemented by the Ministry of Home Affairs and Immigration.

Namibia also boasts with a high rate of 113% of mobile phones usage and the landing point of a submarine communications cable at Swakopmund, called the Western Africa Cable System (WACS). This cable runs along the west coast of Africa linking Namibia and South Africa with the United Kingdom.

The introduction of an electronic voting system by the Electoral Commission of Namibia is another milestone in ICT development in the country.
Speaking at a recent workshop on the popularisation of the e-Government Strategic Plan among stakeholders, Mr. Dasa Padachi, General Manager for SILNAM Solutions which developed the plan said; “the e-Government Strategic Plan is actually more of a [public service] reform initiative than an ICT project.”

The development of ICT in the country is not an exercise operating in a vacuum. It is in line with the country’s National Development Plans (NDPs) and Vision 2030.

In its declaration, Vision 2030 stipulates that Namibia aims to become “a prosperous and industrialized nation, developed by her human resources, enjoying peace, harmony and political stability” and envisions itself being a “knowledge based economy” and a “technology driven nation”.

In the same breath, the Namibia’s Fourth NDP, lists “improved delivery of public services” as a desired outcome, and identified ICT as means for achieving this result area.

To further improve efficiency in the Public Service, the Government of Namibia has identified 20 strategies with defined objectives and ICT has been identified as the key enabler.

It is on this basis that Namibia has devised an action plan with an e-Government Readiness Model in keeping with broad developmental goals and the emerging trends in the e-Governance across the world. The model focuses on five (5) main categories namely; Policy, Access, Content, Capacity and Willingness.

At the moment, the overall e-Government readiness score for Namibia stands at 2.2 out of 4 points. Namibia scored an average of 2.11 out of 4 points for its readiness on a Policy level, 2.71 on Access measures, 1.95 on Content perspective, 2.21 on Capacity and 2.05 out of 4 points on Willingness to provide information and services electronically. Specific recommendations to improve the buy-in of all five categories were also well outlined in the action plan.

These ratings show that Namibia’s ICT development is at an average level and with the e-Government Strategic Plan things can be improved for the better.

“The benefits of e-Government are immense, citizens business and visitors alike will be able to access government information and online services with ease through multiple channels or in the comfort of their homes,” says the Prime Minister. He further said the project as big as the e-Government will have numerous challenges and thus called on all O/M/As and stakeholders to support the project to ensure the successful implementation of this reform initiative.
Common impediments of efficiency in Public Service recruitment process

The nation investors and tourists deserve the best and quality services, and these needed services can only be efficiently and effectively delivered once vacant positions in Government Office/Ministries and Agencies (O/M/As) as well as in Regional Councils (RCs) are efficiently filed/ staffed with competent public servants. A Public Servant is someone who serves the public. The purpose of this article therefore, is firstly to highlight the common impediments experienced by the Public Service Commission Secretariat (PSCS) when processing filling of posts through either promotion or transfers. In other words, these are challenges which compromise efficiency in recruitment processes. Secondly, it is hoped that this article will create awareness and sensitise O/M/As and RCs to be vigilant and eliminate or even minimise these kind of errors in future.

To start with, the function of Public Service Commission (PSC) among others in terms of article 113 of the Namibian Constitution a (aa) is to “advise the President and Government on the appointment of suitable persons to specific categories of employment in the public service, with special regard to balance structuring thereof”. Moreover PSC is the arbiter of transparency and fairness in human resource related matters in the public service. The focus of this article is on public servants who are appointed in terms of Public Service Act, 1995 (Act 13 of 1995), Regional Council Act, 1992 (Act 22 of 1992) as amended and Public Service Act, 1980 (Act 2 of 1980) as amended.

The PSC efficiency in some cases is hampered by some of the following common issues:

1. Advertisement Discrepancies

To ensure equity and transparency in the recruitment process, recruitment must be advertised to be inclusive of all Namibians who qualify rather than exclusive. In most cases O/M/As and RCs do not adhere to the following:

- Areas of search or medium of advertisement are not fairly determined and do not allow all Namibians to have reasonable opportunities to compete for vacant positions. In this case, O/M/As and RCs approached the PSC with nominations for recommendation without proper advertisement done.

- Vacancies are not advertised with clear and correct designations, grades, levels and scales of salaries of the posts as approved by the PSC.

- Posts are advertised without requirements as prescribed in Personnel Administration Measures (PAM) without the PSC’s prior authorisation.

- If O/M/As and RCs have additional requirements they are at liberty to indicate as such. Additional requirement should be clearly stipulated that: “preference will be given to candidate who meet such and such additional requirements”.

- Running period of advertisement is 4 weeks, a running period of less than 4 week are undesirable. If such a need exist to run advertisement with less running period, the PSC approval should be obtained in advance.

2. Shortlisting

In terms of PSSR B. II/ IV 3.2.1 (c) the purpose of shortlisting for interview is to reduce the number of applicants/ candidates for final selection, when there are too many applicants that will make the interview cumbersome and time consuming. It is therefore, optional for O/M/As and RCs to setup own shortlisting criteria within the framework of the advertisement requirements. It is however, painful to mention that some O/M/As and RCs do not adhere to their own shortlisting criteria. In some instances applicants who do not meet advertisement requirements are shortlisted, interviewed and nominated for recommendations. On the other hand some applicants who meet both advertisement requirements and shortlisting criteria are excluded and unfairly denied opportunities to be interviewed. At times O/M/As and RCs come up with vague shortlisting criteria to favour their preferred candidates.

3. None adherence to stipulated timeframe within which the PSC is expected to be approached with nominated candidate for its recommendation.

In terms of the recruitment charter, advertised vacancies are expected to be filled within three (3) months from the date of the advert. The PSC does not condone O/M/As and RCs request for filling of vacancies after 12 months has passed since the post was advertised. Delays in the finalisation of the recruitment process must be avoided at all costs. None adherence to stipulated recruitment timeframes result in denial or delay of efficient and effective government services. In addition, it can result in losing prospective candidates to other employers.

In terms of the PSC Circular No. 2 of 2011, once the recruitment process has started, it must be scrupulously adhered to and concluded within the timeframe.

4. Nomination of candidates

If possible three (3) nomination in order preferences should be made for filling of each post so as to avoid delays in cases where services of preferred candidates is for one reason or another no longer available. Moreover, O/M/As and RCs should be vigilant not to nominate candidates who are skipping grades, after all they are not supposed to have been interviewed in the first place.

5. Confirmation of Probation

In terms of the PSC policy only applicants whose probation have been confirmed before or on the date of advertisements should be shortlisted, interviewed and nominated.
6. Delay in the implementation of the PSC advices/directives. 

In some instances the PSC noticed that some candidates who meet both advertisement requirements and shortlisting criteria were excluded. In such instances the PSC gives directives to O/M/As and RCs to constitute new interview panels and re-interview candidates previously interviewed including those who were excluded. Instead O/M/As and RCs choose to delay or ignore such directives.

7. Reluctance in the implementation of PSC recommendations based on Affirmative Action provision

In some instances the PSC as per requirements of the Affirmative Action Act/policy recommend second or third candidates. Instead O/M/As and RCs often dispute or ignore such recommendations.

8. Nomination of foreign nationals

In some instances O/M/As and RCS nominate foreign nationals while there are Namibian nationals who were found suitable for appointment/promotion.

In conclusion, it is therefore, my humble request to Human Resource Practitioners and various role players in O/M/As and RCs to read relevant acts and staff rules which govern the recruitment process, and ensure adherence to their provisions at all time before approaching the PSC for recommendations.
Public Service Staff Rule BVII/I makes provision for the Commission to consider requests for the relaxation of appointment requirements, if proof is provided to its satisfaction that the applicant is suitable and that she/he has the potential or ability to satisfactorily perform the duties attached to the post concerned.

The Public Service Commission (PSC) has been inundated with boundless requests to relax appointment qualifications from government Offices, Ministries and Agencies (O/M/As) and Regional Councils (RCs). In some cases, it is disturbing when persons who do not meet the prescribed requirements are appointed by O/M/As and RCs, without due authorization, and the PSC is approached thereafter for relaxation of requirements.

In order to prevent compromising standards of performance, the PSC is reluctant to relax qualification requirements, although it is prepared to consider the relaxation of experience requirements in certain scares fields.

The Chairperson of the Public Service Commission has time and again raised a concern that while the advantage of relaxing requirements is that the post will be filled, the disadvantages are numerous and detrimental to the quality of service that the PSC ought to offer to O/M/As and RCs.

The lowering of appointment requirements is thus, not only a violation of laws and rules but has negative implications which might in a long run ethically compromise quality service to OMAAs and RCs. The relaxation of requirements may result in the deterioration of standards and quality of service, promotes incompetency and mediocrity in the Public Service and stagnation of skilled/ qualified staff members.

In view of the Namibian Public Service historical background discrepancies are often made at the point of setting up such standards/requirements. Hence, relaxation of requirements cannot be done away with completely. Meanwhile, O/M/As and RCs are discouraged from insisting to relax appointment requirements.

The PSC is busy interrogating the issue and consulting relevant Departments to develop a policy on relaxations and jumping of grades.
Namibia’s first green-house underway at the coast

Karin Miller Architect plans to complete Namibia’s first state-of-the-art green-house building for the Ministry of Mines and Energy (MME) at Swakopmund by 2015.

The objective of the green building by MME is to construct a structure that is cost effective and “as green as possible”, in the words of the architect, Jorit Miosel by taking advantage of renewable energy technologies that have a much lower environmental impact than conventional energy technologies.

The environmental benefits of renewable energy technologies are widely recognised in Namibia, but the contribution that they can make to energy security is unknown.

Renewable technologies can enhance energy security in electricity generation, heat supply and transportation. Access to cheap energy has become essential to the functioning of modern day Namibia.

Hence, the MME’s green building will be using low energy solar tubes for lighting. The solar tubes will be used to introduce natural lighting into most parts of the building, including offices. The use of such a renewable technology will minimise the usage of conventional electric lighting and LED plus low voltage lighting will also be utilised to keep the electricity consumption minimal in the building.

Furthermore, the structure will be constructed with high quality clay bricks that are manufactured locally by NAMCLAY in Uis to provide cool and natural temperatures on hot days and allow the building to get naturally warmer on cold days.

The project will also explore the usage of solar modules of Thin Film Technology as one of the renewable technologies. These are cost efficient high performance modules based on innovative and patented technologies and designed to provide a significant reduction in the overall cost of electricity generated.

As if that's not enough, Karin Miller Architect also thought of adding a water collection system to the idea. This system will be made from a piece of the boundary wall that will be used to harvest fog.

In addition, the recycling of waste water in a patented biological/mechanical process without chemical additives is a perfect method of recycling water for plants and outside taps as the water collected from the fog nets will be used coincidently with Hansgrohe Grey water recycling and Pontos AquaCycle.

“Human comfort entails that a person feels comfortable in an area with optimum temperature as well as means of receiving fresh air. The aim of achieving a more efficient building is derived from the thought of making use of alternative energy thus creating a comfortable human space as well as saving electricity,” says Miosel.

The building will, furthermore, have under floor heating through the installation of the Viega under floor heating closed water system which works efficiently in providing comfortable temperatures in the building as seasons change.

The building will also be made up of ventilated cavity & ceiling voids. These will supply heated air to heat pumps which in turn will need less energy to heat up water for the under floor heating system and air conditioning system.

The ceiling of this modern environmental friendly building will be made out of lamda board, which carries an eco-friendly stamp and offers the highest levels of insulation properties. The board has a high temperature resistance and is recyclable. Lamda board complies with the Montreal Protocol regarding ozone depletion and the Kyoto Protocol regarding global warming, in the manufacturing process.

The project that started on 7 February 2014, is projected to be completed by 7 October 2015 and will cost an approximate N$36 986 502.00.

The project has thus far employed 57 local people of which; 39 are brick layers, 6 carpenters, and 2 contractors. The number/s are expected to rise as more hands and thinking heads will be needed.
The Public Service Commission Secretariat’s visit to Kenya and Tanzania yielded good results, reported the team that undertook a benchmarking trip to the eastern African countries from 04-18 May 2014.

The Secretariat intends to improve the ways it conducts its business and also extends its scope of operation of its Division: Monitoring, Evaluation and Compliance (DMEC).

It, therefore, became eminent for the Secretariat to benchmark with other partners with similar units or divisions on the best practices regarding monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance and uniformity in application of various legal instruments that govern public service administration and management.

Kenya and Tanzania were identified for benchmarking on the basis of their best practices on how to practically carry out the function of monitoring and evaluation to ensure compliance in the Public Service.

The benchmarking visits were further aimed at strengthening and enriching the Division in terms of capacity and process re-engineering. Moreover, it was expected that thereafter, the Division will be able to develop a practical monitoring and evaluation framework based on the lessons learned.

During the benchmark visits, the team compared notes with counterparts on the maintenance of effective and efficient quality service delivery through a process of monitoring and evaluation systems.

The team consisted of Mr. Alfred T. Tjihambuma, Director: Human Resources Compliance, Mr. Fillemmon N. Shipena, Chief Human Resources Policy Analyst, Ms. Uamii Tjiuiju, Human Resources Policy Analyst and Ms. Maria Tokundu, Human Resources Policy Analyst from Division Monitoring, Evaluation and Compliance.

The team learnt that ideally the scope of the Monitoring, Evaluation and Compliance function includes; Human Resource Information System (HRIS), recruitment and selection processes, training and development, salary administration, compensation and benefits among others.


The team noted with delight how its counterpart Division: Compliance and Quality Assurance in Kenya embraces electronic systems in monitoring and recruitment system of staff members in the Public Service.

In the report, the DMEC recommended that to strengthen and improve its operations it is advisable to clarify where the Division derives its mandate from. The Division’s counterpart in Kenya derives its mandate from the Constitution while in United Republic of Tanzania, it derives its inspection/audit mandate from an Act of parliament.
More female staff members trained in 2013/2014

Over 4 424 staff members have been trained during the 2013/2014 financial year, indicates the Public Service Commission's (PSC) preliminary annual report findings. The report contains information on activities that the PSC has dealt with in the last financial year. One such activity is capacity building across Offices, Ministries and Agencies (O/M/As) and Regional Councils (RCs).

In comparative analysis of functional, administrative and management levels, the report indicates that more women were trained than men. The findings indicate that on a functional level, 1 246 women were trained, while 1 113 and 249 women were trained at administrative and management levels respectively.

The report further indicates that most of the capacity building programmes across the three categories were conducted locally and not outside the country. On a closer inspection the data indicates that most of the trainings, especially under the functional and administrative levels occurred at below management levels.

A closer ministerial analysis indicates that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism was the highest trainer during the period under review with a total number of 619 of trained staff members across the three levels, while the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Forestry scored second with 551 and the Ministry of Justice the third with 538. The Ministry of Health and Social Services came fourth with 498 staff members trained in the last fiscal year.

It is also interesting to note that the Ministry of Environment and Tourism scored higher than all O/M/As and RCs in the training of staff members at functional level with 256 males and 306 females trained. The Ministry of Health and Social Services scored the highest in the training of staff members under the administrative category with 120 males and 302 females. Health also trained more staff members than all O/M/As and RCs in the same year under the management category with 56 females, while the National Assembly scored the second highest under the latter category.

The statistics show not only the distribution of training and development opportunities across O/M/As and RCs, it also indicates government commitment to individual development plans in the Public Service. Most of these trainings varies from basic skills development to intermediate and advanced qualifying courses.

It also resonates a louder message about Namibia’s commitment to quality service delivery and fair representation of gender at functional, administrative and management levels in government.

In a nutshell, at total number of 2 182 public servants were trained at functional level, while 1 794 and 448 were trained at administrative and management levels respectively.

The table above shows the distribution of training and development opportunities in O/M/As and RCs across the management, administrative and functional levels during the 2013/2014 financial year.
Open source government is the governing principle which holds that citizens have the right to access the documents and proceedings of the government to allow for effective public opinion. It appeals to the idea that government should be open to public scrutiny and subject to public views.

It is described as a key hallmark of contemporary democratic practice and is often linked to the passing of freedom of information legislation.

Openness in government is often ascribed with generating government accountability. It allows citizens to keep their government in check thus reducing possible institutional corruption, bribery and inefficiency. It further encourages effective dissemination of information, which in turn helps produce greater knowledge society.

Openness and transparency are in fact some of the backbone both of the African Charter on Values and Principles of Public Service and Administration and the Namibian Public Service Charter. These charters encompass values that an accountable public service ought to portray as a tool to enhance government as an open source entity. They are also a flagship instrument that guides and aide in the realization of capable developmental states.

However, seemingly the implementation of both the African and the Namibian Charter continues to be marred with, amongst others, limited buy-in and ownership by government institutions, limited co-ordination and alignment of Public Service Reforms Initiatives in the Public Service. Hence, service delivery challenges remain inherent in many jurisdictions both in Africa and the world at large.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Marco Hausiku, expressed the same sentiment during his keynote address at the 2014 Africa Public Service Day celebrations (APSD), on 23 June 2014 at Rundu in Kavango-east region. The event was attended by participants from all walks of life including Ministers, Governors, and members of the Diplomatic Corps, Permanent Secretaries, Trade Unions and the media.

The Charters are supposed to be a broad framework aimed at guiding member states to develop, modernise and professionalize their public services. Such a process needs to be grounded in the main purpose of the Public Service which is to promote the general welfare of all citizens based on effective, efficient and economic delivery of public services.

The African Charter adequately addresses three key principles among others namely; transparency, participation and collaboration. These principles form the cornerstone of an open source government.

The principles simply posit that a government should be accountable by providing the public with information about what it is doing and allow its citizens to contribute working ideas and expertise. It also promotes the effectiveness of government by encouraging partnerships and cooperation within government, across levels of government, and between the government and private institutions and citizens.

Namibia has some policy and legislative provisions to ensure ‘access to information’ as provided for in Article 6 of the African Public Service Charter and cascaded into its own Charter under the principle of “Transparency” and “Information” sharing.

However, the questions are; whether we actively live up to the challenge of openness and transparency; whether we do engage citizens in a symmetrical information sharing model in the formulation, planning and implementation of policy developments or projects and programmes implementations; and whether we are open to public scrutiny in all actions taken in Public Service.

During a recent two days Intra-regional Workshop aimed at popularising the values of the African Public Service Charter, held in Windhoek from 15 to 16 October 2014, the Namibian Government’s Director for Efficiency Charter Unit, in the Office of the Prime Minister said the notion of “open-source government” in not fully practical without complementing policies in Namibia.

The Media Institute of Southern Africa (MISA) indicated in its statement on World Press Freedom Day, 3 May 2010 – that the right to know remains a dream for the people in Southern Africa.

Commissioner Wilma Deetlefs from the Public Service Commission of Namibia echoed the same sentiments at the workshop saying, currently, there are still no Access to Information legislation in Namibia—an ideal which is dear to her heart.

Contrary, we have the apartheid era “Protection of Information Act of 1984” still on our statutes.

Media and Political Analysts often maintain that the current legislative framework is not conducive to facilitating the right of citizens to access information and Namibia’s Constitution, whilst guaranteeing the right to Freedom of Expression, does not expressly provide for the right to access to Information.
BUILDING LEARNING ORGANISATIONS VIA KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

The Chief Executive Office of the South African Centre for Public Service Innovation (CPSI), Ms. Thuli Radebe is a hands-on administrator. The Public Servant caught up with her after a two days Intra-Regional Workshop aimed at popularising the values of the African Public Service Charter, held in Windhoek from 15 to 16 October 2014, to share practical ways of building a learning organisation through knowledge management initiatives. Hereunder we publish her learning experiences tips with the Namibia Public Service verbatim.

Skills database
The premise for the skills database was simple: We were not primarily interested in a person’s qualification but rather in what the person knows. We started by posing simple questions to staff members to get to know them better: Where have you been? This was to understand their experience that they might not have been utilising. Are you an analyst or did you perhaps do action research for an NGO before joining government? Are you an experienced facilitator or counsellor? What courses did you do (e.g. a labour relations course)? The idea was to see what internal capacity existed to address a particular challenge.

In order to get people to volunteer the relevant information, we added a number of personal items, such as birthdays and other interesting information such as interests and hobbies. The portal became a social tool because staff were congratulated on their birthdays on the intranet, in our newsletter and via email. Those that graduated were also congratulated publicly for their achievements. These personal touches played a critical role as staff members felt that they mattered and had value and that their contributions and skill sets were of value to the organisation.

Study Tour Register
The skills database was complemented by a study tour register. This register responded to two challenges, namely that officials that had the privilege to go on a study tour, did not share their learnings or documentation with others in the organisation. This register ensured that the lessons learned were captured for future reference. The second problem related to the fact that departments would send different groups to the same country over and over, and that officials were not aware of what was previously done. The register allowed those planning study tours and those approving, to first peruse the records for similar visits, findings and recommendations. The decision makers would then ensure continuity and linkages whilst those going on study tours would be better prepared for the visits.

Departmental Library
Officials would go on study tours and bring back packs of material, case studies, publications or multimedia. Likewise officials would be funded to attend conferences, again bringing back material. Such material does not ‘belong’ to the official and can be used to the benefit of all staff. So we decided to start a departmental library where, after a study tour, officials could deposit their material for broader use. Soon it included books received for reviews and where a bit of savings were achieved, those savings were channelled towards buying subject-specific books. Soon the library grew into a substantial collection where policy makers or those studying could find the latest publications and global best practices.

Brown bag sessions
One of the more informal ways of sharing was “brown bag” sessions where staff could gather during lunch and a fellow employee would share some of his / her learnings (for example after a study tour). Staff would bring their own lunch (yes, we allowed lunch in the library!) whilst for an hour engaging with an official that just returned from a study tour or conference or who had just completed a thesis. In this way we ensured that tacit knowledge became explicit.

Knowledge management is an elusive subject that can easily become just another fad. By keeping it simple and practical, staff come to appreciate its importance. After all, we all have an inborn need to learn and understand.
Personnel Movements

New Staff Members

Maria Tuyapeni, Human Resource Policy Analyst, Grade 7, 01 August 2014*

Tolata Tyrives, Human Resource Policy Analyst, Grade 7, 01 August 2014*

Rosco Itwa, Human Resource Policy Analyst, Grade 7, *01 August 2014

Loide Andreas, Human Resource Policy Analyst, Grade 7, 01 August 2014*


* Date of effect