

**TECHNICAL PAPER FOR THE  
10<sup>TH</sup> ASEAN CONFERENCE ON CIVIL SERVICE MATTERS  
BANGKOK, THAILAND, 1999**

**The Executive Development Programme  
for Senior Government Officers**

**Executive Summary**

The Management Development Programme is a customised, short-term non-degree executive development programme. This programme addresses the challenges of managing in today's rapidly changing operational environment. Staff members from the University Brunei Darussalam and top management from the Public Service Department have worked together to develop the curriculum. It is an annual programme specially designed to suit the needs and preparations for senior government officers to assume the leadership of government agencies.

The programme is designed to assist participants to develop fundamental quantitative and analytical skills necessary for effective policy analysis. The curriculum builds the broad base of skills necessary to design and implement policy and manage the organisations that operate in the public interest. The programme emphasises team-based project work and individual skill development. The programme is structured in such a way that groups of participants work jointly to solve complex problems.

The teaching style is highly interactive and emphasises group learning. The programme contains lectures, individual and group work. Components in the programme include the Study of Public Policy, Public Policy Analysis and special topics in Public Policy and Administration.

The programme stands out for three key reasons:

- a) Relevance to Brunei Darussalam today
- b) The 'Local Content' and the Quality
- c) Classroom interaction

All participants are expected to apply and implement the knowledge and skills acquired during the programme. When combined with enthusiasm, talent and commitment, this professional educational creates the basis for a flexible and rewarding career and in addition prepares participants to make a real difference in organisations and in society.

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 It is evident to all of us in Brunei Darussalam that the public sector management is undergoing rapid change. Indeed the public sector in Brunei Darussalam today bears no resemblance to that of immediately following independence in 1984.

1.2 In the Brunei Darussalam economy of today, only leaders with insight will succeed and this reality poses one very practical question: How do senior executives in public service gain the insight they need to effectively co-operate and collaborate with each other? The answer to this question is extremely important because senior executives are faced with increasingly complex work related challenges with fewer resources.

1.3 As government budgets are markedly reduced because of the prevailing economic climate, agencies are struggling not only with the task of how to do more with less, but how to do the same with less. With the emphasis of the Government being on 'Learning to Lead and Succeed' in these turbulent economic times, a special programme was designed and developed jointly by the Universiti Brunei Darussalam [UBD] and the Public Service Department [PSD] and is called the 'Executive Development Programme'. [EDP]. The aims and purpose of the programme are to meet the new and emerging management needs of senior executives.

## **2. POLICY STATEMENT OF HIS MAJESTY THE SULTAN**

2.1 Dalam bidang tenaga manusia ini kita bukan sahaja memandang ke sudut pertumbuhan ekonomi yang dijangkakan berpusat di rantau ini dan di rantau Asia-Pasifik, malah kita juga mestilah menuju untuk menghasilkan 'Generasi Pemikir' yang akan membawa negara ini kepada leboh terhormat dan bertamadun<sup>1</sup>.

[<sup>1</sup> Statement of His Majesty The Sultan of Negara Brunei Darussalam at the 7th. Universiti Brunei Darussalam convocation]

## **3. THE EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME [EDP]**

3.1 The initiative to introduce a 16 week EDP in collaboration with the University of UBD was established by the Government in 1996 and is based on the following rationale;

- a) the programme of studies is offered would be annually;
- b) the grading for every module specified in the programme is based on the grading for Master of Public Policy programme offered by UBD; and
- c) the minimum viable number of participants is 8 and the maximum 15.

#### **4. THE FOCUS OF THE EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME**

4.1 The programme is designed to assist officials to assess the tasks they face in managing today's results-driven agenda. The curriculum content is intensive and focuses on the following three key areas, namely;

- a) imparting knowledge of contemporary approaches to public policy and administration in order to enhance understanding of the policy and organisational environment in which senior officers work;
- b) providing the particular skills necessary to analyse problems and to formulate, implement and evaluate policies and programmes; and government organisations in a dynamic environment;
- c) learning about contemporary ideas and approaches to administrative reform and the process of managing complex.

4.2 Three fundamental characteristics form the basis of the EDP and these are;

- a) the integration of research and practical training;
- b) a multi -disciplinary approach to problem solving; and
- c) the integration of management knowledge and leadership skills.

#### **5. PARTICIPANT AND PROGRAMME PROFILE**

5.1 EDP candidates typically have at least 15 years of management experience and come from a variety of educational and professional backgrounds. They include such individual as:

- a) Deputy heads of department; and
- b) Senior civil servants who are being groomed to take on significant positions in the not too distant future.

5.2 The deputy heads of department referenced above have qualifications and experience from the United Kingdom and Arabic speaking countries. This broad representation of candidates offers every opportunity to share knowledge, insight and experiences.

5.3 The programme has been offered to qualified candidates for the past four years. To date some 52 candidates from all 12 ministries have successfully completed the programme. Currently 14 officers are attending the programme. [Please see Appendix 'A' for further information on course participants]

#### **6. PROGRAMME BUDGET**

6.1 Budgetary provision is provided by the PSD and on annual basis. The total cost of delivery amounts to some B\$60,000. This budget provision covers the following allocations:

- a) Course fees
- b) text books
- c) Incidental expenses

It is evident that the EDP at UBD is more cost effective compared to sending a participant to a programme of comparable standing at an overseas university.

## 7. PROGRAMME STRUCTURE

7.1 The programme is organised into three separate units, namely;

- a) Study of Public Policy
- b) Public Policy Analysis
- c) Special Topics in Public Policy and Administration

7.2 Study of Public Policy

This unit focuses on providing an understanding of governance and the public policy process. The unit illustrates the theory and concepts of public policy and administration by use of relevant case studies. Cases are based on **actual problems**. Within the course, one module in the course enables participants to examine in some detail a policy/management field. Some of the topics covered include:

- a) Issues, problems and public policies
- b) Policy making and rationality
- c) Bureaucracy and the policy process
- d) Decision-making
- e) Policy implementation
- f) Change and reform

7.3 Public Policy Analysis

This primary focus of this unit is on policy 'skills' ,that is, the art, craft and science of policy, formulation and analysis. Particular emphasis is placed upon policy design and evaluation and economic analysis of policies. Throughout the course, consideration is given to the ethics of policy analysis. Topics covered include:

- a) Policy analysis process
- b) Analysing success and failure
- c) Problem analysis
- d) Economic analysis of policies and cost-benefit analysis
- e) Evaluating policies and programmes.

7.4 Special Topics in Public Policy And Administration

This unit is a modular course, which deals primarily with administrative reform and the new public management approaches applied within the public sector organisational context. The course centres on the theme of governance for the 21st century. Some of the topics covered include:

- a) Organisational context of public management
- b) Administrative reform and transformation
- c) Strategic planning and management
- d) Information technology management
- e) Human resource management

#### 7.5 Special Component

The special component consists of Computing and Analytic and Communication Skills. The focus is to enhance the ability of participants to gather and analyze data used in public policy and management.

### **8. PROGRAMME CURRICULUM**

8.1 Each year, the programme content is revised and updated to meet the changing needs of participants and to address recent trends and innovations in the country. For example, with the emergence of a regional economy (ASEAN, BIMP-EAGA, etc.), the case studies and lectures in EDP, as well as the UBD faculty research programme, have become increasingly regional in focus. As a result, the learning materials are more relevant and 'local' and the learning experience increasingly dynamic.

### **9. PROGRAMME PROJECTS**

9.1 Three projects are available for course participants to select from. Two projects can be selected for completion by the individual participant and the other is a group project. One individual project is set by UBD faculty, the other can be selected by the participant. This latter project can cover a wide range of related topics. With respect to group project, each working group is required to study a particular issue or problem facing public policy and management in Brunei Darussalam, prepare a paper on the subject, and present the paper at a seminar.

### **10. PROGRAMME REQUIREMENT AND ASSESMENT**

10.1 In each of the three major components, participants are required to complete problem solving exercises individually and ,at times, in small groups. Each major component also has a practical assessment assignment at the end of the programme.

10.2 To complete the programme, all written assignments must be submitted within a prescribed time frame. This is a full time programme and attendance is compulsory. Participants are strongly advised to remain free of outside responsibilities throughout the duration of the programme.

10.3 At the end of the programme, UBD faculty are required to evaluate the work of participants and provide the result of the evaluation to the PSD. Overall evaluation is based upon the performance of each participant's performance in the various components of the programme. The evaluation includes required written work, presentation skills, participation and teamwork.

## **11. INVITED SPEAKERS**

11.1 Speakers from both the public and private sectors are invited to share their experiences and insights with regard to the practical application of training to relevant day to day policy problems. To date the majority of the speakers have been in the most senior level of management.

## **12. GROUP PROJECTS**

12.1 The purpose of the group projects is to enable the participants to work in small groups to analyse in-depth an issue or problem of importance to Brunei Darussalam. This exercise provides the opportunity to use what has been studied in the programme systematically. Valuable experience is gained in working as a team. The group projects provide useful insights to some local issues and problems.

12.2 Small groups of about three participants are formed and certain topics are chosen. With each group providing a brief outline of their projects. This also includes the group making a presentation of their analysis and together with their recommendations. Participants may work in-groups of three (minimum) to four (maximum) persons. Participants from the same ministry are not usually allowed to work in the same group thus allowing for the opportunity to exchange ideas.

12.3 Sample of project topics completed during the past four years is included as in Appendix 'B'. Policy recommendations made by the participants are given serious consideration by the organisation in which the individual is employed.

## **13. PROGRAMME OUTCOMES**

13.1 Under the skillful guidance and probing of UBD faculty, participants gain exposure to many different scenarios. As a result they are better equipped to managed and adminster to a higher level of skill then previously. Other identifiable and observable improvements would include an ability to;

- a) identify key data;
- b) analyse the situations critically;
- c) define problems and opportunities;
- d) formulate solutions and compare options;
- e) translate solutions into actions and recommendations; and
- f) articulate and defend particular positions with colleagues.

## **14. CONCLUSION**

14.1 The Management Executive Development programmes for senior government officers can be regarded as very successful given that the results show only 2 participants to date have failed to complete successfully the individual or group tasks

assigned to them. As the majority of the participants are Deputy Head of Departments, the programme assists them to better perform their duties and responsibilities which in this present climate are wider and more complex.

14.2 Those participants who have not gained a Masters degree in public policy, this Executive Development Programme has helped them to up-date their skills and knowledge consistent with the latest development in management thinking and practices. They are now well equipped to deal with issues covering advanced organisational development, human resource management, financial management, and in addition, to be more innovative and resourceful.

14.3 Executives who leave the program are better prepared to fulfill their roles as leaders of change, have the intellectual breadth, organisational skills, and self-confidence necessary to assume leadership positions in an increasingly complex public service environment.

## **15. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- a) Some relevant group projects should seriously be follow-up by the relevant agencies;
- b) Those participants who have successfully completed the programme should be given the opportunity to proceed to the Master of Public Policy degree offered by Universiti Brunei Darussalam in one further semester;
- c) The Public Service Department should play an active role throughout the programme especially during the group project deliberations on matters/issues pertaining to civil service rules and regulations; and
- d) A scenario planning team or think tank should be organised with members chosen from previous participants.

### **References:**

1. The Executive Development Programme For Senior Administrative Officers, 1999 Handbook.
2. Universiti Brunei Darussalam Prospectus 1999/2000.
3. Final Assessment Report 1996, 1997 and 1998.
4. List of Participants for 4<sup>th</sup> group - 1999.
5. Kumpulan Titah Kebawah Duli Yang Maha Mulia Paduka Seri Baginda Sultan dan Yang DiPertuan Negara Brunei Darussalam Sepanjang Tahun 1996.

Appendix 'A'

SUMMARY OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE EXECUTIVE DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

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<b>GROUP</b>	<b>NO. OF PARTICIPANTS</b>	<b>MALE</b>	<b>FEMALE</b>	<b>ADMIN. OFFICERS</b>	<b>NON-ADMIN. OFFICERS</b>
I (5 Mar 96 - 29 Jun 96)	12	12	0	6	6
II (28 July 97 - 16 Nov 97)	12	12	0	8	4
III (20 July 98 - 14 Nov 98)	14	12	2	5	9
IV (23 Augt 99 - 1 Dec 99)	14	13	1	4	10
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>29</b>

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## Appendix 'B'

The following list of EDP titles, drawn from projects completed during recent years, illustrate variety of suitable projects:

- a) Motor vehicle accident reduction.
- b) Absenteeism and morale in the public service.
- c) The region's economic downturns impact on Brunei Darussalam.
- d) The road link from Bandar Seri Begawan (Brunei Darussalam city centre) to Sabah (Malaysia).
- e) Littering and rubbish disposal.
- f) The higher price of food in Brunei Darussalam compared to Miri (Sarawak) and Kota Kinabalu (Sabah).
- g) Early school leavers and unemployment.
- h) Failure rate of small bumiputra businesses.
- i) Preference for careers in the public sector instead of the private sector.
- j) Computer software and/or literature piracy regulation.
- k) Global information regulation, e.g., satellite television and/or Internet material.
- l) Population growth and social services or employment in year 2020.