



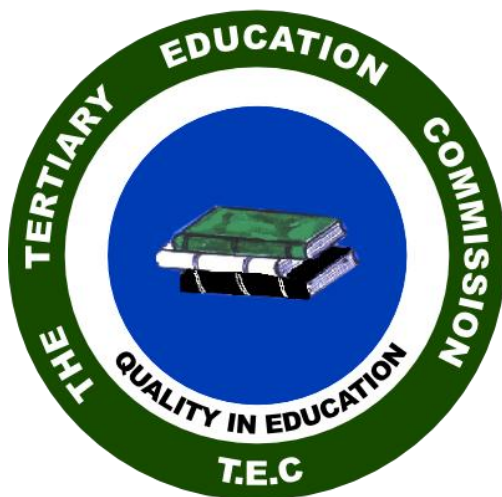
GOVERNMENT OF SIERRA LEONE

PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM UNIT

(PSRU)

FINAL REPORT

**MANAGEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL REVIEW OF THE
TERTIARY EDUCATION COMMISSION (TEC)**



NOVEMBER, 2021

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATION

AAIA	-	Academic Audit and Institutional Affairs
APNIL	-	Academic Programmes, New Institutions and Legislation
COS/D	-	Conditions of Service and Discipline
ES	-	Executive Secretary
FGDs	-	Focus Group Discussions
FQE	-	Free Quality Education
HQ	-	Head Quarter
HR	-	Human Resource
HRMO	-	Human Resource Management Office
THE	-	Higher Tertiary Education
HTEIs	-	Higher Tertiary Education Institutions
ICT	-	Information and Communication Technology
IQA	-	Internal Quality Assurance
IT	-	Information Technology
JDs	-	Job Descriptions
KII	-	Key Informant Interview
MDAs	-	Ministries, Departments and Agencies
MFR	-	Management and Functional Review
MHTE	-	Ministry of Technical and Higher Education
PSRU	-	Public Sector Reform Unit
QA	-	Quality Assurance
QANQF	-	Quality Assurance and National Qualifications Framework
TEC	-	Tertiary Education Commission

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In an effort to enhance its management and functional capability to effectively deliver on its mandate and reposition itself to be a critical catalyst for the successful implementation of the tertiary education component of Government's flagship programme "Free Quality Education (FQE)", the Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) solicited the expertise of the Public Sector Reform Unit to conduct a Management and Functional Review (MFR). The MFR process is a holistic and invasive diagnosis of the structure, systems and processes with a view of identifying critical gaps, proffering accompanying recommendations that are surgical and providing the requisite technical backstopping support that will ensure the Commission recalibrates its systems processes and aligns its organizational structure with the NMTDF and FQE policy.

This MFR report catalogues the most critical findings, proffers targeted recommendations and critically analyses the Commission's mandate/mission/vision to ascertain whether it is fit-for-purpose and sufficient to support the Commission perform at optimal capacity. This report will also indicate what the analysis reveals vis-à-vis the Commission's current structure and will propose the necessary fixes that will enhance performance/ productivity and address some of the HR issues, especially those that relate to stagnation, succession planning and change management.

The MFR process commenced with a preliminary inception meeting held with Commissioners and the senior management of the TEC during which the scope, methodology, timelines and focal person were discussed and agreed on. Consistent with the structured and semi-structured approaches which included Key Informant Interviews (KIIs), Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) and the administration of the MFR tool, the team administered questionnaires to both the Commissioners and staff across cadre to ensure the process was as holistic and invasive as possible. PSRU would at this juncture like to acknowledge the commitment of the leadership and staff of the Commission which culminated in the MFR process being completed within a short turnaround time.

A core outcome of this MFR process is the proposed organizational structure that realigns the Commission's staffing with its mandate, addresses the issues of career growth that served as a critical demotivating factor and developed accompanying Job Descriptions for proposed positions that were fit-for-purpose and functions, rather than nomenclature oriented. The team also made proposals that were geared towards administrative and operational reengineering all in a bid to ensure the Commission, moving forward effectively delivers on its mandate as enshrined in the 2001 TEC Act.

The Review Team identified the most critical gaps and challenges TEC is grappling and proffers the following recommendations: 1. recruit a Records Management Officer to manage the records management system 2. develop a communications strategy 3. create a succession plan 4. Establish regional offices that will enhance the Commission's impact and productivity at the

regional level and 5. establish positions for Heads of the various Directorates that will mitigate career growth pathway issues.

1.1 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section gives a synopsis of the gaps identified and proffers accompanying recommendations that are targeted and impactful.

1.1.1 Statutory Framework

The review revealed that the lacunae in 2001 TEC Act were addressed by the 2006 TEC Regulations which gives TEC suspension and revocation powers.¹

1.1.2 Human Resource Management

The review revealed that 3 (approximately 16%) out of a total staff strength of 19 were in the age bracket 55-59 which implies they are close to the retirement age of 60 years. The review further revealed that the Commission has no succession plan to make the transition between the retired and replacement staff seamless. **Therefore, the Review Term recommends that** the Human Resource Unit within the Commission prepares a fit-for-purpose succession plan.

The review also revealed a mismatch between broad mandates and extensive functions of the Commission and grossly resources both human capital and material. This has in no small measure contributed, to TEC's inability to deliver effectively on its mandate. It is against this backdrop that the review team recommends the establishment of heads of directorate positions that will serve a dual function: 1. Ensure the recruitment of technical staff with the requisite expertise to head the respective directorates and 2. address the challenges related to lack of career progression.

The review further revealed the lack of a comprehensive staff development/ training plan, which resulted in staff development or capacity building efforts to be ad-hoc and unpredictable. Therefore, **the Review Team recommends that** the Commission develops a comprehensive and customized annual staff development plan that will serve as the blueprint for the Commission's career development. **The Review Team also recommends that** the Human Resource Officer Coordinates Annual Institutional Capacity Needs Assessments which will inform Training Needs Assessments (TNAs) and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

The review revealed a career stagnation at the middle level, implying that several staff in that cadre are demotivated owing to the fact that they overdue for promotion. **Therefore the Review Team also recommends that** the Commission creates a career growth pathway and prioritizing current staff for higher level vacancies, like the ones suggested in the proposed organogram.

¹ 2006 TEC Regulations

1.1.3. Performance Management

The Review revealed the Commission's suboptimal performance which was traced to weak supervision and lack of an effective performance benchmarking and accountability mechanisms. **Therefore, the Review Team recommends that** the staff evaluation process be modified to incorporate periodic performance benchmarking, **The Team further recommends that** the Appraisal Committee which is to be chaired by the Executive Secretary should be rejuvenated to ensure effective performance appraisal system for the staff within the Commission. The team also **recommends** the development and rigorous implementation of a staff attendance and movement of personnel mechanism. **The Review Team further recommends that** the Commission effectively implements the rules and regulations enshrined in the Conditions of Service and the Code of Conduct for staff which is the binding and contractual agreement between the Commission and staff.

1.1.4 Structural and Operational System and Processes

The review revealed that the Commission lacks functional regional offices to carry out its statutory mandate at the regional offices. **Therefore, the Review Team recommends** the establishment of regional offices that will ensure the implementation of the Commission's mandate and ensure effective and real-time service delivery at the regional level.

1.1.5 Administrative Systems and Processes

The review revealed several systems and process gaps and challenges, especially the lack of critical documents such as manuals/policies/procedures and strategies. The review also revealed defaults with critical systems with the human resource management/ system and accountability mechanisms to drive productivity being the most mentionable. **The review team therefore recommends that** the commission engages in a systematic systems and process reengineering that will ensure systems and process gaps are plugged and operational and functional processes that are either dated or ineffective are recalibrated to align with current institutional realities or the NMTDF.

1.1.6 Records Management

The review revealed the lack of an effective and centralized records management system that put in place modalities for easy records access, achieving and management. The review however noted the existence of the current records management system which is neither centralized nor digitized. **Therefore, the review team recommends that** the Commission develops a centralized Records Management system that enhances data security, easy access/retrieval and digitization.

The review revealed the lack of a **Records Management Officer** on post to manage the Commission's Records' Management system. Therefore, the review team **recommends** the recruitment of a qualified **Records Management Officer**. **The team further recommends that** the Commission develops and maintains an up-to-date records management plan, supported by appropriate policies and procedures.

ICT/Equipment

The Review Team observed that the TEC is well equipped with IT/ICT equipment and vehicles to provide complete monitoring and supervision of its activities. However, the review revealed that the Commission is grappling with reliable internet access which often impedes real-time and consistent information gathering and sharing and likewise slows down institutional productivity based on internet connectivity. The review also revealed the lack of motorbikes which serve as a critical utility and dispatch mechanism for the Commission. **The Review Team therefore recommends that** the Commission enhances its IT infrastructure and engages the services of a reliable and efficient internet service provider to ensure the Commission's internet connectivity is reliable. **The review team also recommends that** the Commission provides motorbikes which are a critical utility mechanism to despatch letters to various MDAs so as to enhance the speed of communication based on that mode of transportation.

The review revealed that the Commission is grappling with office space issues evident by the fact that the office spaces available are very small and not conducive for producing at optimal level. The review also revealed that apart from the fact that the office is cramped up, it is located in a neighborhood that is prone to noise pollution, making it further uncongenial for staff to perform optimally. **Therefore, the Review Team recommends that** the management of the TEC provides a conducive office environment for staff to carry out their daily activities in a more productive and efficient manner.

1.1.7 Organizational Structure

The Review Team **recommends** that the Commission should operate to a directorate system to cover the following;

- Academic Programmes, New Institutions and Legislation (APNIL)
- Academic Audit and Institutional Affairs (AAIA)
- Quality Assurance and National Qualifications Framework (QANQF)
- Conditions of Service and Discipline (COS/D)
- Finance and Funding
- Human Resource and Administration
- Regional Offices

The Review Team also **recommends** in the proposed organizational structure that each Directorate be supervised by a head, assisted by a manager. **Therefore, the Review team has attached Job descriptions in respect of each Directorate's Head outlining the requisite qualifications, experience, competencies and skills for the jobs.** However, each regional office should be headed by a manager known as Manager Regional Office.

