

# TOP MANAGEMENT BENCHMARKING ON HR BEST PRACTICES IN AUSTRALIA

*Inspired by relevant best HR practices in Australia, four programs are now adapted in CSC to make it more strategic and developmental: ISO accreditation, multi-sectoral participation, development of public sector leadership competencies, and PRIME-HRM.*



## BACKGROUND

Civil Service Commission (CSC), as central Human Resource (HR) institution of the Philippine government, continuously strengthens HR systems and standards of public agencies to support good governance and reforms. In 2010, in line with this mandate, CSC launched a five-year road map for development and reforms with six strategic priorities: developing competent and credible civil servants; exemplifying integrity and excellence in public service; cultivating harmony, morale and wellness in the workplace; effective and efficient performance of quasi-judicial functions; building partnerships and strengthening linkages; and managing support mechanisms. At core of the roadmap is the goal of developing an efficient and effective HR management and development (HRMD) system for the bureaucracy. PAHRODF assisted CSC through a benchmarking trip to Australia in 2011 to introduce CSC leaders to best practices and help them develop strategic directions in formulating HRMD policies, programs and standards in support of CSC's reform agenda and change journey. ■

# INTERVENTION OVERVIEW

The intervention was meant to be an eye-opener and introduce CSC's top management to best international HR practices - as the Commission embarked on its strategic HR and organisation development (OD) journey. It brought eleven senior CSC executives to Australia, acknowledged as having government agencies implementing best HRM policies, systems and practices, to appreciate and learn first hand how strategic HR systems effectively worked in government agencies. They met with officials of the Public Service Commission in Canberra and Brisbane. The senior executives were introduced to strategic HR and OD systems, principles, processes and practices such as recruitment and selection, competency modelling, performance management, change management and talent management. They were also familiarised with different strategies available for improving public sector HR processes and leadership paradigms to deliver excellent public service and sustain effective and efficient client management. ■

## COMMITTED RESULTS



## IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

The participants identified relevant best HR practices in Australia that, through their re-entry action plans (REAP), can be adapted in CSC to make it more strategic and developmental. Three REAPs are worth noting: ISO accreditation, multi-sectoral participation in CSC, and

development of public sector leadership competencies. These REAPs are already making positive changes in the Commission. CSC has already received ISO certification for case adjudication, examination, external training services, and appointments processing. It is in process of replicating “Embracing Community of Practice Through Multi-Sectoral Governance Coalition” to other regions. The new leadership and management competencies have been adopted, and are being institutionalised through a certification program that will include these leadership competencies in the qualification standards of second level public sector division chiefs. CSC is also enhancing its accreditation program through the Program to Institutionalise Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM), another REAP identified and was developed because of this intervention. ■

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## ASSESSMENT



### Relevance

The intervention is relevant. It responds to CSC’s need to strengthen its credibility as the central HR institution of the Philippine Government. Understanding how benchmark organisations conduct HR management helps CSC develop strategies to implement best practices.



### Effectiveness

The intervention is effective. The participants were able to identify relevant best HR practices in Australia and adapted them in CSC to make it more strategic and developmental. Four CSC initiatives that came out of the intervention worth noting are: ISO accreditation, multi-sectoral participation in CSC, development of public sector leadership competencies and the Program to Institutionalise Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM).



### Impact

The intervention is already exhibiting development impact. Through the initiatives that were developed as a result of the participants’ REAPs, such as PRIME HRM, the delivery of CSC key services have definitely improved. Beyond that, moreover, improved HR practices of CSC’s clients would also result in the improvement of their own delivery of key services to their constituents.



### Sustainability

The intervention outcomes are sustainable. The initiatives that were developed as a result of the intervention are already being implemented in CSC. They are also fully supported by top management and are already mainstreamed into CSC’s systems and processes. ■

*“I must say the benchmarking intervention started it all for CSC. If it was not for benchmarking, our minds would not be opened on how we can be strategic in our function at CSC. Sure, we’ve been sent abroad for various conferences before. But there were no deliberate attempt to observe. In the benchmarking intervention, we were all students – even our chairman. It was a very fruitful experience, and it will not have been possible without the support of the Facility,”*



Former CSI Executive Director  
**Agnes Padilla**

## FACTS AND FIGURES

### INVESTMENT



### NUMBER OF CORE PARTICIPANTS



Duration	November 20, 2011 - December 2, 2011
# of REAPs	11
Produced Output	Benchmarking report with action plans

## EMERGING LESSONS AND GOOD PRACTICES

- 1 The use of international benchmarking as an intervention methodology is innovative and effective in initiating reforms in government organisations. It affords top management actual and first hand information on how critical reforms are best implemented by other governments. This helps formulate relevant and strategic action plans that better facilitate achievement of their workplace development objectives.
- 2 Benchmarking missions become more effective if participants are organised by group, e.g. by theme, interest or target output. This would facilitate team development and allow for constant dialogue or “critical conversations” t participants.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** To maximise and better contextualise and structure their learning, participants should first undergo an extensive re-entry action planning workshop before embarking on a benchmarking mission.
- 2** Benchmarking interventions should rationalise the number of organisations to be visited to avoid information overload and ensure that learning is more structured and purposive.
- 3** Benchmarking missions should spend more time, say 30% of the intervention timeline, for processing, reflection and report writing. This would allow participants to deliver better outputs.

# Building up the Filipino Public Sector Leader

*“Why am I a mayor? Why am I an assistant secretary?”*

It was an event that’s one for the books. Over fifty public sector leaders – mayors, governors, president of state universities, executives of government-owned and controlled corporations – gathered together for the first time at the Civil Service Commission (CSC) to answer the important, yet often overlooked, question: “What should be the competencies of a Filipino public sector leader?”

For the first time the country’s top leaders reflected – “Why am I a mayor? Why am I an assistant secretary?” The leaders reflected, exchanged ideas, discussed experiences, and at the end of the day, came up with a list of five competencies that every Filipino public sector leader should have: – leading change, leading employees well, delivering customer satisfaction, communicating and building relationships, and continuous learning.

This was CSC’s former executive director Agnes Padilla’s re-entry action plan (REAP) in action. In partnership with Philippine Society for Training and Development (PSTD), ED Padilla sought to find out the competencies of a Filipino public sector leader. Through the once-in-a-lifetime gathering of public servants, she found the answers straight from the leaders themselves.

## **BENCHMARKING IN AUSTRALIA**

ED Padilla's passion on leadership was sparked when she went to Australia in 2011 for the Facility's intervention Top Management Benchmarking of HR Practices in Australia. ED Padilla, along with 11 other leaders from Civil Service Commission, went on an eye-opening trip to Australia to observe how strategic human resource and organisation development were practiced in public and private organisations in the Land Down Under.

"It was my first time in Australia and I was so impressed by the structure of their government. They really gave much premium on HR. In fact, I was impressed by their performance management system because they don't have the kind of monetary incentive that we have in the Philippines. Instead, it was competency-based. That got me thinking – if they could do away with that, maybe a competency-based program could also solve some of our issues here. So for my REAP, I decided to focus on what should be the competencies of a public sector leader," said ED Padilla.

According to ED Padilla, there are around 1.4 million public servants in Philippine government, but only 400,000 (or less) leaders. The scope of responsibility of these leaders, therefore, is big.

"The challenge is there is no leadership program yet for the greater mass of leaders. In CSC, we have management programs but no leadership programs. So I told myself, I am going to develop a leadership program...a program that doesn't look at the incumbent leader but at the emerging leader," said ED Padilla.

## FRUITFUL EXPERIENCE

Through ED Padilla's REAP, the Civil Service Institute, CSC's training arm, now offers training modules on the five leadership competencies to build up emerging government leaders. Moreover, CSC uses these leadership competencies as reference for recruitment of talent at leadership, as basis for scholarship programs, and as basis of a leadership certification program.

"I must say the benchmarking intervention started it all for CSC. If it was not for benchmarking, our minds would not be opened on how we can be strategic in our function at CSC. Sure, we've been sent abroad for various conferences before. But there were no deliberate attempt to observe. In the benchmarking intervention, we were all students – even our chairman. It was a very fruitful experience, and it will not have been possible without the support of the Facility," she added. ■