



VOLUME 2— ISSUE 4

OCTOBER—DECEMBER, 2021

PSC Signs Anti-Corruption MoU with TIPNG



Image: (L-R) PSC Secretary Mr. Terence Tupi, PSC Chairman Mr. Apeo Sione, CEO of TIPNG Ms. Arianne Kassman and Deputy Director Communications (TIPNG) Ms. Yvonne Ngutlick holding up the signed MoU.

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K10.9m Budget Allocated for PSC in 2022

By Nadia Marai

THE Public Services Commission (PSC) and Transparency International PNG (TIPNG) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding that formalized a partnership and cordial working relationship in October, this year, in relation to the development of Anti – Corruption Strategies to address Integrity Gaps under the recently published National Integrity Systems Assessment Report, 2021.

This initiative is part of TIPNG's Promoting Anti-Corruption and Integrity Strategies (PAIS) Project, funded by the European Union focused on restoring public confidence in National Integrity Institutions.

Chairman of the Public Services Commission Mr. Apeo Fuata Sione, thanked TIPNG and the Senior Management of the PSC Secretariat for working together to foster this partnership, and further acknowledged the need for government

institutions to partner with TIPNG to combat corruption.

“This approach considers that preventing corruption and promoting good governance is everybody's business. Every institution must assess its problems and challenges and work towards addressing those problems to combat corruption. Despite having policies and good governance laws in place, this still calls for greater collaboration and partnership towards developing realistic and practical integrity strategies and solutions to address integrity gaps”, said Mr. Sione.

He further stated that the signing of the MoU signifies the Commission's willingness to participate in partnership with TIPNG and other institutions to combat corruption.

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CHRISTMAS MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIRMAN



I would like to take this opportunity to sincerely thank the members of the Public Service Commission as well as the staff of the Public Services Commission Secretariat who have worked so hard to enable the Commission to successfully discharge and fulfil its Constitutional responsibilities and mandate without fear or favour in what has been a challenging year for the Commission, the Public Service bureaucracy and the nation as a whole.

I extend my appreciation to the staff of the Legal, Advisory & Litigation Division for the excellent job performed in the clearances of all advices and provision of legal opinion; staff of the Corporate Services Division for the administrative support they provided; the staff of the Assessment and Investigation Divisions for their untiring efforts and commitments in their attendance to investigations and appointment matters; and the staff of the National Review and Provincial Review Divisions for their commitment in ensuring that we had Commission Meetings for this year 2021.

As we recall, we note that this year 2021 was already marred by the worldwide pandemic COVID-19 and the surge of the new Delta Variant coupled with the ongoing financial and economic challenges facing the nation.

As a direct consequence, the Commission's operations were much affected. This was largely due to lack or insufficient funding provided monthly to cater for its operational requirements. It was observed that the monthly warrant from the Department of Treasury was very much sporadic or irregular. The Government through its 2020 supplementary budget removed K2.61m from our Public Investment Program (PIP) and this year it has yet to reinstate that funding back after we did a formal administrative request through the Department of National Planning. This as a result has delayed the construction of our first PSC Highlands Regional Office in Mount Hagen, WHP. It is anticipated that in the year 2022 through the 2022 PSC Budget appropriation, the said funding will be made available again so that the delayed construction will begin in conjunction with the setting up of the second PSC Momase Regional Office in Madang Province.

From a glance, this year's 2021 PSC Budget appropriation was K6.003m but the actual funding to date, was approximately K5m which was less than we expected. But next year's approved 2022 PSC Budget appropriation is K6.939m which is an increase of K936,000.00 compared to 2021 PSC Budget appropriation. There is an increase, especially, in the Goods and Services Item from K369,000.00 to K1.430m. That is good news, especially, for the Review, Assessment and Legal, Advisory & Litigation Divisions which will help them implement their year 2022 Divisional Work Plans and Activities. Under the Capacity Building Program for year 2022, we have received a second phase PIP funding of K4m for the PSC

Momase Regional Office in Madang Province which is also good news for us. All in all, we hope that the Government will honour our 2022 PSC Budget appropriation request and fund it in full so that the Commission can successfully discharge and fulfil its Constitutional responsibilities and mandate.

However, despite this year being a difficult year for the Commission, the Commission was undeterred to perform strongly in the discharge of its constitutional duties to all its stakeholders.

On behalf of the members of the Commission, may I offer my warmest of Christmas greetings to all the staff of the Commission. Christmas festive period is a time to be with families, friends and most of all, a time to thank our Great God for His leading in 2021 as we anticipate the commencement of a New Year 2022. We must renew our commitment to God who will provide us guidance, hope, and strength to face the New Year with boldness and we look forward to a brighter, stronger, more prosperous Year 2022.

Merry Christmas and a Prosperous New Year to all staff of the Public Service Commission! God bless each one of us as we endeavour to take the Commission forward in the New Year.

Apeo Fuata Sione, LM, M.PP
Chairman



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He said it is a milestone initiative and achievement for the Public Services Commission, and that PSC is delighted to be part of the journey to synchronize our resources, mechanisms and ability in a coherent way to overcome these challenges moving forward.

Chief Executive Officer of TIPNG Ms. Arianne Kassman said the overall objective of this project is to strengthen public trust within State Agencies, and TIPNG believes that this could be achieved through collaboration and partnerships.

“At this point, I would like to acknowledge the work of the Commission in putting out a lot of information through its social media platforms about the Commission's roles and mandate, and how people can access the Commission. I commend the PSC team for ensuring information is accessible to Papua New Guineans”, said Ms. Kassman.

She further stated that the media plays a vital role in ensuring information is out there and is accessible, so that people can use that information to take action.



Image: TIPNG and Public Services Commission sign MoU.

Ms. Kassman commended PSC for signing the MoU and added that this decision speaks of the foresight of the Commission in ensuring that it is further equipped to fulfil its mandated roles and responsibilities.

PSC PRESENTS 2020 ANNUAL REPORT TO GOVERNOR GENERAL



Image: PSC Chairman Mr. Sione presenting the PSC's 2020 Annual Report to Governor General Grand Chief Sir Bob Dadae at the Government House.

By Nadia Marai

THE Public Services Commission officially presented its 2020 Annual Report to His Excellency, The Governor General, Grand Chief Sir Bob Bofeng Dadae, GCL, GCMG, KStJ. at Government House, Konedobu, on the 11th of November, 2021, and was witnessed by officers from PSC and the media.

Despite the various challenges including the global coronavirus pandemic and the continuous funding constraints, the Public Services Commission continues to uphold and carry out its constitutional functions and responsibilities.

The 2020 Annual Report is PSC's 25th Annual Report presented to the Governor General.

The presentation of the Annual Report is in accordance with Section 17 (1) of the Public Services (Management) Act 1995 (as amended).

The 2020 Annual Report covers the period from January 01st, 2021 to December 31st of the same and captures the activities, achievements, challenges and recommendations of the Public Services Commission.

PSC EMBARKS ON DEVELOPING ITS IN-HOUSE ANTI-CORRUPTION STRATEGY



Image: Participants from government agencies who attended the one-day Anti—Corruption Strategy Template Workshop at Holiday Inn Hotel. (Pic courtesy of TIPNG Media)

By Cecilia Miolol – UPNG Trainee Student

THE Public Services Commission is one of Papua New Guinea's National Integrity Institutions, and therefore, is required to uphold and promote good governance initiatives within the organization and the National Public Service.

Secretary of the PSC Secretariat Mr. Terence Tupi when highlighting the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between PSC and Transparency International PNG in October this year, said the partnership is focused on improving integrity gaps that are aimed at assisting organizations like PSC to create its own in-house 'Anti-Corruption Strategies' to improve accountability and transparency in the service we provide.

"PSC is an institution of good governance; therefore, we have to do something to address corruption issues to improve transparency and accountability in-order to uphold the rule of law in all sectors without undue influence", said Tupi.

He added that PSC is focused on its existing anti-corruption strategies to address these integrity gaps some of which include protecting and promoting the Merit Based Appointment

Process involving vigorous and thorough vetting of candidates that are recommended to the National Executive Council (NEC) for appointment as Departmental Heads and Provincial Administrators.

"PSC ensures that candidates applying to take up these departmental head positions must be competent, must pass the fit and proper test and above all must have good morals and ethical values", said Secretary Tupi.

Another existing anti-corruption strategy that will also be strengthened is the Review of Personnel Matters. Officers undertaking this function always remain neutral in the entire review process, culminating to a decision handed down by the three (3) Commissioners without fear or favour.

Mr. Tupi said these are some of the existing strategies within PSC that we would like to further strengthen.

He added that an In-House Committee has been set up and are already in discussions with Square – Circle, an agency based in Brisbane, Australia that have been brought on board by TIPNG to assist organizations develop their own Anti - Corruption Strategies.

OFFICERS RETIRE FROM THE PUBLIC SERVICES COMMISSION

By Nadia Marai

TWO Senior officers from the Public Services Commission officially signed their Deeds of Release on the 23rd of October, to mark their exit from the National Public Service.

Mrs. Mary Solomon upon her retirement was the Manager Human Resource Management and clocked almost forty – two (42) years in the public service, beginning her career with the Department of Prime Minister & NEC in 1981, before joining PSC in 2019.

Another retiree, Mr. Brian Avuti served as Principal Review Officer with the National Review Division. He officially retired in 2019, after serving for forty (40) years in the public service.

On hand to witness the signing of the Deeds of Release were officers from the Department of Personnel Management and Public Services Commission.



Image: Human Resource Officer from PSC (L) together with the retirees, Mrs. Solomon and Mr. Avuti (c) after the signing of their Deeds of Release which was witnessed by Director CSD Mr. Waga Navei and a staff from the Departmental Of Personnel Management.

The Public Services Commission commend both Mrs. Solomon and Mr. Avuti for their service to the state and people of Papua New Guinea and wish them both a happy retirement.

MAJOR CHANGES EXPECTED FOR PSC IN 2022

By Cecilia Miolol – UPNG Trainee Student

THE establishment of PSC regional offices; the relocation of PSC to a new office space; upgrade of the Case Management System and the Amalgamation of the Commission and the PSC Secretariat are some major changes that are expected to take place in 2022.

Chairman of the Public Services Commission Mr. Apeo Fuata Sione revealed this when highlighting some of the plans for PSC next year stressing the importance of the establishment of PSC's two regional offices in the Highlands and Momase regions.

"Funding for the construction of PSC's first regional office in Mount Hagen was delayed this year, resulting in the delay of the project. However, we anticipate that through the 2022 Budget Appropriation for PSC, funding will be made available again so that the delayed construction will begin which will be in-conjunction with the setting up the second PSC Momase regional office in Madang Province", said Mr. Sione.

The Chairman further added that plans are already in place to relocate the PSC office in NCD to a new office space.

"We have been working very hard with the Government Office Allocation Committee to fund us an office space as the current building we are housed in is deteriorating and is not safe our staff and clients," added the Chairman.

Mr. Sione also mentioned that the upgrade of the Commissions Case Management System (CMS) project funded by the European Union is making significant progress and is expected to be completed next year, adding that the CMS will help fast track Personnel Review Matters to meet the 90 Days statutory period mandated by law.

Meantime, he added that despite the ongoing financial constraints it must not deter us from achieving what we have set out to do in our Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023.

GOVERNMENT ALLOCATES K4MILLION TO BUILD PSC REGIONAL OFFICE IN THE MOMASE REGION

By Cecilia Miolol – UPNG Trainee Student

Public Servants in the Momase Region will soon be able to access services rendered by the Public Services Commission with plans to now establish a regional office in Madang Province.

Secretary of the PSC Secretariat Mr. Terence Tupi said a Public Investment Program (PIP) submission was submitted to the Department of National Planning & Monitoring requesting for K6 million to undertake this project.

“This is a project under the PSC Corporate Plan 2019 – 2023 to establish regional offices, to allow public servants working in the provinces and districts to easily access our services instead of traveling into Port Moresby, which can be a very expensive exercise”, said Mr. Tupi.

Mr. Tupi added that from the 2022 National Budget that was handed down in November, K4 million was allocated to undertake this project.

“The Commission is grateful to the government for allocating funds towards this project which is expected to commence next year after the first project in Western Highlands Province is complete”, said Mr. Tupi.

Construction on the first PSC regional office for the Highlands Region got underway at the beginning of this year, however, due to the delay in the release of funds for the project by the Department of



Image: Contractors surveying the land in Western Highlands Province for PSC’s first regional office that will service the Highlands region.

Treasury, the project has come to a standstill.

Secretary Tupi, said the Commission plans to set up regional offices in the four regions of PNG so that review matters and other complaints are dealt with efficiently and effectively within the required time-frame by law.

GOVERNMENT SHUTDOWN PERIOD DATES

Friday 24th December 2021	Working day to lunchtime
Saturday 25th December 2021	Christmas Day
Sunday 26th December 2021	Boxing Day
Monday 27th December 2021	Public Holiday
Tuesday 28th December 2021	Designated Day Off (1)
Wednesday 29th December 2021	Designated Day Off (2)
Thursday 30th December 2021	Designated Day Off (3)
Friday 31st December 2021	Designated Day Off (4)
Monday 3rd January, 2022	Resume Normal Duties



NATIONAL GOVERNMENT ALLOCATES K10.9MILLION BUDGET FOR PSC IN 2022



By Cecilia Miolol – UPNG Trainee Student

The substantial budget break-up of the 2022 National Budget by the Government has resulted in government departments and agencies taking a bigger portion of the budget for next year, with an increase of 19 percent for the Public Investment Project (PIP) capital, as highlighted in a report by Deloitte PNG on its assessment of PNG's 2022 National Budget.

The Public Services Commission (PSC) has also been given an allocation of K4million under the PIP funding for the construction of its new regional office in Madang Province, which will serve clients from the Momase Region; that brings the total budget allocation for PSC in 2022 to K10.9 million.

Chairman of PSC, Mr. Apeo Fuata Sione said he is very pleased with the budget allocation for PSC in 2022.

“That is good news, especially for the Review, Assessment and Legal, Advisory and Litigation Divisions, as this will help them to implement their Divisional Work Plans and activities for 2022”, said Mr. Sione.

He said under the Capacity Building Program for next year, PSC has received a funding of K4million that will go towards the establishment of the Momase Regional Office in Madang Province.

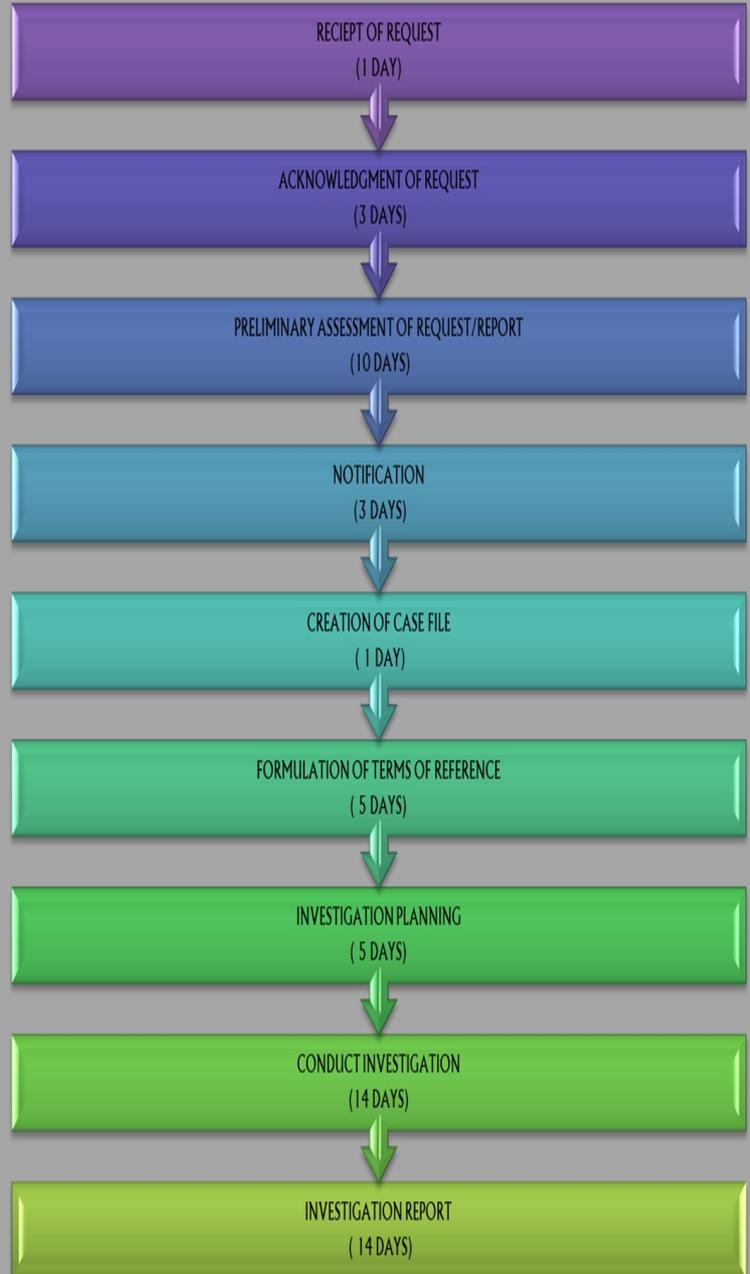
The Chairman further added that this year funding was a major issue especially in the Goods & Services component, that saw PSC's budget cut by 39.35 percent; from an initial allocation of K11,440,560 million only K4,501,560 million was the actual amount given to PSC for 2021. He added that despite this year being a difficult year for the Commission, it was undeterred and performed strongly to discharge its constitutional duties.

“PSC is thankful to the government for the allocation in 2022 and hope that they honour the PSC budget appropriation request and fund it in full, so that the Commission can successfully discharge and fulfill its Constitutional mandate and responsibilities,” said Mr Sione.

ROLE OF THE INVESTIGATION DIVISION

- The role of the Investigation Division is to conduct investigations into allegations and circumstances relating to the revocation of appointment and suspension of a Departmental Head or Provincial Administrator.
- The Division also conducts investigations in the conduct, activities or performances of the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in relation to the revocation of appointment of the CEO.
- The appropriate bodies that by law, can request PSC to undertake an investigation includes; National Executive Council, Minister for Public Service, Provincial Executive Council and Boards of Regulatory Statutory Authorities (RSA).
- PSC can conduct its own investigations when it learns or obtains credible information about misconduct or serious allegations raised against Departmental Heads or Provincial Administrators.
- The Division manages all investigation and reports to the Commission and offer appropriate recommendations resulting from the investigation conducted.
- A request for an investigation is submitted in writing by way of a letter to PSC, specifying the grounds for investigation.
- PSC WILL NOT investigate requests that are not eligible for an investigation and may be referred to the appropriate authorities or rejected by PSC.
- If you have any queries in relation to the investigation function, we are more than happy to answer them. Please contact us on 325 7722 or email enquiries@psc.gov.pg.

INVESTIGATION PROCESS



The Public Services Commission as part of its obligation to safe guard the health and safety of its staff and clients is strictly adhering to the Niupla Pasin protocols. Therefore, we ask that ALL our clients, service providers and stakeholders wear a mask and sanitize your hands upon entering the PSC office. We are learning to adapt to this 'new normal' and therefore sincerely ask that you also play your part in reducing the spread of COVID in PNG.

If you would like to get in touch with the Public Services Commission you can do so by:

Ph: 325 7722

Email: enquiries@psc.gov.pg

Website: www.psc.gov.pg

We are also on:



Protect yourself and others from COVID-19:

- Wash your hands frequently with soap and water or alcohol-based hand rub.
- Cover coughs and sneezes with a bent elbow. Wash hands after.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose & mouth.
- Keep at least 1m distance away from others.
- Avoid close contact with someone who is sick.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces.

