



Agenda Item 2(c): Human Resource Committee

Proposed Recommendation

The Board is invited to **consider** recommendations proposed under each of the agenda sub-items discussed below.

Purpose

This paper seeks to provide the Board an update regarding key activities undertaken by the Secretariat to advance the Strategic Focus Output Four Governance and Secretariat Support under Human Resources Update. These key activities include:

- (i) PIDC HOS Recruitment Update
- (ii) Deputy Head of Secretariat recruitment process
- (iii) Secretariat Staffing Needs

Agenda Item 2(c)(i): PIDC HOS Recruitment Update

Update

2. The Board will recall at its last Intersessional Meeting at the Tanoa International Hotel in Fiji on 22 February, the Chair of the HR Committee updated the Board on the withdrawal of the 1st Candidate where the Board consequently endorsed the recommendations to appoint the second candidate, Mr Akuila Ratu. Mr Ratu had accepted the offer to take on the position of the Head of Secretariat.

3. The term is for 3 years and became effective on 22 February 2023. The incoming HOS has also accepted the salary offered to him which is 80% of Band 14 as it is within the Head of Secretariat salary band.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- (i) **Note** the update of the Head of Secretariat recruitment update
- (ii) **Congratulate** the new Head of Secretariat for accepting the Offer to take up the position as the PIDC Head of Secretariat

Agenda Item 2(c)(ii): Recruitment of the Deputy Head of Secretariat

Background

4. The appointment of the Deputy Head of Secretariat (DHOS) to the position of the Head of Secretariat creates the vacancy of the DHOS position. While the last HR consultant review report had

recommended the disestablishment of the DHOS position and the subsequent recruitment of technical positions to be absorbed under the DHOS position when he completes his contract in September 2023. The Intersessional Board Meeting in Fiji, had approved for the immediate recruitment of the Deputy Head of Secretariat one month after the appointment of the Head of Secretariat. The Board had tasked the HR Committee to work with the new Head of Secretariat to undertake the immediate recruitment of the Deputy Head of Secretariat.

Process for appointing the DHOS

5. Employee regulations 21.5 provides:
“When an aggregate period of six (6) years has been served by an Employee it shall be mandatory for that position to be re-advertised. The incumbent (other than Head of Secretariat) is eligible to apply and should the Head of Secretariat decide to reappoint the incumbent on merit they may do so provided a report is made to the Board and is therefore endorsed by the Board’

6. Employee Regulations 19 further provides:
The power to appoint an Employee (other than the Head of Secretariat) rests with the Head of Secretariat. The Board must authorise all new vacancies prior to the commencement of recruitment activity and the Human Resources Sub-committee must endorse a recruitment process, as delegated by the Board.

7. In terms of a recruitment process, the recruitment of the Deputy Head of Secretariat can adopt the same process as the HOS recruitment which was outsourced to a Human Resource company that was awarded the recruitment contract. The recruitment firm managed the entire process from vacancy advertisements, candidate assessment, short listing to interviews and selection. While the HR Firm managed the recruitment administration and selection process, the Board through the appointment of a Selection Committee that included the Chair and HR Committee members were engaged in the shortlisting and the selection process of the individual candidates.

Table 1: PIDC recruitment Timeline Activity

Priority	Tasks	Timeline
1.	Contracting the recruitment company	24 April 2023
2.	DHOS recruitment period	01 May-12 May 2023
3.	DHOS Shortlisting and interview	22 -26 May 2023
4.	DHOS Selection	01 June 2023

8. Consequently, if we are to adopt the recruitment timeline in table 1, the new Deputy Head of Secretariat can be recruited in time to attend the Annual Regular Meeting in June to allow the new DHOS to meet the Members and Board.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- (i) **approve** to outsource the recruitment of the DHOS position as per the process undertaken during the recruitment of the Head of Secretariat position with the support of the HOS and the HR Committee on the basis that it avoids additional administrative burden and costs to the Secretariat in managing the process

Agenda item 2 (c)(iii): Secretariat Staffing Needs

The purpose:

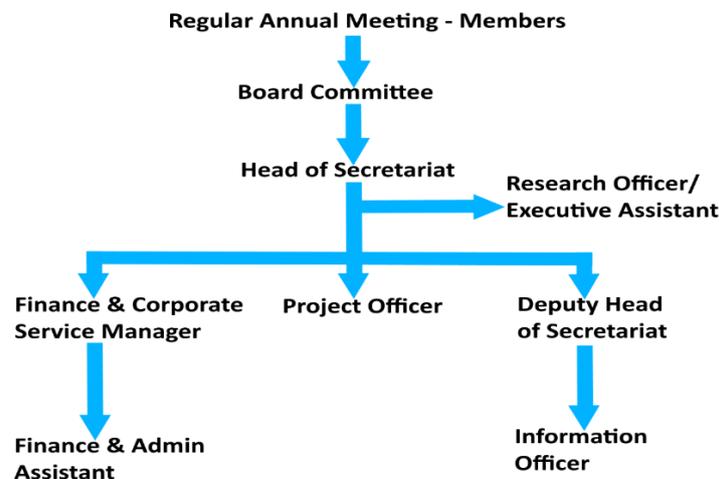
This paper seeks to discuss:

- (a) a proposal to undertake a review of the PIDC Secretariat in several very specific areas by reviewing a draft ToR (**attached Annex 1**) prepared for the Board to consider;
- (b) consider a proposal by the Secretariat to extend the contracts of the Programme Officer and the Information Coordination Officer for two years to support the Secretariat in the Work Programme Activities given the upcoming Annual Regular Meeting and also the workload that the Secretariat is facing with the current two positions (DHOS and RO) still yet to be filled; and the
- (c) Recruitment of an Executive/Finance Assistant for a period of one year.

Background

10. Members at 2022 Regular Annual Meeting “agreed to do a stocktake to review the organisation staff capacity once the recruitment of the Head of Secretariat is completed. The stocktake is to determine in more details the staffing needs of the Secretariat and the potential recruitment of new technical positions to reliably inform the Boards’ decision-making process; and agreed that the aforementioned review will consequently better inform the Board in determining a definitive decision on Secretariat staffing positions”.

PIDC Current Organisation Structure



11. The Secretariat proposes that the review of staffing needs is to be done immediately to determine what structure would best serve the interests of Members taking into account the interest from the Board to increase staffing levels to provide technical services to Members given the staffing limitations that the Secretariat is facing.

12. The key issue for the Secretariat is ensuring that if a staffing review were undertaken, it should be focused on specific forward-looking areas to promote future work and not duplicate the significant work already undertaken by the Secretariat when implementing the PIDC Strategic Plan.

13. The Staffing review report to be submitted to the Head of Secretariat and the Chair of the HR Committee once completed for the Boards deliberation and review in the next Board Meeting.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- (i) **endorse** the proposal to progress the review of staffing needs and approve the recruitment of a consultant to undertake this review; and
- (ii) **endorse** the timing, expected activities and deliverables outlined in the TOR.

Agenda Item 2(c)(iv): Extension of Contracts and Recruitment

(a) Extension of Contract for Project Officer

14. The Secretariat is proposing for the extension of the contract for both the Project Officer and the Information Coordination Officer for a period of 2 years. The Program Officer was recruited on November 2020 for a period of two years to manage the rolling out of the Regional Covid-19 Support to Members.

15. At end of the two years (2022) during the Regular Annual Meeting, the Secretariat proposed for the contract to be extended for 6 months since the funding for the Regional Covid -19 Support was yet to be fully utilised by Members due to significant delays in getting Member responses. The Covid-19 Regional Support funding will come to an end on 30th June 2023. At that time the Project Officer position will automatically cease.

16. Given the workload that the Secretariat is currently facing with the departure of the Research Officer and current vacancy of the Deputy Head of Secretariat, the Project Officer in her current position has taken up additional responsibilities of some of the responsibilities of the two positions and in the immediate term has filled this staffing capacity shortfall quite effectively. The Project Officer has been given added responsibilities to monitor all Procurement and Contract management of the Secretariat in terms of consultancies and project contracts. Where she has immediately complimented the Secretariats responsibilities in monitoring and evaluating projects and put in place monitoring structures in addition to other added responsibilities that the Head of Secretariat had tasked the Project Officer.

17. Currently the secretariat has only one recognized project – the COVID--19 responses but there is a myriad of other essential programme activities that are considered as ongoing projects especially with the Programme activities that support the Members in country technical work. Therefore, a dedicated Project Officer would allow intense overview for these programmed activities while being able to respond to unscheduled activities and future emergencies. Once the Stock take is completed then the Board can review recommendations to reflect the required positions that needs to be filled while in the interim, the extension of this position to manage all PIDC projects and programme in terms of monitoring and evaluation responsibilities will have an immediate impact in supporting the Head of Secretariat deliver on all work programmes despite the staffing challenges. The draft Job Description for this position is outlined in **Annex 2**.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- (i) **endorse** the proposal to extend the Project Officer contract for 2 years while awaiting the completion of the staffing needs review; and
- (ii) **endorse** the revised Job Descriptions of the Project Officer to reflect the added responsibilities.

(b) Extension of Contract for Information Coordination Officer

18. The Information Officer was hired on 06 April 2021 to assist Members with the roll out of APAN. At that time there was no one person within the Secretariat being responsible for the collection and coordination of data, resulting in both the HOS and DHOS to share this burden. The successful implementation of APAN and the need to efficiently maintain its usage with complete data entry, coordination, refresher training / ab initio training for members requires the retention of this position. Prior to Covid border shut downs, virtually all meetings and training were delivered on a face-to-face basis.

19. While this was an effective tool and helped build personal and technical contacts across the region, was an expensive method of training and networking. During Covid, the Information Coordination position became more vital to secretariat operations by being able to provide support to the membership via remote and more cost-effective means. Better and more effective use of the internet via zoom calls, more usage of the website with relevant and up to date data, having an officer who members can contact for specific data queries.

20. This position also supports the technical country work by assisting the membership collect their own data which allows for better analyses. Having a person within the secretariat to coordinate PIDC data internally with our members while linking up externally with our Partner Agencies.

21. It is envisaged that this core position/responsibility will be retained in the future secretariat operations until it is subsumed into a future technical position. As such, the staff stock take report will help identify this position in future. The draft Job Description for this position is outlined in **Annex 3**

Financial Implications

22. In terms of available funding, the planned activities of the 2023/2024 Financial Year have been disrupted by the Covid 19 Pandemic, the closing of borders, the inability to carry out face to face meetings and training and the inability to travel for in country support technical work have reduced the Secretariats usage of consultants and travel expenses. Therefore, the secretariat projects a "one off saving" of WST 240,000 for the current financial year from the Salaries can cater for the salaries for the two positions for two years.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- (i) **endorse** the proposal to extend the Information and Coordination Officer contract for 2 years while awaiting the completion of the stocktake; and
- (ii) **endorse** the revised Job Descriptions of the Coordination Officer to reflect the added

(d) Recruitment of an Executive/Finance Assistant

Background

23. The Secretariat is currently understaffed with vacant position including the (i) Deputy Head of Secretariat and the (ii) Research Officer position which has resulted in the Secretariat staff taking added responsibilities on top of the current workload that each individual has been assigned to deliver Programme activities before the end of this financial year. The Secretariat is currently working on recruiting a replacement for the Research Officer and it might take another 2-3 weeks before the position is filled while the Deputy Head of Secretariat position is in the process of being advertised and might be filled in the next 2-3 months.

24. Consequently, the Secretariat in consultation with the Chair of the HR Committee had discussed the current staffing issues that the Secretariat is facing with the realisation that extra support is needed for the Secretariat team.

25. The opening of the borders and the increased travel requirements for conferences, Board Meetings and training Programs have put a strain on the finance team especially at a time that preparatory work for the 2023/2024 annual work plan and budget is being prepared together with the preparation of the Annual Audit apart from the normal administrative activities. Currently all Finance and Administration which includes, Financial Management, Events management in terms of organising travel and meetings together with Human resources responsibilities are handled by the Finance & Corporate Manager with the support of the Finance Assistant and at times are overwhelmed with the workload. This is in addition to the two staff looking after logistic arrangements for our Members, Boards and as well staff travel.

Position Descriptions

26. The Job Description of the Executive/Administrative Assistant position(temp) is attached as **Annex 4** which outlines the actual activities performed daily of the employee and the expected workload with the required responsibilities and activities for the position in the next one year until the Staffing needs review is completed.

Recruitment Procedures

27. PIDC recruitment procedures and the roles and responsibilities of the PIDC Board, Human Resource Committee and Secretariat are contained primarily in Employee Regulations 19 and 20 (**Annex 4**). Regulation 19 provides:

- (a) the power to appoint an Employee (other than the Head of Secretariat) rests with the Head of Secretariat;
- (b) the Board is responsible for authorising all new vacancies prior to the commencement of recruitment activity; and
- (c) the Human Resources Committee must endorse a recruitment process, as delegated by the Board.

Recruitment Process

28. The Secretariat is proposing to save time and money for the Secretariat that the Executive/Finance Assistant recruitment is to be selected from the pool of applicants that was received for the Research Officer position that was advertised in February. The education, technical skills and other attributes required for both positions are very similar. Twenty-one applications were received and are now in the process of being shortlisted for interview by the HR Committee selection panel. The selection of an officer to undertake the executive/finance assistant responsibility can be drawn from the pool of candidates that have been shortlisted for the Research Officer position and have not been selected for the position if agreed by the Board.

Financial Implications

29. The Costs of the Executive/ Admin Assistant for the next one year which is the entire period of the contract will be around WST\$22,000 and can be factored from the last savings that we have for salaries and benefits in the current financial year.

Proposed Recommendations

The Board is invited to:

- (i) **endorse** the proposed request to recruit Executive/Finance Assistant; and
- (ii) **approve** the proposed recruitment process for the position outlined in the briefing paper.