

HUMAN RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL (HRDC)

Assessing, proposing and setting up of an Integrated Career Counseling System

2014

The Human Resource Development Council (HRDC) is looking into the setting up of an Integrated Career Counselling System for the Republic of Mauritius in line with the requirements of the country and international trends.

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 In the wake of economic crises, labour markets globally have been highly dynamic. In this context there have been calls for labour markets to become more flexible to buffet the negative impact of the crises on short and long-term employment. One of the cornerstones to increasing labour market flexibility is to increase labour market information. There is need for people to be better informed about the current and future labour market to make career decisions over their life spans.

- 1.2 Over the last decades the economic landscape in Mauritius has also been constantly changed. The economy has structurally changed to compete on an international front. The socio-economic growth of our country increasingly depends on people who have the right skills and qualifications to join the services and the knowledge economy. On top of upgrading the human capital in those sectors through training and development, it is also vital to provide information to guide individuals so that they can make the most of their career life choices.

- 1.3 Choosing realistic and meaningful career(s) can be a very daunting task especially in a competitive job market which potentially offers an array of opportunities. Moreover, as the whole aim of development is about helping people realise their potential, increase their choices in order to have a better quality of life, it is vital to provide information to people about the ecosystem within which they make career choices at various stages of their life. In light of the above there is a need to widen access to career guidance, career orientation, career information and career management services while delivering them in a far more reachable, flexible and cost-effective manner using among others ICT-enabled instruments.
- 1.4 The above context, coupled to the needs of employees, graduates and school leavers, require career information needs to be provided in a systemic manner. Career counselling can contribute towards improving the efficiency of education systems and labour markets that ultimately contribute to social equity.
- 1.5 The NHRDP 2009 recommended that the career guidance and counselling services locally should be enhanced to address the needs of relevant stakeholders. The plan stipulated that this initiative will encourage networking among institutions towards an effective career guidance service and counselling.
- 1.6 Presently, different institutions are managing different components of the system, leading to gaps and/or duplication and thus the system is not necessarily amenable to systematic use by the users. It is therefore vital to have a system which plays a pivotal role in assisting individuals integrate and apply an understanding of self and the surrounding environment, to make the most appropriate career decisions and adjustments over his/her lifespan. Such a system should cater for the needs of students, school

leavers, graduates, jobseekers, unemployed, out-of-school youths, retrenched workers, employers, those transiting jobs, among others. A career counselling system can help provide this basis going beyond the arenas of education and youth.

- 1.7 It is vital for people to be aware of where and how to access career information to ensure proper use of this information. Institutions currently involved in employment and career counselling services could then collaborate and provide required services within the system to ultimately provide up-to-date, reliable and relevant information on the requirements of the market. There is a need to encourage networking among institutions so as to provide an effective career guidance service and counselling through a web-based Integrated System. Indeed, the globalised world forces us to shift emphasis from career guidance to career management through the effective use of ICT and regularly collected user-friendly up-to-date data on careers.

2. OBJECTIVE OF PROJECT

The main objective of this project is to seek the services of a resource person (internationally or nationally) to assess the current situation in terms of career awareness, planning, guidance and management, and come up with a strategy having detailed step by step implementable recommendations for an integrated career counselling system adapted to the needs of the country.

This project will help citizens, including students, school leavers, people willing to change career and unemployed, retrenched workers towards a successful career or career opportunities. The project will also help employed persons to better manage their education, training and employment. It will also provide broader, flexible, easily accessible and meaningful career information and services to help people, of any age

and at any point throughout their lives to make educational, training and occupational choices and to manage their careers. The integrated system should cover the essential components of career guidance, counselling and management using a blend of resources, including technology-based resources taking into consideration that individual's needs and capacities differ at different stages in their life.

The challenge for this career counselling system is thus to provide the necessary information to allow both young people and adults to make proper career choices/decisions that will be linked to their aptitudes and capabilities, and that would also be informed by labour market realities. A functioning system with an element of career development and management can also eventually assist in increasing employability and in decreasing the mismatch of skills.

One of the components of the system will be a web portal that will aim to provide updated and user friendly career information to potential users.

In a nutshell the project objectives are to:

- Assess the current situation in terms of career counselling englobing awareness, planning, guidance and management;
- Propose a strategy to improve/reorganise career counselling service provision for all individuals at different periods of their life span, by complementing, wiring and upgrading existing services and proposing new and flexible ones in light of the Mauritian context. The strategy should contain a detailed action plan portraying how to go about with the wiring process and the involvement of all stakeholders; and
- Propose recommendations to set-up a web portal for collecting and disseminating career information.

3. IMPLEMENTATION

The HRDC will fund, coordinate and provide technical support towards the implementation and realisation of the project. It is also proposed to constitute a multi-sectoral and ministerial steering committee that would assist in the implementation of the project and more importantly to ensure that recommendations are subsequently taken-up and implemented at respective Ministries.

Interested stakeholders would include, the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, the Mauritius Employers' Federation (MEF), the Ministry of Labour and Industrial Relations, the Careers Guidance Service of the Ministry of Education and Human Resources, public and private universities, training institutions, recruitment agencies, students representatives, among others.

4. SCOPE OF WORKS

It is planned to hire an international or local consultant to undertake the following:

- To assess the existing career guidance/counselling structure and functioning in Mauritius. The consultant should carry out a stock take of the delivery of different services by the private and public sector. The person should be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of services being already offered by the different stakeholders in Mauritius. The analysis should be based on the philosophy that the integrated system should cover the awareness phase, the counselling phase and the management phase. The consultant should be able to point out the weaknesses and strengths at each phase, whether it is being provided by the private or public sector;
- To propose relevant and practical recommendations to improve career counselling service provision for all individuals at different periods of their life span, by complementing, wiring and upgrading existing services and

proposing new ones in light of the Mauritian realities. Recommendations should cover all aspects of career education and help to foster the development of career skills, provide education and training pathways and ensure exposure of youth to the world of work, Such recommendations and likely implementation should be informed by best international policies and practices, taking the Mauritian context and resources availability into consideration; and

- To advise and collaborate with the local consultant to set up a web portal for collecting and disseminating career information.