

STRENGTHENING CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION PRIME HRM: THE ASSESSMENT PHASE⁶

CSC develops global standards on 4 HRMD systems that include practices and competencies through PRIME HRM – Assess, Assist & Award.



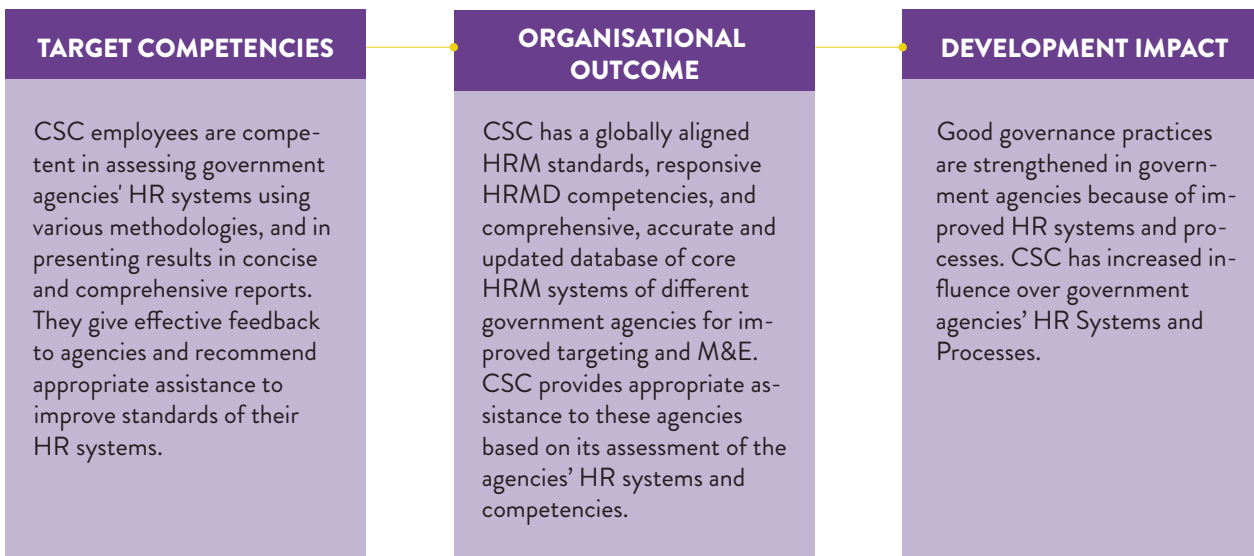
BACKGROUND

Civil Service Commission (CSC) is a quasi-judicial agency and the central human resource (HR) institution and adviser to the President on Philippine bureaucracy's HR concerns. It is mandated to conduct HR audit of government agencies to ensure compliance of their HR systems and processes with CSC policies. For the past 20 years, CSC, through its HR Policies and Standards Office (HRPSO), performed this mandate by empowering agencies to take final action on appointments if they met CSC's accreditation requirements. In 2012, in line with its vision to be Asia's leading center of excellence in HR and organisation development (OD) by 2030, CSC partnered with PAHRODF to implement Strengthening CSC Program to Institutionalise Meritocracy and Excellence in Human Resource Management (PRIME-HRM): Assessment Phase – a program that changes how CSC accredits agencies from one that audits compliance to one that “Assesses, Assists and Awards” best HR systems and practices among government agencies. ■

INTERVENTION OVERVIEW

Strengthening PRIME-HRM: Assessment Phase was implemented to develop the competencies of CSC members, and help CSC institute mechanisms, adopt tools to accurately assess government agencies, and provide technical assistance to help agencies attain excellence in their HR processes and systems. The intervention had three components: (1) development of maturity level indicators of four basic HRM systems that are aligned with best practices, and adaptation of the CSC core HRMD competency model and proficiency. The global standards categorised into 4 Maturity Levels were developed in consultation with HR practitioners from the private and public sectors; (2) conduct of assessment training of Policies and Systems Evaluation Division (PSED), Field Directors and HRPSO staff; and (3) conduct of basic assessors training on “The Investors in People Standards” (IIP), which is an international quality standards that focuses on the outcomes or effectiveness of people management practices, rather than the processes themselves. ■

COMMITTED RESULTS



IMPLEMENTATION PROGRESS

CSC pilot tested common assessment methodologies and will use the tools to assess targeted government offices. As regards training, PSED staff of regional offices started training on assessing identified government offices targeted for CSC accreditation for Level 2. The Commission has already approved the global standards for recruitment, selection and placement, HRD planning (learning and development), performance management system, and rewards and recognition – which were developed with the assistance of public and private sector HR practitioners. It has categorised the global standards into 4 levels

of maturity: transactional HRM (level 1), process-defined HRM (level 2), integrated HRM (level 3) and strategic HRM (level 4). The Commission signed a resolution institutionalising the enhanced PRIME HRM. A computer assisted PRIME HRM Assessment tool is in place and in use. The CSC HRPSO database management has been enhanced and can already generate accurate and up-to-date reference assessment results as well as customised reports. ■

ASSESSMENT



Relevance

Strengthening CSC PRIME-HRM: Assessment Phase is implemented in line with CSC's vision to be Asia's leading center of excellence in HR and OD by 2030. As the central HR agency of government, CSC is supposed to promote merit systems and integrate all HRD programs for the bureaucracy to help agencies obtain alignment with good international practices. CSC itself, however, needs capacity building so that its own systems will also be aligned with good international practices. With the PRIME HRM, CSC is able to walk the talk.



Effectiveness

The intervention led to the development of three components for the Enhanced PRIME HRM system: the Maturity Level indicators and standards for the four (4) core HRM Systems of Recruitment, Selection, and Placement, Performance Management, Learning and Development, and Rewards and Recognition, the HRMD Competencies, and the good Practices aligned to IIP Practices which has clarified to the different Agencies the focus necessary to vie for accreditation, recognition, and awards of excellence in HR. It also led to behavioural improvements of its participants. For the PSED Assessors, in particular, coaches observed that the assessors are more prepared for their assessment activities, more confident and maintained a professional demeanor when doing interviews and synthesising findings.



Sustainability and Potential Impact

It is too early to assess the sustainability and impact of this intervention. Anecdotal evidence suggests, however, that gains from the intervention are sustainable. While there is resistance from some employees in CSC who doubt that the commission can assist agencies, such resistance is isolated. Such concerns may be mitigated by HRODF interventions on developing CSC Subject Matter Specialists in competency-based HRMD systems that will develop key personnel's confidence and allow CSC to reach the next step of PRIME-HRM with greater ease. ■

“Through Strengthening CSC PRIME-HRM our accreditation is no longer a numbers game. We are now after the quality of HR systems in our government agencies. If the HR systems of our agencies shift from transactional to strategic, we can be globally competitive. We can be Asia’s best.”



**Director
Ena Esleta**

FACTS AND FIGURES

INVESTMENT

 **AUD240,000**

NUMBER OF CORE PARTICIPANTS

 **94**

Duration

September 2013 - May 2014

of REAPs

16

Produced Output

1. PRIME HRM Assessment Manual
2. PRIME HRM Maturity Level Brochure
3. Online PRIME HRM Assessment Tool
4. Video on PRIME HRM
5. Maturity Level tables for the 4 core HRM systems: Recruitment, Selection, and Placement, Performance Management, Learning and Development, and Rewards and Recognition
6. HRMD competency proficiency rubrics for the 4 core HRM systems

EMERGING LESSONS AND GOOD PRACTICES

- 1 Conducting regular coordination meetings with process owners of simultaneous interventions helps in the seamless prioritisation of project implementation plans.
- 2 Involvement of Regional Directors at the outset ensures greater buy-in for PRIME HRM.
- 3 Maintaining open communication between the LSP, the process owner and HRODF ensures the immediate and effective mitigation of critical incidents that may affect the effectiveness of the intervention.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** It is critical that CSC employees understand and accept the new HRMD globally aligned standards in PRIME HRM. A comprehensive database of the assessment results of government offices should also be stored. Phase 2 of HRODF assistance is on the assist and award phases. These changes require that the gains of the intervention be fully institutionalised and sustained in the whole bureaucracy, which would require implementing interventions that may exceed the life of the Facility.
- 2** CSC may want to rethink its Philippine Governance Systems targets. It should also focus on qualitative assessment vs quantitative assessment.
- 3** Public Assistance and Information Office in communicating updates on PRIME HRM within and outside CSC through Regional and Field Offices should be continued.
- 4** Understanding of PSED assessors of HR best practices and assessment methodologies should be deepened.
- 5** CSC must be IIP certified by 2014 to create moral ascendancy in implementing PRIME HRM and deliver its mandate.

Institutionalising Meritocracy and Excellence in HRM

As an HR practitioner for more than twenty years, Marissa Ceneta's inclination has always been elevating HR systems. In 2012, she found herself at the helm of one of Civil Service Commission's (CSC) major programs: PRIME HRM or the program to institutionalise meritocracy and excellence in human resource management.

Marissa, supervising personnel specialist, was officer-in-charge of CSC's Audit and Position Classification Composition (ACCP) under the Human Resource Policy Standards Office (HRPSO) when PAHRODF supported the program through the intervention Strengthening Civil Service Commission PRIME HRM: The Assessment Phase. The intervention aimed to help CSC transform its accreditation program from one that audits compliance to one that assesses, assists and recognises best HR systems and practices among government agencies.

Marissa explains, "The objective is to strengthen the program so that it does not only include the checklist form of audit. We have to level up to a certain degree to enable us to assess agencies - not only in complying with civil service rules but also in the effectiveness or impact of their implementation of the HR programs in the bureaucracy."

With Marissa and her team at ACCP tasked to implement PRIME HRM, Marissa's hands were full, setting the wheels of Prime HRM in motion and coordinating with Learning Service Providers (LSPs) for the intervention. The fact that ACCP is a lean team stretched Marissa. But, at the end of the day, she sees the value of the project. In fact, she is

encouraged to change the mindsets of agencies and LGUs who are rather lukewarm about the program. “We really have to work hard for them to really appreciate that we have a new program. That it’s not just a program to give them accreditation, but also one that will help them or assist them in their developmental needs,” she emphasises.

TURNING THINGS AROUND

Marissa said they are starting to see the fruits of their labor. For one, CSC now uses a computer-aided assessment tool in assessing the HR systems and practices in government agencies. This is a far cry from old checklist system that they have been using for almost twenty years to audit government agencies’ compliance to CSC’s policies and standards.

Marissa considers the opportunity from the intervention to work with private organisations as an important learning experience, citing computerisation in private sector as a major eye-opener. “When you benchmark them (the private sector), you really see the big difference in the implementation of a program; in the technology and systems they use. It is something worth emulating.”

From mere compliance, ACCP is now looking at the maturity level of HR systems and determining the interventions needed to elevate level of agencies. Although feedback

from all regions is still incomplete, Marissa is excited to see a lot of agencies eager to be assessed using the new standards. “I think it is working because I would say that from now until December, we would get at least one agency to a certain level of maturity for the HR systems and programs.”

Witnessing these little breakthroughs, Marissa’s optimism for the program is fired up. She predicts that with PAHRODF’s help, CSC will achieve its vision to be Asia’s center of excellence in 2030. “Personally I am very grateful to PAHRODF. It was such a huge intervention. We were able to realize that we really have a lot of things to work on especially for the government sector.” ■