

# CIVIL SERVICE REFORMS

## Fact Sheet

### BACKGROUND

Fijian Civil Service is the largest employer with over 30,000 civil servants. In context to Fiji, the civil service is typically described as the core, permanent administrative arm of government, including permanent and pensionable officials working in government ministries, departments and agencies.

It includes staff who advise on, develop, and implement government policies and programmes and manage and wider public service, including the military, the police, teachers and health workers. Fijian Civil Service has the following vision and diversity, modern and positive approaches to discipline, merit-based, efficient, equal opportunity and responsible employer. Having reforms, should modernize and strengthen the public sector, benefiting both civil servants and the Fijian population.

### CURRENT STATUS

Fijian Civil Service play a pivotal role in the Fijian economy given their vast asset base, contributions to GDP, employment generation and provision of public goods and services.

People-Centric Approach where the Fijian Civil Service aims to serve the people effectively fostering a responsive and accountable civil service ensuring they feel secure in their employment and contribute effectively to the nation's development and well-being.

Legislative Changes - the government acknowledges that certain legislations need revision through broader consultation and consensus such as raising the retirement age for civil servants to 60 and totally removing contracts for civil servants. This move intends to provide stability and security for employees. The Fijian Government established the Civil Service Reform Management Unit (CSRMU) to oversee the comprehensive reform program. This unit collaborates closely with the Public Service

Commission and adheres to guidelines set forth by the Civil Service Act. The Act covers Open Merit Recruitment and Selection, Discipline, Job Evaluation, Remuneration Setting, Performance Management: Evaluating and Training and Staff Development.

### CHALLENGES

1. *Balancing Employment Opportunities:* The high expenditure on an oversized civil service has an opportunity cost which is limiting resources in improving employment opportunities, kick-starting the economy, and investing in critical sectors like health and social programs.
2. One of the most immediate and concerning issues is the shortage of skilled workers within the public sector.
3. The public's reluctance to seek employment within the public sector exacerbates this challenge. This lack of interest from the local population further complicates the Government's efforts to fill these vacancies and maintain essential services.
4. This labour loss provides the Government with an opportunity to right-size the civil service. Identifying the right size of civil service that fits with the role of government, and addressing skills gap in the public sector becomes imperative for Fiji to continue the trajectory of sustainable economic growth.

### OPPORTUNITIES

1. Reduction in red tape and bureaucracy and gradually removing civil service contracts at the same time review and overhaul the current civil service pay which had not increased from the past 15 years.
2. Ensure prudent, accountable and transparent management of fiscal and human resources and strengthen accountability and transparency in the civil service.
3. Reforms enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of the civil service by streamlining processes, improving accountability, and promoting merit-based recruitment, the system becomes more responsive to citizens' needs.

4. Reforms shift the focus from political patronage to merit-based appointments. This ensures that qualified individuals, regardless of political affiliations, serve in key positions. A meritocratic system fosters competence and professionalism.
5. Reformed civil service is better equipped to deliver quality services to the public.
6. Modernized civil service embraces innovation, adapts to changing circumstances, and leverages technology. This agility is crucial in a dynamic world.
7. Competent civil service plays a pivotal role in economic development. Effective policies, efficient implementation, and sound governance contribute to growth.

## **FUTURE POLICES AND STRATEGIES**

- **Strengthening Core Government Systems and Enhancing Service Delivery:**
  - ✓ Building a dynamic, productive and citizen centric civil service.
  - ✓ Promote innovation and creativity in service delivery.
  - ✓ Support efficiencies on management of across Civil service.
  - ✓ Improved efficiency and effectiveness of public service.
- **Address Skill shortages in the Public Service Building capacity for whole of Government:**
  - ✓ Develop leadership capabilities across civil service.
  - ✓ Continuous learning and development programs through local and oversea training and scholarship programs.
  - ✓ Strengthen and encourage more job attachments, apprentice and cadetship scheme in public sector.
- **Enhancing Civil Service Performance:**
  - ✓ Holistically review the civil service remuneration and salary structure.
  - ✓ Effective Performance Management System.
  - ✓ An effective Performance Management System to reward performing staff and as staff retention during current times.

- **Strengthen transparency and accountability:**
  - ✓ Ensure prudent, accountable and transparent management of fiscal and human resources.
  - ✓ Reaffirm and strengthen accountability and transparency in the civil service.
  - ✓ Development of an establishment management practice.
  - ✓ Improving good governance practices internally and with our stakeholders.
- **Ensuring modern systems for service delivery:**
  - ✓ Monitor Staff establishment with the Civil Service through establishment register.
  - ✓ Establishing a fit for purpose staffing across individual Ministers.
  - ✓ Formulation of an Online Civil Service Recruitment Portal.
  - ✓ Development of a skill shortage list (public and private sector).