



Asian Productivity Organization
“The APO in the News”

Name of publication: The Jet (3 September 2014, Fiji)

Page: <http://thejetnewspaper.com/2014/09/03/ministry-of-information-fiji-news-summary-030914-1000am/>

ISO CERTIFICATION FOR EXCELLENCE IN SERVICE DELIVERY: A FIRST FOR FIJIAN GOVERNMENT

3 September 2014

The Ministry of Labour, Industrial Relations Employment achieved a historical milestone as two of its core services, the National Occupational Health and Safety Service (NOHSS) and the Mediation Service received the ISO 9001:2008 Certificates.

The two services had acquired the ISO 9001:2008 Certification during the month of July after a successful final audit conducted by Auditors from the world renowned United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) certifying body. This now means that the two services provided by the Ministry are internationally recognised.

The Minister for Labour, Industrial Relations and Employment Mr Jone Usamate said the Certification is part of the Ministry's 2014 Operational Reform focused at enhancing customer service delivery through reformed systems and processes and ultimately achieving 'Excellence in Operations'.

He highlighted that the ISO 9001:2008 QMS standard will boost the existing service excellence initiative in which the Ministry can deliver efficient, effective and economical services to the people of Fiji.

“The ISO 9001: 2008 Certification means that the NOHSS and Mediation Services have implemented a Quality Management System that will continually monitor and manage quality across its operations,” said Mr Usamate.

To prepare the Ministry for ISO certification, the Ministry had secured the assistance of two top Asian Productivity Organization (APO) experts in 2012 to conduct an awareness and training on the whole ISO 9001 quality management system. Following this, in 2013, a Lead Auditors training was conducted to train Ministry’s Senior Officials to become internal auditors.

Ministry’s internal auditors who successfully completed this training conducted comprehensive internal audits for the National OHS Service and the Mediation service to prepare them for certification in 2014. After correcting the ISO 9001 QMS for these two core businesses through auditing and management meetings, the Ministry secured the services of top auditors from the UKAS certifying body who conducted a very rigorous ISO 9001 certification process in June 2014.

The Ministry followed four stages to implement and sustain its ISO 9001 QMS throughout all its eleven (11) core businesses. The four stages included getting started with ISO 9001, implementing an ISO 9001 system, certification to ISO 9001 and maintaining ISO 9001 system.

“We opted for the toughest certifying body to undertake its certification in order to acquire the best recognised certification for quality international benchmarking and credibility. This is also to ensure that the revolutionary Labour Reforms undertaken by the Ministry are compatibly matched with the best QMS standard of delivery in the world so that the social justice benefits of the reforms are actually realized by employers, workers, the general public and the Government,” Mr Usamate said.

As the world’s most widely recognized quality management standard, the ISO outlines ways to achieve, as well as benchmark, consistent performance and

service. It allows the Ministry to put in place processes to improve the way it operates at all levels.

Mr Usamate said the ISO 9001:2008 system uses management tools that increases productivity and reduces the wastage of resources. This will lead to the speedy processing and resolution of customer requests and complaints.

“The implementation of QMS enabled officers to better understand customer expectations and incorporate this in a robust and easy to follow Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs). The internal work processes for Mediation and National OHS Service have been improved with consistency in service delivery through all its offices located around Fiji,” the Minister highlighted.

The Certification has improved employee motivation, awareness, and morale by taking ownership of the system and process and also improved accountability of management and their commitment to the people.

The Minister said that the process will not stop here, but ongoing monitoring and assessment will be conducted to ensure that the processes continue to comply with the required standard, and more importantly, to ensure that continual improvement is achieved.

He said customer feedback systems have been implemented by the Ministry to gauge customer satisfaction and take measures for improvements where problems are identified.

The remaining 9 core businesses of the Ministry have also achieved ISO 9001:2008 conformance in June 2014 through internal audits and are targeted to complete the certifications in 2015.