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NATIONAL AUDIT OF DFO STAFF RELATIONS FUNCTION : FINAL REPORT

OCTOBER 2002

Fisheries and Oceans Canada | Pêches et Océans Canada

Canada

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

INTRODUCTION

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans recognizes the value of its entire workforce and views the employee-management relationship as a key contributing factor in meeting its mission and objectives. The staff relations (SR) function plays a principal role in assisting departmental managers in the management of their employee-employer relations and in fostering productive union-management-employee relationships. Efficiency and effectiveness of the SR role is therefore important to a productive and smooth functioning organization.

This audit was conducted to assess the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's SR function at a high level and to identify areas warranting improvement in support of the department's intention to initiate a Staff Relations Renewal Initiative for the achievement of departmental objectives. It was conducted in Corporate Headquarters and in two regions – Pacific and Central & Arctic. To ensure that the assessment was thorough and relevant, stakeholders from all pertinent venues were consulted: SR staff, management, delivery partners, clients, Treasury Board and Unions.

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND CONCLUSIONS

The SR team is committed to providing sound advice to managers and employees on staff relations issues. Clients report that the quality of advice is generally satisfactory. Nevertheless, in the current context of renewal, four main areas were found to be requiring significant improvements to bring the SR function up to a desired level of efficiency and effectiveness.

Service Delivery

There are significant differences in the ways SR service is provided across the organization. Reporting relationships differ between Headquarters and regions. Quality of SR advice varies between HR advisors (generalists) and SR advisors (specialists). The SR division at HQ does not readily have a clear picture of the distribution of SR service providers across the regions and their respective roles, which is fundamental to manage service delivery. The Pacific Region offers a solid division of responsibilities for HR/SR advisors, supporting the awareness of local issues and the face-to-face service the clients value. This delivery model should be considered and promoted for wider application.

Learning Organization

The SR division should analyse and discuss trends and tendencies reflected in their data more systematically. Since this is not current practice, SR management and client managers do not have an accurate picture of the main issues affecting staff relations and they cannot easily develop relevant SR strategies to improve employee-employer relations. To support greater trend analysis and monitoring, the information system needs to become more accessible, user-friendly and reliable.

Union/Management Relations

The SR division could play a more proactive role in the management of union/management relations. Although management reports that its relations with unions are good, their actions in the areas of UMC and grievance management leave unions, feeling that they are not always respected. Unions see SR division as playing a crucial role in advising management on how best to manage the Union Management Committee consultations to facilitate good union-management relations.

Through more efficient management of grievance files, SR would improve the ability to keep management abreast of grievance proceedings and progress or delays in timelines. The availability of managers in authority for hearing grievances or for rendering decisions is also an issue. Because there is insufficient tracking of the steps in the grievance process, it is impossible to determine the exact cause for delays or to ascertain which party is responsible for creating delays.

Management Control Framework

TBS no longer monitors departmental compliance with its SR policies that are generally outdated. However, if SR guidelines are not clearly communicated and followed at the departmental level, there are risks of more numerous and lengthier grievances, as well as inconsistencies in SR procedures resulting in a poor staff relations environment. It is recommended that the SR division put in place its own management and control framework to govern staff relations and that these guidelines be clearly communicated throughout the organization.

NEXT STEPS

We believe it is important for DFO to take a forward-looking stance with regard to how the SR Renewal Initiative plans the future. This includes paying attention to internal processes for service delivery, learning from trend analysis, playing a more active role in managing union/management relations and developing greater awareness and responsiveness to client needs. Strengths of the SR division and HR sector within DFO are identified in the report. These strengths will sustain the efforts required in carrying out measures to improve efficiency and effectiveness.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

2.1 BACKGROUND

The Department of Fisheries and Oceans (DFO) exists to conserve and protect Canada's Oceans, Freshwater and Fishery resources and, in partnering with stakeholders, to assure their sustainable utilization. As such, the Department develops and delivers policies and programs in support of Canada's economic, ecological, and scientific interests in oceans and inland waters. In addition, DFO oversees the safe, efficient and environmentally sound movement of commercial and other traffic over Canada's oceans and inland waterways.

The Department recognizes the value and importance of its entire workforce and regards the employee-management relationship as forming part of the foundation for success in meeting the Department's mission and objectives. The staff relations (SR) function plays a principal role in assisting departmental managers in the management of their employee-employer relations and in fostering productive union-management-employee relationships. It is therefore a fundamental element in success.

This audit intends to assess the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the Department's staff relations function as it relates to operations and to identify areas warranting improvement in support of the current Staff Relations Renewal Initiative and of the achievement of departmental objectives. The SR Renewal Initiative[1] is one of four Human Resources (HR) initiatives stemming from the Federal Government’s HR Modernization project. Its four objectives are: (1) to improve SR processes, (2) to improve the quality of SR strategic advice, (3) to improve the marketing of the SR function, and (4) to improve union-management relations. This audit report includes an assessment of the current functioning of SR operations, and takes a more forward-looking stance with regard to how the SR Renewal Initiative plans to change the SR function in the future.

2.2 OBJECTIVES, BACKGROUND AND SCOPE

Audit Objectives

The national audit had two objectives:

> ***(1) To determine whether the management and control frameworks in staff relations are efficient and effective. The criteria used to achieve this objective are found in Annex B.***

and

> ***(2) To assess compliance with central agency (i.e. Treasury Board Secretariat) staff relations policies. The current departmental responsibilities in Treasury Board staff relations policies are listed in Annex C.***

The audit sought to view these objectives at a high level in order to assess management’s perceptions regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the Staff Relations Function.

[1] Staff Relations Renewal Initiative Workplan, 22 February 2002.

Background

The staff relations division falls under the Operations and Systems Directorate of the Human Resources Sector. The vast majority of SR functions and services are provided by SR advisors at corporate headquarters in Ottawa and in DFO's regions. In some regions, SR advice and services are also provided by Human Resources (HR) generalists. These SR advisors and HR generalists are the primary contacts for clients requiring SR support and advice, so these groups and their services are at the forefront of the audit.

The Staff Relation area's main functions and services include:

- the provision of advice to management in the interpretation and administration of collective agreements and Treasury Board (TB) policies;
- the provision of advice and guidance on grievance procedures, discipline, non-disciplinary termination of employment;
- the coordination of the departmental response to the Canadian Human Rights Act complaints, provision of advice to managers and management, on their behalf, or the investigations into complaints of harassment lodged under the departmental policy of harassment in the workplace;
- the administration of union/management consultation meetings and the provision of advice to DFO management representatives on formal national, regional and area/site union/management consultation meetings;
- the development of strategies for, and coordination of, collective bargaining and potential strike management activities, and the representation of DFO at seven bargaining tables;
- the development, monitoring, implementation and evaluation of national policies, procedures and programs in the following areas: grievance procedures, harassment and discrimination, exclusions, designations, discipline, strike management, Canadian Human Rights Commission (CHRC) complaints and conflict of interest;
- Public Service Staff Relations Board (PSSRB) adjudication hearings or mediations
- overseeing the training and development of staff relations specialists, Human Resources Advisors, managers, and employees in the various areas of labour relations.

Scope

The scope of this audit was limited to the National Capital Region (NCR) and two regions - Pacific Region and Central & Arctic Region. The audit document review covered one fiscal year (2001/02) and fieldwork interviews and focus groups were conducted from April to June 2002. Data required to provide further analysis to compare regions was either not available or not reliable. We did not conduct sufficient research to develop our own data base to allow us to compare resource utilization across regions. Furthermore, we did not assess staff relations staff training, or qualifications with respect to professional accreditation. Research, analysis, conclusions and recommendations are limited to the two above-mentioned objectives and should be viewed with respect to the scope limitations and parameters within which this audit work was conducted.

The scope of this audit does not include an assessment of the effectiveness of the specific functions related to the two Senior Advisors Complaints (i.e., Harassment, Human Rights) nor those of the Exclusions/Designations Officer.[2]

2.3 AUDIT STANDARDS, ASSURANCE LEVEL AND CRITERIA

Wherever possible within the capacity of our audit team, the audit was conducted in accordance with the TB Policy on Internal Audit and the IIA Standards for the Professional Practice of Internal Auditing. Insofar as the audit was limited in reviewing the SR function at a high level, it was designed to provide assurance. The audit therefore included such procedures as observation, inquiry, confirmation, analysis and discussion as were considered necessary to achieve the audit objectives. The criteria used for the audit were based on the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA) Criteria of Control (CoCo).

2.4 FORMAT FOR AUDIT REPORT

This report outlines our methodology, our summary of conclusions and then discusses the results of the internal audit, organized by issue. Audit results have been grouped under five main issues as follows:

- SR Service Delivery
- SR as a Learning Organization
- Union/Management Relations
- Management Control Framework
- Compliance with Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) SR Policies

For each issue, there is an issue statement, along with a discussion of the relevant findings, risks and recommendations. Where merited, there is also a discussion of current or emerging strengths related to each issue. Annex E provides a comprehensive listing of the recommendations.

2.5 METHODOLOGY

The audit was conducted in three phases:

1. Planning
2. Fieldwork
3. Reporting

During the Planning Phase, initial information gathering and document review were completed; key stakeholders for interviews and focus groups were identified; and thorough workplan with a

[2] These functions are considered to be highly specialized. The audit team agreed that, should issues related to these specific functions become evident during the fieldwork, they would be discussed as part of the audit findings.

precise methodology was established. The Control Self Assessment (CSA) provided a basis for developing some key lines of enquiry.

Preliminary issues identified in the Planning Phase were pursued and examined in greater depth during the Fieldwork Phase. Interviews and focus groups were conducted at three sites: departmental Headquarters in Ottawa, Pacific regional offices in Vancouver, and Central & Arctic (C&A) regional offices in Sarnia. In each region, a sample of interviewees participated by teleconference from local area offices, so that information gathered reflected the points of view of those on-site as well as those in remote areas. Individuals from eight stakeholder groups participated in the audit fieldwork, to ensure that the assessment of the functioning of staff relations was well-rounded, thorough, and based on input from all relevant points of view. The eight stakeholder groups participating in this audit were:

- SR Management
- SR Advisors
- Partners of SR (Corporate HR, Legal Services, Early Conflict Resolution office, etc.)
- HR Management and HR Advisors
- DFO Senior Management (DG or RDG level and above)
- Treasury Board Secretariat
- Unions
- SR clients (line managers who have supervisory responsibilities and require the services of SRAs)

During the Reporting Phase, the results of all interviews, focus groups and the document review were analysed and findings were developed. Recommendations were built to address the main issues discovered in the fieldwork.

2.6 CONCLUSIONS

Objective 1: SR Efficiency and Effectiveness

For the first objective of this audit, the findings show that the overall functioning of SR does not demonstrate a high level of efficiency or effectiveness in certain areas. In fact, four main areas were found to be requiring significant improvements to bring them up to a desired level of efficiency and effectiveness: SR service delivery; SR as a learning organization; union/management relations, and Management Control Framework.

Objective 2: Compliance with TBS Policies

With regard to compliance with TBS SR policies, based on information gathered through interviews and initial document review, the audit team chose not pursue this objective. In essence, because TBS recognizes that its policies are out of date, it no longer monitors or expects departmental compliance to its existing SR policies. As such, it was decided that pursuing this objective would bring no added value to the audit conclusions. However, good SR management is still the audit’s ultimate concern, and this is covered by the first objective.

3.O ISSUES, FINDINGS, STRENGTHS, RISKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 SR SERVICE DELIVERY

ISSUE

There are significant differences in the ways SR service is distributed and provided across the organization, which is negatively affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the SR function.

FINDINGS

SR service is delivered to client managers primarily through SR advisors (SRAs) located at corporate headquarters in Ottawa and in the various regions. The SRAs at headquarters are at a more senior level than those in the regions, and each is assigned a regional SRA to whom he or she provides guidance. Most regions have one SRA. Some regions employ HR advisors (HRAs), in addition to the SRA, to provide SR service to clients along with the numerous other HR-related duties (staffing, classification, pay and benefits, etc.). In Pacific Region, the HRA, and not the SRA, is the first point of contact for clients seeking SR advice. In fact, HRAs handle the grievance process up to and including Level 2, with advice from the SRA as needed. In corporate headquarters and in C&A, however, HRAs do not handle SR issues, and the SRA is the client's first contact.

Reporting relationships differ between headquarters and the regions. At headquarters, SRAs report to the Chief SR, whereas regional SRAs report to the Regional Director HR. As a result, local priorities are at the forefront for regional SRAs. Although this has the potential to lead to inconsistencies in objectives between corporate headquarters and regions, it was not seen by SRAs as posing any problems for them.

Several factors related to this structure of SR service delivery influence the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff relations function:

SR Specialists versus HR Generalists

The quality of SR advice varies between HRAs and SRAs. All clients consider SRAs as SR specialists and more knowledgeable on staff relations issues than HRAs. In C&A Region and corporate headquarters, HRAs are seen as lacking the depth of SR knowledge required to handle complex SR cases. HRAs are also seen as having less time to dedicate to SR issues due to their other workload responsibilities (staffing, classification, etc.). At the time of the Audit, in C&A, where some HRAs were new, not fully trained and lacked SR experience, clients expressed dissatisfaction. (Note: Subsequent to the time of our audit, the majority of the C & A HRAs have received SR training). These observations do not apply in the Pacific Region, which is a model for solid HRA SR advice, as conditions there are ideal for an HRA structure for SR service delivery: highly knowledgeable HRAs with SR experience gathered over several years, a stable relationship with their client group, and a place at the client's management table that gives them an holistic understanding of their client's specific needs. Furthermore, HRAs in Pacific Region are for the most part located with their clients, for the face-to-face service that clients value.

It should be noted that the service delivery model in Pacific is one that is dependent on the level of resourcing attached to it. Front-line service delivery depends on the ready availability of trained HR generalists to client managers, while the promulgation of functional expertise depends on the ready availability of expert staff to the HR generalists. While the Pacific example seems to be functioning well, its immediate and complete reproduction in other regions may require time and local adjustments.

In general, clients report that they would prefer the ‘one-stop-shop’ model of service delivery, where they could refer to one HRA for all their HR needs including staffing, classification, staff relations, etc. They believe that the HRA is in an ideal position to understand their SR issues, as they have a more well-rounded perspective of all the work environment issues that could affect staff relations. Clients in Pacific Region are highly satisfied with the current HRA service delivery model. Clients in C&A Region report that they would be open to this model on the condition that HRAs be highly experienced and knowledgeable on SR issues, and that they complete a full training program. Clients in C&A report that HRA resources are inadequate at present due mainly to the fact that all HRAs except one are still in training.

Geographic Representation

Clients want face-to-face service, as it promotes the accessibility of SR advice and facilitates relationship-building and understanding between SRA and client. Clients also report that on-site SR service allows many conflicts to be resolved before they become official grievances, as the client is able to seek SR advice early on. In the C&A Region, the regional SRA is located in Sarnia. However, regions are sub-divided into areas, and there are no local SRAs on site at these remote locations. Clients see this as a detriment to good SR service, as the SRA is less accessible, unable to develop a strong relationship with his/her client, and not truly aware of the client’s work environment. The lack of SRAs in the areas is not a problem for Pacific Region, as there is one local HRA per area who provides SR service on site. Clients report that this recent structure has improved SR service and they perceive a decrease in formal grievances due to the fact SR advice is more easily and regularly accessible.

The vast geographic spread of the C&A Region creates a unique situation and it affects the quality of SR service. The region covers approximately two thirds of the country, and its remote areas are far more culturally diverse than the areas of the Pacific Region. As a result, clients report that it is all the more important for the SRA to have a solid understanding of each area’s unique work environment and its effect on staff relations. The fact that the SRA is not on site, and the budget does not allow for frequent travel to each area, impedes the ability to gain an understanding of local issues. By contrast, in the Pacific Region, because SR service is provided at each location by the area HRAs, clients believe that the understanding of local issues is sufficient.

HR management, in both regions visited for this audit, reports that the pool of candidates for HR positions in Pacific Region greatly differs from the pool of candidates available in C&A Region. It is reported by HR management that it is easier to attract and retain qualified HR personnel in Vancouver and its areas than it is in Sarnia. If Sarnia is fortunate enough to attract a highly experienced HRA, its next challenge is to retain the individual for any length of time. According to HR management in C&A, since HR-related career opportunities are seen to be limited within the region, qualified candidates prefer to relocate within a short time.

Resources

The staff relations division reports a national total of 47 SR service providers, including SRAs at corporate headquarters and in regions, as well as those HRAs who provide SR service.[3] The SR division at headquarters was unable to provide the audit team with complete and up-to-date organizational charts showing the total number of SR service providers and their location. It is only with a complete understanding of these numbers, and how the workload is distributed among them, that the division will be able to better manage its resources for service delivery. It is reported that, during any temporary absence, clients have sufficient backup resources in HR managers, SRAs from other regions, or SRAs at national headquarters.

The resourcing factor that seems to have the most impact on SR service is whether or not HRAs provide SR advice. Clients who receive their SR service from HRAs (either formally in the regions, or informally at corporate headquarters) feel that the number of SR resources is adequate. In Pacific Region, clients do not go directly to the SRA for advice, and their positive impression of SR service is derived from the service they receive from their HRA. The situation is different in C&A Region, where HRAs do not provide SR services. In this region, clients report that one SRA is not at all sufficient to provide adequate SR service.[4] Because the SRA is the only source of SR advice, the fact that he rarely travels to the various areas and is only at the C&A regional office part-time has a much greater negative impact on service delivery than would be the case if HRAs were also providing SR advice. In Pacific Region, the HRAs located in each area provide SR service and this alleviates the need for additional SRAs. In C&A Region, the inadequacy of SR resources has resulted in one client group, the Canadian Coast Guard (CCG) funding an additional position to assist with the SR workload.

Finally, it is perceived that in order to provide a more proactive service (i.e. to provide SR training for client managers and HRAs), a greater number of SRAs would be required.

STRENGTHS

- *Competence:* clients report that the quality of SR advice (with regard to rights and interpretations of collective agreements) from SR specialists and experienced HRAs is good. They have yet to receive a more strategic level of advice from SRAs or HRAs, but feel that the advisors in place would be able to provide this type of advice if they had the time.
- *Internal SR communications:* In general, SRAs report that internal communications between regions and corporate headquarters are good and that knowledge sharing among SRAs is adequate. In general, relations between SR management and SR staff are reported to be good.

[3] National Audit of DFO Staff Relations Function – Benchmarking Report, Project #65197, May 2002, section 2.1.
[4] Clients gave examples of incomplete grievance files, lost files and no responses to their SR questions as results of inadequate SR resources. The audit team confirmed the issue of incomplete and lost grievance files during its document review (see grievance analysis, Annex D).

RISKS

- Without a clear understanding of exactly how the SR workload is distributed among resources (SRAs and HRAs), these resources may be inappropriately distributed across the country and service delivery may be negatively affected.
- Where the regional SRA is the only source of SR service, there is a risk that the position may have too great a workload, resulting in weak controls over SR files and poor client service.
- Client satisfaction is at risk when there is a lack of face-to-face contact with the SR service provider (either an SRA or an experienced HRA).
- When the SR service provider is not located on site, there is less of an understanding of clients' needs and local issues. This can result in inadequate or inappropriate SR advice.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- The SR division update its organizational charts to show all SR service providers, where they are located and which client groups they serve.
- C&A Region be supported in adopting a service delivery in which HRAs are fully trained in staff relations (including the standard two-week SR course provided by PSC and on-the-job training under the guidance of an experienced SRA).
- Priority should be given to training the C&A HRAs (based on a specific training plan and strategy), so that there is more than one source of SR advice. [5]
- To the extent possible, SR service delivery should be on site, to ensure face-to-face advice and maximum understanding of local client needs and work environment.

3.2 SR AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

ISSUE

The SR division does not use SR trends or SR statistics sufficiently or appropriately to convey a true analysis of the SR issues which can be used as a management tool. DFO's use of information systems (PeopleSoft), as it relates to SR, is inadequate to support proper monitoring of trends or statistics for management-level decision-making.

FINDINGS

SRAs perceive sufficient knowledge sharing among their group. The Chief, SR, holds meetings every two weeks with the SR team, with regional SRAs participating through teleconference. These meetings are a forum to discuss the latest issues in SR at DFO, and to raise awareness among SRAs of recent grievance or adjudication decisions. Also, recent decisions can be found in an electronic file format accessible to all SRAs for their reference. Most knowledge sharing among SRAs is done on a casual, informal basis. When an SRA needs the opinion of a colleague

[5] A review of the HRA job descriptions revealed that the provision of SR advice is already part of the HRAs' job responsibilities, although they are not fulfilling this role in C&A Region at the present time.

or wishes to know if a colleague has experience with a particular type of SR case, he or she usually phones another SRA that they know personally. SRAs report that this type of knowledge sharing is adequate for their needs, and they prefer it to using an electronic file.

The SR division does not track data or monitor statistics on a regular basis for the purpose of guiding management decisions.[6] For the most part, SR statistical reports are produced at the request of a client, and are often for information purposes only – rarely are the data used to influence management-level SR planning or strategy. At most, Regional Management Committees (RMCs) receive a monthly or bi-monthly report on the number of grievances and the latest progress on these files. Generally, the numbers are provided for information purposes and are not accompanied by any sort of analysis. Hence, they do not readily assist in decision making. Clients report that they rarely if ever request SR management information or use such reporting to aid or guide their management decisions. In fact, most client managers stated that this type of SR information 'would be nice', but it is not one of their immediate priorities. An exception to this lies with CCG, where management has recently begun to request SR statistics and uses them to gain an understanding of trends and tendencies within CCG. Clients admit that they have not ever considered the value that this type of information could hold for them, nor has SR division ever discussed with them the potential value of trend analysis in managing their staff relations.

SR information systems (PeopleSoft) are criticised by SRAs, HRAs, and SR/HR management for three main reasons:

- The PeopleSoft system is not considered to be user-friendly. Because usage is infrequent, it requires too much time and relearning each time that reports are needed. (C & A report that they are using an Excel worksheet to produce grievance reports for RUMC).
- The data in PeopleSoft are generally believed to be unreliable and not up-to-date. In fact, this was confirmed by the audit team's comparison of hard copy grievance files with the grievance data contained in PeopleSoft. The majority of files reviewed showed that critical dates in the grievance files did not match the dates entered in PeopleSoft. Annex D contains a more detailed look at the audit team's grievance analysis.
- Not enough people have access or are able to work with Peoplesoft...[7] Although each region has a designated HR employee who is trained to run PeopleSoft reports, this person usually only has access to produce 'canned' reports rather than ad-hoc reports. Headquarters SR management states that more people need to be trained to run PeopleSoft reports, both canned and ad-hoc. When the trained individual is absent, they have had to pay outside consultants to run reports for them. In fact, some of the reports requested in the context of this audit were produced by an outside consultant.

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[6] Pertinent SR statistics could include the total numbers of grievances received and at which levels they are resolved; average times to resolve grievances at each level; trends in grievance subject matter; comparisons between sectors; grievances granted versus denied; trends in adjudication decisions; numbers of grievances going on to adjudication; etc. Besides grievance data, the division could also track statistics such as the average number of cases handled per SRA; types of issues handled by HRAs; SR client satisfaction; SR client needs analysis, how DFO compares with other Departments on SR issues, etc.

[7] The audit team was unable to obtain from SR division the exact number of people within the SR or HR structure who are trained and able to produce either 'canned' or ad-hoc reports.

STRENGTHS

- Because the Coast Guard has the largest proportion by far of grievances at DFO, CCG management has recently begun to monitor its grievance situation. It now requests monthly reports from SR on the number of outstanding grievances, subject matters, and the progress in each file.[8]
- The Early Conflict Resolution (ECR) Office is tracking statistics and provide reports to DFO's senior management.[9] ECR provides management with regular reports which include the number of cases it handles, subject matters, and the ECR success rate in resolving the issues. Awareness of such statistics brings this type of tracking to the forefront for DFO management.
- At the end of May 2002, SR management provided a thorough statistical report to the ADM HR on the issue of outstanding grievances, levels of resolution, timelines, etc., showing that this type of reporting is becoming important to senior management.

RISKS

- When SR data tracking or trend analysis is not done, SR management and line management cannot have an accurate picture of the main issues affecting their staff relations, nor do they know the degree to which their SR environment is improving or deteriorating and in what ways.[10] Without this knowledge, management cannot develop relevant SR strategies to improve employee-employer relations. Indeed, if management's action plans are based solely on a 'feeling' of the SR environment, there are risks that potential SR problems may be overlooked or ignored at the management table because of a lack of awareness.
- Because PeopleSoft is not seen as being user-friendly, SRAs and HRAs are reluctant to use it as a tool to help formulate the advice they give to their clients.
- When the information in PeopleSoft is inaccurate or missing, the system loses credibility in the eyes of clients and SR staff. The risk then is that SR and client managers choose not to rely on the information available to them in PeopleSoft, and a potentially valuable management tool is rendered useless.
- Current limitations on the type of information available in Peoplesoft makes ad hoc reporting problematic. As such, clients and SR management alike are reluctant to ask for data that could potentially aid them in their SR decision-making. In this case, management may assume that the information they require is simply unavailable or unattainable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

[8] Although this is a positive step, it is too early to know of management's subsequent use of this information and how the data will be used to influence the management of staff relations within CCG.
[9] Although the ECR office is a separate entity from the SR division, both are involved in the realm of solving problems that arise in the workplace.
[10] Currently, client managers report that, at best, they have a 'sense' of the general situation with regard to the staff relations environment, but this feeling is not based on a review of accurate data. It is driven primarily by perception.

- SR division undertake an analysis of the reliability of the data contained in PeopleSoft, and take measures to ensure that the system is kept up-to-date, and communicate the importance of data quality, reliability and consistency to all SRAs and HRAs, and to any support staff who enter the data in the system.
- SR management and the PeopleSoft Division provide PeopleSoft training and access to more staff. This will ensure that there are sufficient numbers of people available to generate both canned and ad-hoc reports not only on a regular basis, but also at any time upon request from SR management or clients.
- SR division seek information from their clients regarding what types of data or trend analysis would be useful for them.
- SR division begin regular data tracking and trend analysis. This type of tracking can be promoted to senior management and clients as a valuable management tool to guide decision-making and SR strategies and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the SR function.
- SR division raise the awareness of the value of data monitoring by demonstrating to clients how to use this information to guide decision-making.

3.3 Union/Management Relations

ISSUE

The main channels by which union/management relations are built show weaknesses that can affect their efficiency and effectiveness. SR division has a valuable role to play in each of these areas, but their current involvement is less than ideal.

FINDINGS

Management's relations with unions can best be described through the two main channels for union-management communication: the grievance process and Union/Management Committee Consultations (UMCCs).[11] Although management reports that its relations with unions are good, Unions indicate that management actions in these two areas leave unions with the feeling that they are not being respected.

The Grievance Process

There is a three-level grievance process in effect at DFO. Authority over the grievance process (to hear the grievance and render a decision) is delegated as follows: the employee's supervisor/manager at Level 1; the Director General (DG) or Regional Director General (RDG) at Level 2; and the Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) at Level 3. At levels 2 and 3 in the grievance process, the parties can agree to a sub-delegation of authority. If a grievance is not resolved at Level 3, the case then goes to Treasury Board. Treasury Board can then decide whether or not to support the grievance in adjudication, or whether it will request the Department to further attempt to resolve the matter.[12] At each level, there is a maximum timeframe by which

[11] UMCCs are held regularly at the National, Regional, and Local area levels to resolve issues between unions and management.
[12] Not all types of grievances are adjudicable – there are differences in procedures depending on subject matter.

management is required to respond to the grievance.[13] In all cases, timelines can be extended upon agreement between the two parties (management and union). If the union does not accept to extend the timelines, it can decide to go to the next level in the grievance process at the end of the relevant timeline.

An employee usually presents a grievance to his or her immediate supervisor. The employee can also present a copy of the grievance to the SRA or HRA at the same time. While the immediate supervisor is responsible for acknowledging receipt of the grievance, the SRA or HRA maintains responsibility for the integrity of the grievance file (i.e., ensures all relevant and required documentation is on hand) and usually advises management throughout the case as needed. In Pacific Region, the HRA handles all grievances up to and including Level 2, dealing directly with the union and the appropriate management level involved. The HRA refers to the SRA for advice on an as-needed basis, but the SRA does not get involved in these grievances unless requested by the HRA. If the grievance goes on to Level 3, the regional HRA is no longer involved and responsibility for the file is transferred to the appropriate SRA at corporate headquarters. On the other hand, in C&A Region, HRAs have no involvement with the grievance process. Unions and management deal directly with the regional SRA for Levels 1 and 2. Again, grievance files that go on to Level 3 are transferred to the SRA at national headquarters. Regional SRAs report that once a grievance is transferred to national headquarters, they are not kept informed on the progress of the file.

The audit team's review of grievance files demonstrated that the majority of files contained incomplete documentation. Because there was insufficient tracking of steps in the grievance process, it was not possible, for the most part, to determine exact causes for delays or to know which party (employee, union or management) was responsible for creating delays.[14]

In both regions included in this audit, the RDG maintains authority over Level 2 grievances.[15] In Pacific Region, unions are dissatisfied with the lack of availability of the RDG for grievance hearings and the fact that, as a result, hearing dates are set too far in the future and management's requests for extensions to grievance timelines are far too common. They also state that managers wait until the last minute to ask for an extension to timelines. In fact, union representatives in the Pacific Region report that management often takes too long to respond, and unions end up deciding to take the grievance automatically to the next level rather than agreeing to wait any longer.[16] Both SR and management in Pacific Region report that the unions prefer 'they have the RDG's ear'. On the other hand, union representatives in the Pacific Region report that they would gladly accept a sub-delegation of authority to avoid the long delays in the grievance process due to the RDG's unavailability. They do, however, insist that the sub-delegation meet certain conditions:

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[13] For more detailed information on the grievance process, procedures and timelines, refer to Annex D. To review the grievance process in further detail and for an overview of the process maps, refer to the report 'Review of the Grievance Process Related to the Public Service Alliance of Canada', June 12, 2002.
[14] A more detailed overview of the audit team's review of grievance files is found in Annex D.
[15] In fact, the only region that has sub-delegated authority for Level 2 grievances is the Québec Region.
[16] Unions did not, however, provide any data to support this statement.

- The individual must be permanently and officially delegated the authority over grievances (i.e., they would not accept last-minute, unplanned replacements for the RDG simply based on whoever is available at the time) to promote better consistency in decisions.
- The delegate must have a wide enough perspective over the entire region, so that he/she can base decisions on direct knowledge and understanding of regional-level issues.
- The delegate must have the ultimate power of decision over the grievance, and not have to refer back to the RDG before rendering a decision. In other words, delegating the authority simply to *hear* the grievance is not enough to satisfy the unions.

In C&A Region, the RDG has sub-delegated his authority to hear grievances to the sector Regional Director (RD), but decision authority rests with the RDG. This situation allows for scheduling hearings in a timelier manner. Hearings are conducted with the RD and the SRA in attendance. Together, these two make a recommendation to the RDG. The fact that he still needs to approve the decision adds to the grievance timeline – the decision is not considered final until the RDG signs off. Contrary to the Pacific Region, where these delays in accessing the RDG frustrate the unions, union representatives in C&A Region report that they are relatively satisfied with the arrangement as is. The fact that at least the hearings take place with shorter delays in C&A, and that unions anticipate the RDG will most probably approve the RD's recommendation, seems to account for their acceptance of this arrangement.

At the third level of the grievance process, the employee is often represented by a paid union employee. These union representatives are not DFO employees and therefore have a different perspective on the grievance process – they can compare DFO's actions with those of other government Departments they deal with. Two points of concern were mentioned by the national union representatives:

- DFO's third-level grievances for PSAC-UCTE[17] are heard by an SRA, who makes a submission to the Chief SR. In most of the CCG grievances at this level, decisions are then made by the Deputy Commissioner CCG, who does not hear the grievance. This is seen as reflecting an attitude that these hearings are not important enough to management.
- In the opinion of PSAC-Environment Component, in comparison to the other government Departments they represent, DFO is the least efficient in terms of managing grievance timelines.

From the union point of view, SR division has an important role to play in the management of the grievance process, especially with regard to the management of grievance files. They also believe that it is SR's role to keep management abreast of grievance proceedings and progress or delays in timelines.

UMCCs

[17] Public Service Alliance of Canada – Union of Canadian Transportation Employees, representing most CCG employees.

Most interactions between unions and management take place at UMCCs. These meetings are a forum for airing and resolving issues between the two parties. Responsibility for scheduling UMCCs and organizing the agenda lies with local area management for local UMCCs, the regional SRAs for regional meetings (RUMCCs), and SR division at headquarters for national meetings (NUMCCs).[18] In theory, scheduling of the local, regional and national UMCCs should be coordinated, so that issues at the local level can then be taken to the regional level meetings as required, and so on. However, due to difficulties in coordinating the availability of key management or union representatives, this is not always the case. Management and unions report that many issues are resolved by more informal, one-on-one interactions between managers and union representatives. Despite the fact that SRAs at headquarters warn of potential risks when managers and union representatives consult each other informally and bypass SR, regional SRAs, management and unions all value the positive relations built informally between the parties.

The effectiveness of UMCCs in resolving issues between management and unions varies by level – local, regional or national. In many cases, managers feel that local UMCCs are the most effective, since the issues aired are directly relevant to them. On the other hand, because the majority of grievances and SR issues stem from CCG, managers from other sectors report that most of the discussion at regional or national UMCCs doesn't concern them.

In general, unions mention certain factors regarding UMCCs that are a source of frustration on their part. For example, they report that:

- Management will reschedule or cancel a UMCC at the last minute.
- The RDG will not show up to a UMCC and sends instead an unannounced replacement on his behalf.
- Management representatives have been known to arrive late and or leave early on occasion.
- Action items for management from a previous UMCC will not be acted on.

In Pacific Region, the same issues and conditions as were noted for the delegation of the grievance process apply with regard to management delegation at UMCCs. Once again, union representatives would accept a delegate for the RDG, in order to avoid undue delays in scheduling meetings, if the delegate was permanently and officially named, had a regional-level perspective, and had decision-making power over issues brought up at UMCCs.

With regard to national UMCCs, union employees mentioned one particular point of concern to them: that items are mentioned at UMCCs after the fact (i.e., after DFO management has already taken action to implement something), which in their opinion is a lack of courtesy on the part of DFO management.[19]

[18] Union representatives at local and regional UMCCs are DFO employees who are union stewards. At national UMCCs, the union is represented by paid union employees and/or elected officials.
[19] Note that this information was not confirmed by management.

Unions see SR division as playing a crucial role with regard to UMCCs. From their perspective, SR should be advising management on how best to use UMCCs as an effective tool to facilitate good union-management relations.

STRENGTHS

- Management and unions agree that informal relations and communications between the two parties are positive and are effective tools for resolving many minor issues early on.
- TBS representatives and SR management report that line management shows good involvement and interest when asked to provide input into the collective bargaining process.[20]

RISKS

- Poor management of grievance files by SR division impedes management's ability to monitor the grievance process accurately. Management is not able to put in place any measures that would be necessary to improve the efficiency of the process if they are not able to identify reasons for delays. For example, the claim that management takes so long to respond that union representatives choose to automatically take the grievance to the next level cannot be proven or disproved due to the lack of documentation on file.
- The perception that DFO management is poor in comparison to other Departments with regard to requests for extensions to grievance timelines can negatively impact overall relations with unions. In general, extensions to timelines inevitably decrease the efficiency of the grievance process.
- The perception that the RDG does not have sufficient availability for hearing grievances (which causes delays in timelines), yet does not delegate the authority to hear and render decisions, contributes to the unions' dissatisfaction with management's handling of grievance procedures.
- Having third level grievances heard by an SRA who reports back to the Chief SR, rather than being heard directly by the ADM, leads to the union's perception that the process is not important enough to management and can tarnish any goodwill that unions and employees may have towards management.
- Management's reported behaviours in the context of UMCCs (arriving late and leaving early, cancelling or rescheduling, sending an unexpected delegate, etc.) can lead unions to feel that the spirit of UMCCs is not respected by management. This can sour overall union/management relations.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

[20] When TBS begins preparations for entering into collective bargaining, it asks Departments who have large numbers of the represented employees to provide input regarding the major issues that will be brought to the negotiation table. Major user Departments are also asked to send managers to participate on the negotiation team. Comments on these two points were positive with regard to DFO'S response to TBS.

- SR division be accountable for the filing of the core documentation on the grievance files such as; the original grievance, the grievance presentation form, transmittal forms for each level and decision document\letter for each level, and that the importance of thorough grievance documentation be highlighted and communicated to all SRAs ,HRAs and management.
- SR division begin tracking the progress in grievance files more closely, and produce narrative reports on issues, trends and possible action plans to increase the efficiency of the grievance process.
- That management establish standards for its practices regarding UMCCs, and monitor its adherence to those standards.
- That management, SR division and unions discuss together possible ways to improve the efficiency of the grievance process, and draft an action plan.
- RDGs consider sub-delegating authority to hear grievances *and* render decisions, keeping in mind the conditions unions would expect of the delegate, so that grievance timelines can be shortened and the process can become more efficient.

3.4 MANAGEMENT CONTROL FRAMEWORK

ISSUE

The SR division is planning a Staff Relations Renewal Initiative, with a goal of fostering a productive union-management-employee relationship and providing high quality SR services.[21] One of the first steps of the initiative should be to define the specific needs of SR division's clients.

FINDINGS

There are several forward-looking reports coming out of both Treasury Board and DFO that discuss needed changes in HR as a whole and SR in particular. DFO has begun to think about how to renew its SR function in light of these reports. As such, some of the relevant points in these papers are worth mentioning at this time, since they will form the context within which DFO's SR renewal will need to take place.

Treasury Board requested the Fryer Committee[22] to make recommendations on labour management relations in the federal Public Service to make the relationship to make it sustainable into the 21st century. Some of the recommendations that have been formulated as a result of this report are as follows:

- Have an overall labour management accountability plan specifying the roles and responsibilities of various parties including line managers and union representatives as well as Government boards and agencies.
- Measurement of things such as satisfaction with recourse procedures and time needed to resolve SR matters.

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[21] SR Renewal Initiative Workplan, February 2002.

[22] Advisory Committee on Labour Management Relations in the Federal Public Service, *Working Together in the Public Interest*, June 2001; more commonly known as the Fryer Report, after the Chair, John L. Fryer.

- Comprehensive joint union management training in labour relations and conflict resolution completed by managers and union representatives.
- Union-management consultation to develop SR policies and practices. Public Service must train its managers better in HRM and labour relations.

While the Fryer Committee looked specifically at staff relations in the Public Service, the Quail Task Force[23] is currently developing a larger framework for HR modernization in the Public Service. The Quail Task Force is expected to make recommendations to bring the legislative framework for HR management in the Public Service forward, with the goal of improving labour-management relations and introducing more effective employee recourse mechanisms.[24]

At the Department level, DFO has developed its own HR Business Plan.[25] The plan identifies several challenges and objectives for the HR community as a whole, some of which are listed below:

- HR is asked to play an increasingly important partnership role with senior management in the provision of strategic advice.
- HR Sector is challenged to build better working relationships with the unions.
- The HR community must become more client-focused.
- HR Sector must increase the quality and timeliness of the services it provides, and make these services more strategic in nature.
- HR Sector will work to increase the data quality in PeopleSoft and improve HR's use of systems.

In addition to the HR Business Plan, DFO plans to develop its SR Renewal Initiative, which may have objectives to improve: (1) SR processes, (2) the quality of SR strategic advice, (3) the marketing of the SR function, and (4) union-management relations. HR management has stated that it plans to use the results of this audit to enhance these improvements.

SR services are considered to be reactive rather than proactive. This, however, is the nature of the business and SR will always be functioning in a somewhat reactive mode. Clients approach SR when a problem arises, and SR advises them on how to resolve the problem. On the other hand, some clients or unions see SR as needing to play a more proactive role: not in the promotion of good employee-employer relations, but more concretely, in providing SR training, conducting grievance trend analyses to give management advance warning of possible dangers, or involving unions and clients in SR planning and strategy development. Many clients see ECR[26] as the 'proactive wing of staff relations'. ECR is seen as projecting the image of being an alternative to the grievance process, as its objective is to resolve conflicts early on, before they

[23] Task Force on the Modernization of Human Resources Management in the Public Service, led by Ronald A. Quail.
[24] Taken from the TBS website: www.tbs-sct..gc.ca/classification/AboutUs.
[25] Human Resources Sector Business Plan 2002-2005, DFO, January 11, 2002.
[26] ECR: Early Conflict Resolution. The ECR office at DFO has been established as a completely separate entity from SR division, to emphasise its neutral nature and the confidentiality of the cases it handles. From the ECR office's point of view, their clients come from all sides – employees and managers alike.

become official grievances. When questioned about how SR could become more proactive, many clients state that this is the role of ECR.[27]

In general, most client managers do not have SR at the management table, as SR is not considered to be a member of the management team. Managers report that they are not convinced of SR's strategic abilities and only after SR has demonstrated its added value, would they be offered a seat at the management table. In a few cases, mostly in Pacific Region, line managers have an HR manager on their management team, but would only invite SR on an as-needed basis, if the subject matter were directly related to SR issues.

STRENGTHS

- The ECR office is believed to have done a very good job of marketing itself. It has called managers and offered to provide presentations on ECR to their management teams. This has allowed for clarity of the role of ECR and high visibility for the service – managers and SRAs in the regions report that they very often recommend ECR as a first step when they become aware of a conflict situation.
- In the cases in Pacific Region where an HR manager is part of the management team and HR has a regular seat at the management table, these clients report that this has allowed HR to gain a better understanding of important issues and a wider perspective that allows them to provide better quality advice.

RISKS

- The low visibility of SR, the lack of clarity of its role, and the lack of management awareness, may mean that managers do not consult SR in situations where SR advice would be important. This may lead to managers' acting alone, without proper SR guidance.
- If SR does not begin to act in a more proactive sense, client managers will continue to see the function as solely reactive, administrative and operational, and this would inhibit them from receiving an invitation to the management table. In light of this, SR would have difficulty aligning itself with the direction recommended by Fryer and the HR Business Plan.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

[27] The role of ECR has been a sore spot for some union representatives. Indeed, the very fact that it can be seen as an alternative to the grievance process has some national unions believing that it is a mechanism by which management can exclude unions and take away the employee's right to be represented by his union.

- SR increase its visibility among clients by offering to meet with management teams to present its role and responsibilities, as well as the types of services and guidance it can provide to management teams. SR can follow the example of the ECR office, as its strategy to make presentations to various management teams has resulted in many managers and SRAs recommending ECR as a first step in conflict situations.
- SR division develop plans to offer SR training to client managers. SR should consider joint training with unions – i.e., SR courses or information sessions could be developed in conjunction with union representatives.

3.5 COMPLIANCE WITH TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT SR POLICIES

The second objective for the audit was to assess DFO's compliance with Treasury Board Secretariat's SR policies. TBS has in place several policies that govern the staff relations function in federal government departments. A list of the department-level responsibilities identified in these policies is found in Annex C.

ISSUE

There is no defined and accepted departmental policy framework for SR within DFO.

FINDINGS

TBS no longer monitors departmental compliance with its SR policies and according to TBS representatives most Departments, including DFO, no longer seek TBS approval for the responsibilities listed in these policies. As per discussions with DFO SR management, there are no SR policies at the Department level. SR within DFO is governed by central agency SR policies, the various collective agreements, as well as a variety of Canadian laws (such as the Human Rights Act, the Public Service Staff Relations Act, etc.).

Interviews with DFO's SR management and TBS representatives raised questions regarding the need to assess compliance with TBS SR policies in the context of this audit, and whether or not such an assessment would add value to our findings and recommendations. Indeed, SR management at DFO confirmed that they do not carry out all of the departmental responsibilities listed in TBS policies. TBS representatives confirmed that, although the SR policies in question are still the most current, TBS no longer monitors compliance with these policies. Whereas in the past TBS regularly verified departmental compliance with its SR policies, in recent years it has changed its focus and no longer takes on a role of 'policing' the Departments. While departmental SR responsibilities to TBS are no longer relevant, TBS expects that Departments will still take responsibility for ensuring that their SR practices follow the Public Service Staff Relations Act and the components of the various collective agreements by which they are governed.

Because of the current context of Departments no longer adhering to many of the department-level responsibilities in TBS SR policies, the audit team decided not to separately pursue the assessment of DFO's compliance with these policies. In fact, the team concluded that a verification of whether or not DFO's SR division was seeking TBS approval as per the policies would not add value to this audit as most Departments are no longer following the procedures outlined, nor is TBS expecting that they do. Although compliance itself may not be relevant to an assessment of the efficiency of SR functioning, good SR management is relevant and this is addressed by the first audit objective.

RISKS

Although there is no monitoring by TBS or direct consequences to the Department for not adhering to central agency SR policies, if SR guidelines are not clearly communicated and followed at the Department level, there are risks of an increased number of grievances being received, of grievances going on to higher levels in the process, of lengthier grievance timelines, of inconsistencies in SR procedures, and of a resulting poor staff relations environment. This situation is best explained by the following examples:

TBS SR Policy	Comments
(a) Grievance Procedures: Department must obtain approval of grievance procedures from the Employer Representation Group of TBS.	If a Department does not establish proper grievance procedures, the situation could lead to receiving an increased number of grievances or having many grievances go on to higher levels in the grievance process before being adequately resolved.
(b) Discipline: Department must consult the Employer Representation Group of TBS prior to taking termination action.	Many Departments no longer consult with TBS before terminating an employee. However, if TBS was not consulted, the Department runs the risk that TBS may decide not to go to adjudication and expect instead that the Department settle with the employee.
(c) Discipline: Department must develop, maintain and amend codes of discipline, and drafts must be sent to the Employer Representation Group at TBS.	Most Departments no longer have a code of discipline, so the obligation to send it to TBS is irrelevant. However, should disciplinary expectations and procedures not be clearly established and communicated, the Department would risk receiving an increased number of grievances or having many grievances go on to higher levels in the grievance procedure before being adequately resolved.
(d) Managerial or Confidential Positions: Department is responsible for consulting with representatives of bargaining agents in an attempt to reach an agreement, and then submitting proposals to TBS.	TBS expects that Departments take all actions necessary to ensure acceptance and approval of their proposed managerial or confidential positions. If DFO's consultative process is not thorough enough, files may be insufficiently researched and the Department runs the risk of having its proposals rejected by TBS because of a lack of due diligence.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:
DFO's SR division put in place its own management and control frameworks to govern SR-related areas covered by TBS policies, and that these guidelines be communicated clearly throughout the organization.

4.0. MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN

RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN	OFFICER OF PRIME INTEREST	INITIAL TARGET DATE
SERVICE DELIVERY			
1. The SR division update its organizational charts to show all SR service providers, where they are located and which client groups they serve.	See Annex A Section #1 – Service Delivery		
2. C&A Region be supported in adopting a service delivery in which HRAs are fully trained in staff relations (including the standard two-week SR course provided by PSC and on-the-job training under the guidance of an experienced SRA). Priority should be given to training the C&A HRAs (based on a specific training plan and strategy), so that there is more than one source of SR advice.	See Annex A Section #2 – Learning Organization (Training)		
3. To the extent possible, SR service delivery should be on site, to ensure face-to-face advice and maximum understanding of local client needs and work environment.	See Annex A Section #1 – Service Delivery		

RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN	OFFICER OF PRIME INTEREST	INITIAL TARGET DATE

LEARNING ORGANIZATION

4. SR division undertake an analysis of the reliability of the data contained in PeopleSoft, and take measures to ensure that the system is kept up-to-date, and communicate the importance of data quality, reliability and consistency to all SRAs and HRAs, and to any support staff who enter the data in the system.	See Annex A Section #4 – Data Management		
5. SR management and the PeopleSoft Division provide PeopleSoft training and access to more staff. This will ensure that there are sufficient numbers of people available to generate both canned and ad-hoc reports not only on a regular basis, but also at any time upon request from SR management or clients.	See Annex A Section #2 – Learning Organization (Training)		
6. SR division seek information from their clients regarding what types of data or trend analysis would be useful for them. SR division begin regular data tracking and trend analysis. This type of tracking can be promoted to senior management and clients as a valuable management tool to guide	See Annex A Section #2 – Learning Organization (Training)		

RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN	OFFICER OF PRIME INTEREST	INITIAL TARGET DATE
decision-making and SR strategies and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the SR function.			

UNION MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

7. SR division be accountable for the filing of the core documentation on the grievance files such as; the original grievance, the grievance presentation form, transmittal forms for each level and decision document\letter for each level, and that the importance of thorough grievance documentation be highlighted and communicated to all SRAs ,HRAs and management.	See Annex A Section #3 – Staff Relations Process Improvements		
8. SR division begin tracking the progress in grievance files more closely, and produce narrative reports on issues, trends and possible action plans to increase the efficiency of the grievance process.	See Annex A Section #3 – Staff Relations Process Improvements		
9. That management establish standards for its practices regarding UMCCs, and monitor its adherence to those standards.	See Annex A Section #3 – Staff Relations Process Improvements		

RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN	OFFICER OF PRIME INTEREST	INITIAL TARGET DATE
10. That management, SR division and unions discuss together possible ways to improve the efficiency of the grievance process, and draft an action plan.	See Annex A Section #3 – Staff Relations Process Improvements		
11. RDGs consider sub-delegating authority to hear grievances *and* render decisions, keeping in mind the conditions unions would expect of the delegate, so that grievance timelines can be shortened and the process can become more efficient.	See Annex A Section #3 – Staff Relations Process Improvements		

RECOMMENDATIONS	MANAGEMENT ACTION PLAN	OFFICER OF PRIME INTEREST	INITIAL TARGET DATE

MANAGEMENT CONTROL FRAMEWORK

12. DFO's SR division put in place its own management and control frameworks to govern SR-related areas covered by TBS policies, and that these guidelines be communicated clearly throughout the organization.	See Annex A Section #1 – Service Delivery		
13. SR increase its visibility among clients by offering to meet with management teams to present its role and responsibilities, as well as the types of services and guidance it can provide to management teams. SR can follow the example of the ECR office, as its strategy to make presentations to various management teams has resulted in many managers and SRAs recommending ECR as a first step in conflict situations.	See Annex A Section #1 – Service Delivery		
14. SR division develop plans to offer SR training to client managers. SR should consider joint training with unions – i.e., SR courses or information sessions could be developed in conjunction with union representatives.	See Annex A Section #2 – Learning Organization (Training)		

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

In any Audit, it is worthwhile to mention the importance of participation to the success of the project. The relevance and usefulness of the report are directly linked to the valuable input received from the relevant people, the dependable assistance of partners and the dedication of the project team,

The audit team would like to acknowledge the National Union Representatives, Wayne Elliot, Elaine Massée, and William Pynn as well as union representatives in the Pacific and Central and Arctic Regions for the their participation and contribution to this audit. As well, participants from Treasury Board, Gray Gillespie, Ilan Rumsfield, and Dennis Duggan deserve our thanks.

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To all staff relations advisors, human resources management, human resources generalists, staff relations clients, senior management and staff relations partners who participated in the audit through interviews and focus groups, we extend our sincere thanks and appreciation.

The Project team for this review involved the following people: Lynn Bougard and Carol O'Brien from the Review Directorate; Jacqueline Lussier from the Human Resources Sector in partnership with Cindy Desouza, David Prime and Ian Fernandez from PwC Consulting (a business of PricewaterhouseCoopers) and, Gloria Blaker from Aquila Human Resources Systems Consulting Group. They deserve recognition for their dedication, professionalism and teamwork.

As project manager, I have appreciated your input and your dedication.

Nicole Asselin

A N N E X A – M A N A G E M E N T R E S P O N S E T O A C T I O N P L A N

INTRODUCTION

The audit of the staff relations function at DFO has been reviewed carefully and a management action plan to deal with the recommendations flowing from this audit has been developed based on the major findings as follows:

1. SERVICE DELIVERY / MANAGEMENT CONTROL FRAMEWORK

2. LEARNING ORGANIZATION (TRAINING)

3. STAFF RELATIONS PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS / UNION MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

4. DATA MANAGEMENT

A detailed outline of the action to be taken under each of these headings has been established with the input of employees and managers involved in the delivery of the staff relations function in the regions and in headquarters.

1. SERVICE DELIVERY / MANAGEMENT CONTROL FRAMEWORK

The audit notes that there are significant differences in the ways that staff relations service is delivered across DFO and that this has a negative impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the staff relations function.

The action that is proposed to deal with this issue is directly related to the work being undertaken on staff relations renewal. More specifically, the renewal initiative will examine the current staff relations capacity and establish the approach that will optimize the delivery of high quality staff relations service to clients. This work will take into account:

- the current staff relations capacity in regions and in headquarters and the capacity needed to deal with workload
- the viability of delivering staff relations service through staff relations specialists versus HR generalists or some combination of the two
- reporting relationships of those providing staff relations services.
- the desirability of face-to-face service to clients and the need to balance this against the limited resources providing staff relations service across regions with several hundred different locations
- the characteristics and needs of each of the regional offices

This work will be undertaken with input and feedback from staff relations stakeholders.

The specific result or action to be implemented to deal with this issue consists of:

1. an update of the organization chart for the staff relations function identifying all service providers with clear indication of roles and responsibilities
2. presentations to outline and clarify the roles and responsibilities of the restructured staff relations function to all clients, managers and employees to ensure there is a good understanding of the assistance and support that is available in staff relations

This response incorporates recommendations 1, 3, 12 and 14 of the audit.

This work is targeted for completion by March 31, 2003. The responsible officer is Joe Grebenc, Director, Staff Relations.

2. LEARNING ORGANIZATION (TRAINING AND SUPPORT)

The recommendations relating to education, or training and development in staff relations are found in various parts of the report. This issue refers to the education of those delivering staff relations services as well as managers and employees. Key observations in this area include the following;

- meeting with management teams to discuss staff relations role and responsibilities, types of services and guidance that is available
- staff relations training or information sessions to client managers including joint training with union representatives
- training or development of staff relations service providers, including guidance from experienced staff relations officers
- PeopleSoft training of staff relations service providers to generate reports required or useful to clients and those delivering staff relations services. It should be noted that this training is dependent on the introduction of a report generating capacity in PeopleSoft. Currently, this does not exist. Action related to this training is dependent on changes being introduced to PeopleSoft.

The specific action to be implemented to deal with this issue includes:

1. establishment/identification of clear training programs/information sessions required for clients and specialized training for certification of staff relations staff using available programs (with modification, as necessary)
2. prioritization of training based on budget and resource availability
3. delivery of training beginning with highest priority

This response incorporates recommendations 2, 5, 6, and 13 of the audit.

The identification and prioritization of training programs is targeted for completion by March 31, 2003. Delivery of priority training (subject to budget availability) will be initiated by September 30, 2003. The responsible officer will be identified upon completion of the update of the organization chart identified in the previous section of this action plan. Until this work is completed, the responsible officer is Joe Grebenc, Director, Staff Relations.

3. STAFF RELATIONS PROCESS IMPROVEMENTS / UNION MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

This part of the proposed action plan focuses on a number of observations made in the audit concerning various staff relations processes and practices. The major finding is that the main channels by which union/management relations are built show weaknesses that can affect their efficiency and effectiveness. The specific areas requiring attention, as outlined in the audit are the following:

- staff relations review of the management of the grievance process to ensure a minimum of delay and keep management abreast of grievance proceedings and progress, or delays in timelines (this includes a review of sub-delegation, as necessary, to avoid lengthy delays in responding to grievances)
- the establishment and monitoring of standards with respect to minimizing delays or rescheduling of union management consultation meetings, sending replacements to meetings, timely attendance of participants and follow-up on issues brought to these meetings (this involves regional/local and national consultation meetings)
- the need to track data and monitor statistics on a regular basis for the purpose of guiding management decisions
- a requirement for checklists, management tools, documentation to assist those providing and receiving staff relations advice

Although some of the work recommended on this issue has been undertaken, the following additional action will proceed to deal with these findings:

1. the grievance processes will be reviewed in consultation with clients and regional staff relations officers and managers to deal with issues identified
2. discussion will be undertaken with regional participants and those involved in the union management consultation process to implement changes to the operation of committees consistent with the audit findings.
3. statistics and data important to management will be identified and tracked with regular communication (semi-annual reporting) to managers
4. specific management tools such as checklists will be identified to aid managers and employees in understanding staff relations processes

This response incorporates recommendations 7 through 11 of the audit.

The specific needs associated with the above actions are targeted for precise identification by March 31, 2003. Implementation of actions is targeted for completion by June 30, 2003. The officer responsible for implementing the changes will be identified upon completion of the update of the organization chart identified in the previous section of this action plan. Until this work is completed, the responsible officer is Joe Grebenc, Director, Staff Relations.

4. DATA MANAGEMENT

The audit identifies the need to capture and manage data in ways that would support monitoring of trends or statistics for management level decision making. This includes tracking and developing reports on such issues as the total grievances received and the levels at which they are resolved (in cases where there is a resolution), average time taken to resolve grievances, trends in grievance subject matter, sector comparisons, grievances proceeding to adjudication, trends in adjudication decisions. The audit goes further to propose more sophisticated information collection dealing with client satisfaction, interdepartmental comparisons and so on.

This recommendation notes some difficulties with data management given limitations associated with the use and maintenance of the current HR information system (PeopleSoft). The following action is proposed to deal with this issue:

1. identification with the clients, of the data or trend analysis that would be useful to clients
2. review the ability of PeopleSoft to capture and maintain the data (including the requirement for confidentiality) and the measures needed (including resource implications) to keep the system current and to produce the reports with proper analysis and distribution.
3. identification of what is needed to upgrade the capture and dissemination of data with specific identification of “who is accountable for what” (corporate staff relations, regional staff relations, PeopleSoft)
4. development of required reports in conjunction with the clients, and based on client needs, with necessary analysis, including promoting and demonstrating the usefulness of the information, in keeping with the objective of a more proactive or strategic approach to dealing effectively with staff relations issues.

This response deals with a number of references made in the audit in relation to data tracking and management as well as recommendation 4 that deals specifically with this item.

Working in consultation with our regional colleagues and PeopleSoft staff, the identification and review of data (first two actions identified above) are targeted for completion by March 31, 2003. Implementation of the third and fourth action items is dependent on the findings of the first two items and is tentatively targeted for completion by June 30, 2003 and September 30, 2003, respectively. The officer responsible for implementing the changes will be identified upon completion of the update of the organization chart identified in the previous section of this action plan as well as the third action item identified above. Until this work is completed, the responsible officer is Joe Grebenc, Director, Staff Relations.

A N N E X B - C I C A C R I T E R I A O F C O N T R O L

Based on the Canadian Institute of Chartered Accountants (CICA) Criteria of Control (CoCo), the criteria used to determine whether the management and control frameworks in staff relations are efficient and effective were as follows:

Purpose

- Objectives of the SR division are adequately defined and communicated
- Plans guiding the group's efforts are established and communicated
- Significant internal and external risks faced by the division in the achievement of its objectives are identified and assessed

Commitment

- Authorities, responsibilities, and accountabilities are clearly defined within HQ and between HQ and regions
- Cooperation exists between SR and clients towards effective performance and the achievement of DFO's objectives

Capability

- The resources, knowledge, skills, and tools are adequate to support staff relations and Human Resources Sector's objectives
- The information systems are adequate to provide timely, accurate, and relevant information
- The function-related information is identified and communicated in a timely manner to fulfill assigned responsibilities. (e.g., quality of advice provided to managers in HQ and in the regions)
- The decisions and actions taken within HR and between SR and managers and functional specialists (e.g., ATIP, Legal etc) are coordinated

Monitoring and Learning

- The internal or external environments are monitored to signal a need to re-evaluate the organization's objectives and control
- Performance is monitored against the targets and indicators identified in the ogranization's objectives and plans
- The information needs and related information systems are assessed and adjusted as needed
- Staff relations best practices that can be shared among HQ and regions are identified
- Client satisfaction is assessed with respect to the support and advice provided by SR (i.e. monitoring the external environment can provide valuable information on the state of the internal environment)

ANNEX C - TREASURY BOARD STAFF RELATIONS POLICIES

TB SR Compliance Policies
Certification
▪ Department must comment on the application as well as the composition and the appropriateness of the bargaining unit.
▪ Department is required to post notices where they are most likely to come to the attention of the employees who may be affected by the application.
Managerial or Confidential Positions
▪ Department is responsible for identifying their complement of managerial or confidential positions.
▪ Department is responsible for justifying such a proposal.
▪ Department is responsible for consulting with representatives of bargaining agents in an attempt to reach an agreement, and then submitting proposals to the Treasury Board.
▪ Following the submission of the proposal to TBS, the department should inform employees of their exclusion status and their obligations as a person employed in a managerial or confidential position.
Safety or Security Designation
▪ Departmental management must review the position of each employee to determine whether or not the position has safety or security duties (based on risks to human life, public safety, or essential support to designated positions).
▪ Management must determine what level of service will be maintained during any work stoppage.
Grievances
▪ Department must establish internal grievance procedures for represented and unrepresented employees.
▪ Department must obtain approval of the grievance procedure from the Employer Representation Group of TBS.
▪ Department must post notices concerning steps in the grievance procedure.
▪ Department must consult with the Employer Representation Group before replying to an adjudicable grievance at the final level.
▪ Department must consult on and respond to grievances in the official language in which they are presented.
Adjudication
▪ Upon receiving notice of adjudication, the department must forward to the Employer Representation Group of TBS copies of all documents pertaining to the grievance.
▪ Department must attend all meetings convened by the Employer Representation Group.
▪ Department must make available at adjudication hearings all necessary experts, witnesses and an SR representative.
▪ If authority to represent the employer has been delegated, the Department must have an appropriate Delegation of Authority.
▪ Department must implement any decision of an adjudicator.

Discipline
▪ Department must consult the Employer Representation Group of TBS prior to taking termination action.
▪ Department must obtain approval from TBS prior to terminating an employee in the EX group.
▪ Department must develop, maintain and amend codes of discipline. Drafts must be sent to the Employer Representation Group at TBS.
▪ A record of disciplinary action must be placed in the personnel file of the employee.
Non-Disciplinary Demotion or Termination of Employment for Cause
▪ Department maintains records of measures taken to ensure fairness (i.e. the employee is informed that he/she is not meeting expectations, given the opportunity to adjust, explore other alternatives, etc.).
▪ Departments must notify the employee in writing when they decide to demote or terminate.
Administration of Collective Agreements
▪ Measures have been put in place to ensure communication and accessibility of collective agreements for SR staff and client managers.
▪ Any amendments to collective agreements are communicated to SR staff and client managers.

ANNEX D - GRIEVANCE PROCESS AND ANALYSIS

Grievance Process and Documentation:

Standard practice is as follows:

- griever files grievance by submitting a Presentation Form to the employer
- employer responds to grievance with a Decision Form (form or letter providing the response to a grievance)
- Should the griever be unsatisfied with the response from the employer, the griever can then submit a Transmittal form to elevate the grievance to the next level.
- On any grievance, the parties by mutual agreement can bypass or skip any of the levels in the grievance procedure and go directly to the final level for a decision.
- According to Public Service Staff Relations Board (PSSRB) rules of procedure, termination cases go directly to the final level for a decision.
- If the grievance is bypassing a level and being submitted directly to a higher level, a Presentation Form is used instead of a Transmittal Form.
- Finally, should the griever still be unsatisfied with the decision at the third level, the griever can choose to submit the case to the PSSRB. The PSSRB advises the TB who then takes over the case.

If the griever has not received a response, he must wait fifteen (15) days from the date the grievance was originally presented before he can bypass the level and submit the grievance at the next level. However, no grievance can be transmitted to adjudication until the grievance has been responded to at Level 3.

Collective agreements and the Public Service Staff Relations Act specify that “the Employer shall reply to an employee’s grievance, at any level in the grievance procedures, except the final level, within ten (10) working days of the date the grievance is presented at that level. The Employer shall normally reply to an employee’s grievance at the final level of the grievance procedure within thirty (30) working days after the grievance is presented at that level”.

PSAC and PIPS collective agreements require the employer to respond to a grievance at levels 1 and 2 within 25 working days. At the third level, this time limit for PSAC is 30 working days, while for PIPS it is 20 working days. Note that PeopleSoft tracking is being calculated in calendar days while grievance procedures are specified in working days. The analysis table for this audit uses calendar days. For this analysis, therefore, 25 working days = 35 calendar days; 20 working days = 28 calendar days; 30 working days = 42 calendar days. Note that for the purposes of this analysis, designated paid holidays are not considered.

AUDIT SAMPLE OF GRIEVANCE FILES

Pacific Region			Level One						Level Two						Level Three					
GID	Union	Grievance Type	P/D	Match	#Days	Over	TF	C/O	P/T &D	Match	#Days	Over	TF	C/O	P/T&D	Match	#Days	Over	ADJ	C/O
782	CAPRO	TB Policies Category - Other	P	Yes	64	29	No	C												
128	CMSGPS	Other Category - Other	PD	Yes	64	29	Yes	O	TD	Yes	62	27	Yes	O	T	M	M	M	M	O
161	PIPSC	Classification of Position							PD	Yes	57	22	Yes	O	T	?	1290	1262	No	C
167	PSAC	Term not Renewed	PD	Yes	16	0	Yes	O	TD	Yes	133	98	Yes	O	TD	Yes	193	151	No	C
259	PSAC	Hours of Work - Other			28	0			PD	Yes	360	325	Yes	O	T	M	M	M	M	O
534	CAPRO	Written Reprimand	PD	Yes	18	0	Yes	O	T	?	78	43	Yes	O	TD	No	198	156	No	C
539	CAPRO	Training	PD	No	9	0	Yes	O	TD	Yes	69	34	No	C						
820	PSAC	Suspension							PD	Yes	86	51	No	C						
845	PIPSC	Other - Other	PD	Yes	21	0	Yes	O	TD	No	145	110	No	C						
946	PIPSC	Definition of Duties	PD	No	31	0	Yes	O	TD	Yes	136	101	No	C						
589	IBEW	Suspension							PD	Yes	62	27	Yes	O	T	?	127	85	No	C

Central and Arctic Region			Level One						Level Two						Level Three					
GID	Union	Grievance Type	PD	Match	#Days	Over	TF	C/O	TD	Match	#Days	Over	TF	C/O	TD	Match	#Days	Over	ADJ	C/O
984	CAPRO	Compensatory/Lieu	PD	Yes	15	0	Yes	O	T	M	M	M	M	O*						
229	CAPRO	Transfers	PD	Yes	23	0	No	O	D	Yes	76	41	Yes	O	T	?	435	393	No	C
244	CAPRO	Vacation Leave	P	?	8	0	No	O	X	?	24	0	No	O	D	No	297	255	No	C
230	CMSGPS	Classification of Position	PD	No	M	M	No	O	D	No	161	126	No	O	D	No	M	M	No	C
923	PSAC	Written Reprimand	PD	Yes	2	0	Yes	O	TD	Yes	128	93	No	C						
466	PSAC	Hours of work			166	131			PD	Yes	128	93	No	O	X	?	175	133	No	C
867	CMSGPS	Vacation Leave	P	?	21	0	Yes	O	TD	Yes	111	76	No	C						
413	PSAC	Termination for Cause													PD	Yes	105	63	No	C

Please note that grievance #948 was requested by the audit team but was not found by the C&A region. The region submitted instead grievance #867, which was not requested by the audit team. This stewardship issue, which was dealt with within the report, did not have an impact of the audit results.

Table Legend (for Audit Sample of Grievance Files):

GID: Grievance ID

Unions: PSAC – Public Service Alliance of Canada
PIPSC – Professional Institution of the Public Service Canada
CAPRO – Canadian Association of Professional Radio Operations
CMSGPS – Canadian Merchant Service Guild of the Public Service
IBEW – International Brotherhood Electrical Workers

P/D: At level 1, are the Presentation Form and the Decision Form found in the hard copy file? P = Presentation Form only; D = Decision Form only; PD = both forms are found in the hard copy file

P/T and D: At levels 2 and 3, are the Transmittal *or* Presentation Form *and* Decision Form found in the hard copy file? T = Transmittal form only; D = Decision Form only; TD = Transmittal and Decision forms are found in the hard copy file; PD = Presentation and Decision forms are found in the hard copy file; X = all forms are missing

Match: Do the Decision dates in PeopleSoft match the Decision dates in the hard copy file? If the Decision Form is missing from the hard copy file, comparison between hard copy and PeopleSoft is not possible and therefore the data is entered as '?'.

 # Days: Number of Calendar Days to Resolve a Grievance

Over: Number of Calendar Days over the Maximum Calendar Days Allowed by the Collective Agreements; For the purposes of this audit, maximum days were considered to be as follows: max 35 days for all unions at levels 1 and 2; For level 3, PIPSC = max 28 Calendar days, and PSAC and all other unions = max 42 calendar days.

TF: Is the Transmittal Form Completed for the Next Level?

ADJ: Is there a request for adjudication?

C/O: Is the Grievance Closed or Outstanding? A grievance is considered closed when the decision has been accepted by the griever. A grievance is considered outstanding when there has not yet been a decision or when the decision has not been accepted by the griever.

M: Data Missing in PeopleSoft

Table Notes:

- **Grievance file 782:** The griever withdrew the grievance through an e-mail.
- **Grievance file 128**: Although PeopleSoft has no record of the grievance at the level 3, a Transmittal Form to the third level was found in the hard copy file. Due to the information missing in PeopleSoft, the audit team cannot determine the status of the grievance (closed or outstanding).
- **Grievance files 161, 820 and 589**: For unknown reasons, these files bypassed level 1 and were submitted directly at level 2. Documentation on file does not allow the audit team to conclude as to the exact reasons for this bypass.
- **Grievance file 259**: Although PeopleSoft recorded a period of activity at level 1, a decision was made to bypass this level. There was no documentation in the hard copy file to explain why days were being counted in PeopleSoft at level 1. Although there is no record of the grievance at level 3 in PeopleSoft, a Transmittal Form to the third level was found in the hard copy file. Due to the information missing in PeopleSoft, the status of the grievance (closed or outstanding) cannot be determined.
- **Grievance file 984**: Although PeopleSoft has no record of the grievance at level 2, a Transmittal Form to the second level was found in the hard copy file. Due to the information missing in PeopleSoft, the status of the grievance (closed or outstanding) cannot be determined.
- **Grievance file 229**: There was no Transmittal Form to the second level grievance found in the hard copy file.
- **Grievance file 244**: The hard copy file only contained two documents, the Presentation Form at level 1 and the Decision Letter at level 3. However, the hard copy file contained a handwritten note listing decision dates at levels 1 and 2.
- **Grievance 230**: The PeopleSoft database has no record of the length of time for the grievance at level 1, and provides the same date for the second and third level, as if it was presented at both levels simultaneously. The document was also missing the Transmittal Forms to the second and third levels.
- **Grievance 466**: Although PeopleSoft recorded a period of activity at the first level, for unknown reasons, a decision was made to bypass the first level. There is no explanation in the hard copy in regards to the number of days recorded in PeopleSoft at level 1. The hard copy file did not contain any documentation at level 3.
- **Grievance 413**: A Termination for Cause is only addressed at the third level, hence bypassing the first and second levels.

<u>**Summary:**</u>

- Out of the nineteen grievance files the audit team assessed, eleven were found to be incomplete. This could be for various reasons, including hard copy documents missing, data not entered in PeopleSoft, or files that end with a Transmittal form to the next level and no subsequent documentation.

- The higher the grievance level, the longer it takes to get a response. Only two grievances (782 and 128) went beyond allowed timeframes at level 1 (grievance 466 is not considered to have gone beyond the maximum time allowed, as level 1 was bypassed). At level 2, only one grievance (244) was responded *within* the allowed timeframes. At level 3, *none* of the grievances reviewed were responded to within the allowed timeframes.

- Fourteen out of the nineteen grievance files reviewed either did not have a match between PeopleSoft decision dates and hard copy decision dates, or were missing documentation to enable us to determine whether decision dates matched.

- In order to follow the progress of a grievance file, letters, memo or e-mails would be needed to reconstruct the steps taken during the grievance. Because of the lack these types of documents in Central and Arctic Region, it is next to impossible to track the history of the grievances. In contrast, Pacific Region does tend to keep this type of information in hard copy files and would therefore be in a better position to know where and why delays are happening.

ANNEX E - SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 SR SERVICE DELIVERY

ISSUE

There are significant differences in the ways SR service is distributed and provided across the organization, which is negatively affecting the efficiency and effectiveness of the SR function.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- The SR division update its organizational charts to show all SR service providers, where they are located and which client groups they serve.
- C&A Region be supported in adopting a service delivery in which HRAs are fully trained in staff relations (including the standard two-week SR course provided by PSC and on-the-job training under the guidance of an experienced SRA).
- Priority should be given to training the C&A HRAs (based on a specific training plan and strategy), so that there is more than one source of SR advice.[28]
- To the extent possible, SR service delivery should be on site, to ensure face-to-face advice and maximum understanding of local client needs and work environment.

3.2 SR AS A LEARNING ORGANIZATION

ISSUE

The SR division does not use SR trends or SR statistics sufficiently or appropriately to convey a true analysis of the SR issues which can be used as a management tool. DFO's use of information systems (PeopleSoft) is inadequate to support proper monitoring of trends or statistics for management-level decision-making.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- SR division undertake an analysis of the reliability of the data contained in PeopleSoft, and take measures to ensure that the system is kept up-to-date, and communicate the

[28] A review of the HRA job descriptions revealed that the provision of SR advice is already part of the HRAs' job responsibilities, although they are not fulfilling this role in C&A Region at the present time.

importance of data quality, reliability and consistency to all SRAs and HRAs, and to any support staff who enter the data in the system.

- SR management and the PeopleSoft Division provide PeopleSoft training and access to more staff. This will ensure that there are sufficient numbers of people available to generate both canned and ad-hoc reports not only on a regular basis, but also at any time upon request from SR management or clients.
- SR division seek information from their clients regarding what types of data or trend analysis would be useful for them.
- SR division begin regular data tracking and trend analysis. This type of tracking can be promoted to senior management and clients as a valuable management tool to guide decision-making and SR strategies and to demonstrate the effectiveness of the SR function.
- SR division raise the awareness of the value of data monitoring by demonstrating to clients how to use this information to guide decision-making.

3.3 UNION/MANAGEMENT RELATIONS

ISSUE

The main channels by which union/management relations are built show weaknesses that can affect their efficiency and effectiveness. SR division has a valuable role to play in each of these areas, but their current involvement is less than ideal.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- SR division be accountable for the filing of the core documentation on the grievance files such as; the original grievance, the grievance presentation form, transmittal forms for each level and decision document\letter for each level, and that the importance of thorough grievance documentation be highlighted and communicated to all SRAs ,HRAs and management.
- SR division begin tracking the progress in grievance files more closely, and produce narrative reports on issues, trends and possible action plans to increase the efficiency of the grievance process.
- That management establish standards for its practices regarding UMCCs, and monitor its adherence to those standards.
- That management, SR division and unions discuss together possible ways to improve the efficiency of the grievance process, and draft an action plan.
- RDGs consider sub-delegating authority to hear grievances *and* render decisions, keeping in mind the conditions unions would expect of the delegate, so that grievance timelines can be shortened and the process can become more efficient.

3.4 MANAGEMENT CONTROL FRAMEWORK

ISSUE

The SR division will be working on a Staff Relations Renewal Initiative, with a goal of fostering a productive union-management-employee relationship and providing high quality SR services.[29] One of the first steps of the initiative should be to define the specific needs of SR division's clients.

RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that:

- SR increase its visibility among clients by offering to meet with management teams to present its role and responsibilities, as well as the types of services and guidance it can provide to management teams. SR can follow the example of the ECR office, as its strategy to make presentations to various management teams has resulted in many managers and SRAs recommending ECR as a first step in conflict situations.
- SR division develop plans to offer SR training to client managers. SR should consider joint training with unions – i.e., SR courses or information sessions could be developed in conjunction with union representatives.

3.5 COMPLIANCE WITH TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT SR POLICIES

The second objective for the audit was to assess DFO's compliance with Treasury Board Secretariat's SR policies. TBS has in place several policies that govern the staff relations function in federal government departments. A list of the department-level responsibilities identified in these policies is found in Annex C.

ISSUE

There is no defined and accepted departmental policy framework for SR within DFO.

RECOMMENDATION

It is recommended that:
DFO's SR division put in place its own management and control frameworks to govern SR-related areas covered by TBS policies, and that these guidelines be communicated clearly throughout the organization.

[29] SR Renewal Initiative Workplan, February 2002.