



Asian Productivity Organization "The APO in the News"

Name of publication: DAILY FT (24 June 2015, Sri Lanka)

Page: p.13

TEXT AND PIX BY HARSHA
UDAYAKANTHA PEIRIS

AMONG the biggest challenges of public sector organisations faced today are the increasing dynamism of public service, rising expectations of citizens, trends towards 'rightsizing' and innovation in the service industry. They face unprecedented pressure to achieve the goals set by the Government and meet the expectations of citizens. As the public service user community in a rapidly changing world, citizens expect to see improved performance and service level as they use to experience from the private sector so far. One of the other major challenges of public sector organisations is evaluating the performance realistically.

To manage these challenges, a proper performance management system in the public sector today, is more important than ever before. Due to the universal requirement for good governance in the public sector in the face of national competitiveness agendas, greater strides have been made in various areas of public service such as e-government and centralised service delivery systems to several of the expectations of the service recipients. However, what is desperately needed is to plan and manage an effective and sustainable performance of the public sector. The introduction of a proper performance management model in this regard emphasises performance to create and sustain a healthy, effective and result oriented culture in public-sector organisations and systematically control the management process to achieve organisational objectives.

Accordingly, understanding the necessity of the performance management system in the public sector, a five day workshop on Performance Management for the Public Sector organised under the supervision and guidance of the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) in Japan in collaboration with the National Productivity Secretariat (NPS) under the purview of the Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils Local Government and Democratic Governance commenced on 22 June at the Mount Lavinia Hotel with the initiative of the Minister of Public Administration, Local Government and Democratic Governance Karu Jayasuriya.

Sri Lanka role model of the public service sector

Expressing views at the inauguration of the workshop the Minister emphasised that Sri Lanka was proud to have a successful history of being a role model of the public service sector before and after the independence though there had been both good and bad times due to political interference.

"At present, good governance has become a theme for us. Our vision and mission is to establish a public service system that effectively runs with no political influence or interruption and during the 100 day program of the new Government it has been exercised by us for a greater extent with success. Developing the citizen charter is therefore, an important element to rectify the lapses in good governance and boost productivity," the Minister said.

He added that the workshop was organised at an important juncture where the present Government is thriving towards the best practices of good governance. "The Government's objective is to introduce a better performance based promotions scheme for the public sector so that the best people would receive due recognition. The duty of the public service is to serve the people. The entire public service should therefore, serve towards the nation's socio-economic development and with these new models we are practicing, we assure that we can take the country effectively forward," the Minister further said.

APO workshop on performance management for public sector commences



The head table participants at the workshop (from left): National Productivity Secretariat (NPS) Director Suranga Gunaratne, Secretary of the Ministry of Public Administration, Provincial Councils, Local Government and Democratic Governance R.M.D.B. Meegasmulla, APO Country Director for Sri Lanka J. Dadallage, Minister of Public Administration, Provincial Councils, Local Government and Democratic Governance Karu Jayasuriya, Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) in Japan Director (Industry Department) J.M. Tiilaka Jayasundara, APO Resource speakers Prof. Prajapati Thirivedi, Dr. Shin Kim and D. Brian Marson



Minister of Public Administration, Provincial Councils, Local Government and Democratic Governance Karu Jayasuriya speaking at the occasion

Priority given towards productivity promotion in public sector

APO Country Director for Sri Lanka J. Dadallage at the opening remarks emphasised the importance of the launching of Performance Management Solution developed by the Ministry. The e-solution in this regard was also launched during the inaugural session of the workshop by Minister Karu Jayasuriya. Expressing views at the opening remarks Dadallage said that with the initiatives of the present Government, priority has been given towards the productivity promotion in Sri Lanka in the public sector. "Although we do take traditional human performances and political influences as challenges against elevating productivity in the public sector we have well faced that challenge through the development of effective theories towards best practices to qualitatively deliver service on an assigned time which in return would promote productivity via the quality of delivery of services," he said.

In the year 2008, Minister Karu Jayasuriya as the then Minister of Public Administration had directed Ministry officials to introduce the 'Citizens' Charter' practice to the public sector organisations. Thereafter, it was further developed with ICTA as an activity based performance evaluation system and was practiced in the Ministry successfully for about two years on a pilot basis. The new features in the system offer a totally paperless, web based solution that is highly compatible with modern technologies that extend from desk-top computers to smart-phones, system-influenced features for continued betterment and improvements as well as higher facilitation for good governance.

The new features of the system also include consideration of present evaluation practices and traditions, making it an effective marketable tool for both public and private sectors. Meeting system management, team operations, meeting follow-up actions, converting facility for measurable actions, grading or weight-age on activity-tasks-project quality with star points system and the facility to communicate between supervisor and the responsible officer on activity management are some important value added features of this application.

Future improvements of the solution would consider the system's



Director of the National Productivity Secretariat (NPS) Suranga Gunaratne development towards facilitating for workload analysis, measuring correct size of the organisation, skills and competency matrix management, self competency evaluation and capacity development recommendations as well as its convertibility for a total HR solution.

Systematic control in management process

Director (Industry Department) of the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) J.M. Tiilaka Jayasundara expressing views at the inauguration of the workshop stated that public sector innovation emphasised quality in public service which was crucial to promote productivity in the sector. "The public sector is important not only for the economic development of a country but also for employment. The two biggest challenges to public sector renewal are the development of principles of public sector governance and the inherent dynamics of the public system itself. Like the environment, on-demand services and the citizens' choices.

"As more citizens demand greater value from their tax payments, governments are required to reform and improve public sector productivity to deliver efficient and effective services to them. Therefore, the performance management model emphasises a healthy, effective and result-oriented culture in public sector organisations. It includes the activities of the Government or its agencies in planning, implementing, reviewing, evaluating and reporting the effectiveness of its policies and programs. The main objective is to introduce systematic control in the management process to achieve organisational excellence," she said.

She added that the workshop expected that all senior public sector leaders of Sri Lanka and other member governments would exchange information and best practices during the program towards networking among public sector organisations in APO member countries to contribute towards more productive operations and more responsive services to citizens under the performance management model for the benefit of all.

The Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) started activities catering to the public sector from 2009 and developed a public sector productivity framework and action plan in 2012. From 2015, the sector is considered a major subject



Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) in Japan Director (Industry Department) J.M. Tiilaka Jayasundara speaking at the inauguration



APO Country Director for Sri Lanka J. Dadallage

Objectives of the project

The objectives of this project are to discuss public sector productivity and innovation, share and exchange information and experience on performance management for the public sector, including best practices and



A few of the local and international participants at the inauguration of the workshop

success stories and examine relevant Government policies to promote public sector productivity as well as reviewing and developing the relationship between productivity promotion strategies and performance management and evolve appropriate methodology for their integration.

In a special note, National Productivity Secretariat (NPS) Director Suranga Gunaratne thanked the Asian Productivity Organisation (APO) for its immense support towards the Asia Pacific region to effectively and sustainably elevate the quality of lives of the citizens of member countries.

The five day workshop has brought a group of up to 25 professionally qualified overseas professional participants from APO member countries including Bangladesh, Cambodia, the ROC, Fiji, India, Indonesia, IR Iran, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, the Philippines, Thailand, Vietnam and up to 10 qualified professional participants from Sri Lanka at the mid to senior management level. Further, the workshop has been arranged focusing a wider scope that includes, principles of good governance in the public sector, citizen centred service delivery, networking among federal, state and local government services, quality regulatory management systems, modern public sector management and best practices in public sector performance management that are expressed through expert lectures, field visits, group discussions and an action plan preparation. The APO Workshop on Performance Management for the Public Sector being conducted at the Mount Lavinia Hotel concludes on 26 June.