

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Brunei Darussalam is a small sovereign state having about 348,000 populations and blessed with natural resources, oil and gas. Most industrial sectors are considerably small and medium.
- 1.2. The political administrative system and the structure of government of His Majesty the Sultan and Yang Di-Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam rest on the country's constitution and modern bureaucratic principles. Bonds between the ruler and His subjects have been considerably strengthened which greatly enhance national unity and stability.
- 1.3. In ensuring good governance, modernizing the civil service has always been the top agenda of His Majesty's Government. His Majesty always stresses that the civil service should always be efficient, effective, innovative, competitive, productive and proactive as well as customer focused and friendly. Much of these have been stated in His Majesty's speeches in numerous occasion.

2. The profile of Brunei Civil Service

- 2.1. Brunei Civil Service is the largest employer in the country employing about 11% of the total population or about 40,000 people of which 47% are female. The civil service is divided into 5 divisions with the first division for directors and managerial staff including permanent secretaries, second division for executives, the third for supervisory and skilled technical staff and the fourth and fifth for support staff.
- 2.2. Currently, there are 12 ministries and 98 departments in the Brunei Civil Service whose sizes varies from one to another. For example, Prime Minister's Office has 22 departments under it whilst Ministry of Industry and Primary Resources oversees only four departments.

3. Challenges faced by Brunei Civil Service

- 3.1. The Government has launched its Civil Service Vision of the 21st century which is "To make the Civil Service of Brunei Darussalam as an organisation that promotes continuous development and continuously striving for excellence in its own way and in a healthy environment with the blessings and guidance of God, The Almighty", and which has identified the following challenges:

a. *The unpredictable future.*

- i. The next two decades will pose considerable challenges for Brunei Darussalam in its efforts to sustain and promote growth and development. There will certainly be more uncertainties and complexities in global politics and economy and national development would be more closely tied to the forces of globalization in the fast changing technological era.
- ii. The unpredictability of the future as evidents from past happenings around the world, for example, the financial crisis in 1997/1998 and the September 11 tragedy, clearly shows that the 21st Century is an era full of challenges and uncertainties. Brunei as a sovereign nation in general and the Brunei Civil Service in particular, **should** therefore be prepared to face those challenges and see them as a catalyst that encourages undertakings of more meaningful efforts to bring about more prosperity and stability.

b. *The needs and impact of globalisation*

- i. The current and future global situations, which is getting more competitive, borderless, sophisticated and complex and the advent of communication technology such as satellite, internet, mobile-phone that affect our way of thinking, work, manage or interact between each other, obviously require special attention.
- ii. Such phenomena calls upon Brunei Civil Service to be in tandem with the changes by way of enhancing and equipping everyone in it with the appropriate knowledge, skills and competencies. Brunei Darussalam Civil Servants at all levels need to carry out their entrusted responsibility with more commitment, dedication and greater efficiency.

c. *Strength and Competitiveness.*

- i. The need to upgrade economic development of the country in order to uplift the standard of living and well-being of the people requires the Civil Service to have the necessary strength and ability to compete in various fields of interest.
- ii. To achieve this, close co-operation is needed between public and private sectors. The Civil Service needs to play not only its traditional role as peace-keeper, enforcer of laws and regulations, regulator and service provider, but also

in view of the existing and anticipated future needs and challenges, as facilitator, agent of change and thinker. The Civil Service needs a change of mindset to be able to give quality services which will satisfy all sectors of the society.

- iii. Private sector on the other hand, as an engine of growth, needs to focus its attention on the economic agenda of the country, particularly its economic diversification programme.

d. *Managing Change*

- i. The formation of an e-government initiative in the national policy agenda is all about changes towards the quality of governance as well as service delivery in line with 21st century Civil Service Vision
- ii. The success of implementing e-Government Programme as a massive national agenda, depends heavily on the commitment and collaboration of the civil service as a whole.

4. Changes in Brunei Civil Service:

- 4.1. Realising the various challenges faced by the country, several initiatives have been introduced in the civil service:

a. *Formation of Public Service Reform Committee*

This Committee which is chaired by the Permanent Secretary of the Prime Minister's Office is responsible in introducing and monitoring reforms initiatives in the whole of Civil Service of the country.

b. *Civil Service Vision towards 21st Century*

- i. The vision provides a platform to shape the future of the civil service as well as to give direction and focus in order to strengthen as well as to consolidate all efforts to improve and to reform the Civil Service for the well-being and prosperity of the people of Brunei Darussalam;

- ii. It also provides guidance for Ministries and Departments in planning their activities which in the long run is hoped to create an excellent Civil Service;
- iii. The vision has emphasized several goals such as on commitment, quality, effectiveness, excellence, and moral ethics in the Civil Service of the country.
- iv. Besides continuing its traditional role to maintain peace, enforce law and order, as regulator and service provider, the civil service itself has to focus on a more strategic role such as facilitator, developer, innovator and thinker.
- v. The vision focuses on three areas namely policy, organisational structure and organisational behaviour. Good policies are very crucial in the nation's development; the civil service should reassess them from time to time to meet the aspiration of the nation while human resources should be efficient, innovative, skilled, qualified as well as motivated in performing their tasks and responsibilities. In ensuring its effectiveness, the right infrastructure should be in place. This will enhance the capacity of the organisation in meeting the challenging demand of its customers.

c. *Strategic Alignment Programme*

- i. Having realised the importance of leadership in driving the government machineries towards the national vision, a strategic alignment program has been introduced in 2003. This program requires government ministries and department to revisit their strategic planning, prepare their strategic business plans, rationalise their core business and align them with the needs of their respective stakeholders and of course, with the national aspiration. Even though the programme is still in its early stage, the Prime Minister's Office has already launched its Strategic Planning Framework for the next ten years, ending in the year 2014 .
- ii. The program has given an opportunity to enhance the coordination and collaboration among ministries and departments concerned where each ministry had to present their strategic plan and examine if they are aligned to the national vision and civil service vision. Furthermore, the program has helped them to justify their plan for budget allocation.

d. *Client's Charter*

- i. In an effort to change the mindset of the government ministries and departments to be more transparent and customer-centred in their service delivery, Client's Charter program was introduced in Brunei Civil Service in 1995. It is a mandatory programme where every ministry and department has to make a written pledge on the standard of service that it provides to its many customers.
- ii. Beside encouraging the civil service to be more customer-oriented and more transparent service, Clients' Charter Programme also provides an opportunity to ministries and departments to streamline their processes and align them with the vision and mission of their organisations.
- iii. To ensure the success of this programme the Government of His Majesty, through Management Services Department of the Prime Minister's Office has been given the responsibility to audit the implementations of the programme in ministries and departments. This exercise with its objective to find out the level of implementation of the said programme in ministries and departments also helps them to identify root causes of the problems faced by them in implementing the programme and provide solutions to them.
- iv. The Clients' Charter Auditing Programme started in October 2003 and to date 8 departments have been audited. Initial targets of this programme are those Departments which have many dealings with the public, including those that deals with public goods and those involve in processes that will help to promote the development of business sector in the country.

e. *E-government Programme*

- i. E-government has become a major agenda in the Civil Service of Brunei. It provides an opportunity to revisit and adjust our policy, business processes as well as the infrastructure.
- ii. National Strategic IT plan called IT 2000 and beyond, with an allocation of B\$1 billion was formulated with the aim to promote effective application of IT both in the public and private sectors, raising the level of IT literacy, and ensuring supply of IT skilled manpower to fuel growth.
- iii. One of the main strategies adopted to drive the e-government programme is the establishment of a steering committee called EGPEC - e-Government Program Executive Committee.

- iv. Main project being implemented under this programme so far is Treasury Accounting Financial Information System (TAFIS), and a few which are on the way, amongst others, are Human Resources Management System (HRMS), Virtual library information System (VILIS) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM).
- v. Through this programme, ministries and departments have developed their IS/IT Plans which at the present time, are at varying degrees of implementation.

f. Other initiatives

- i. The introduction of Annual report as a monitoring mechanism to ensure the performance of government agencies in areas that relate to vision, mission, human resource development and incentives, utilisation of financial resources, initiatives towards the implementation of civil service vision, clients' charter program, and development of new initiatives in improving the efficiency and effectiveness of their organisation.
- ii. To further promote the desirable work ethics within the civil service, a book on it was launched a number of years ago. It outlines eleven moral and ethical values which are to be upheld by civil servants in performing their duties and responsibilities. The values are group as follows:
 - ≈ Clean, honest and trustworthy;
 - ≈ Efficient, expeditious and accurate ;
 - ≈ Meticulous and valuing time;
 - ≈ Knowledgeable, creative and innovative;
 - ≈ Committed, open and accountable;
 - ≈ Tolerance, perseverance and courteous;
 - ≈ Productive and competitive;
 - ≈ Exemplary leadership;
 - ≈ Solidarity, consultation and co-operating;
 - ≈ Non extravagance in conducting government spending; and
 - ≈ Caring.
- iii. In its effort to further develop its human resources and to promote continuous learning, the Government of His Majesty has imposed on the 100 hours of training per year for all officers and staffs.
- iv. The Government has also established Internal Auditing Unit in every ministry and department. Among the objective of this initiative is to help ministries and departments in the administration and management of government financial

matters; and to help the Fund Controller to be more accountable in managing the government financial matters.

- v. The Government also tasked Management Services Department of the Prime Minister's Office to look after citizen's complaints with respect to service delivery in the Public Service.
- vi. Yet another effort in promoting the culture of team work, service excellence and innovations in the Civil Service, the Government has also promoted the usage of QCC and established Civil Service Excellence Award.

5. Conclusion

- 5.1. Most of the initiatives done are very much focussed on developing and strengthening the civil service in an effort to achieve the National Vision "to maintain and sustain national prosperity and stability" and the Civil Service Vision towards the 21st Century which is "To make Brunei Civil Service an organisation that promotes continuous development which strive in its own way and in accordance with the way of Islam and in a healthy environment with the blessing and guidance of Allah, the Almighty" . Those initiatives lead agencies in the public sector to focus on their core businesses as well as enhancing it's effectiveness, quality and productivity, and at the same time allows private sector to develop and grows in line with the national development plan.
- 5.2. Being a small country with limited resources, the challenges faced by Brunei Civil Service is not only in trying to keep pace with development in the region but more important in its efforts to stay relevant with the changing time and increased expectation of the general population. Future initiatives therefore, will continuously focus on strengthening the government agencies in pursuing not only its traditional roles but also its strategic role as facilitator, thinker and innovator which at the end is hoped to fulfil the expectation of the general population. Current programmes such as strategic alignment, e-government, client's charter and Customer Relationship Management will therefore be continued and enhanced.