

IDEA system for the Public Service

Procedure Document

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Department: Idea Council

Synopsis

This document outlines the procedure for the operation of the IDEA system implemented in October 2014. The aim of this system is to enable a framework for the generation of ideas from employees across the Public Service. In 2017, the Idea Council was set up to enhance this initiative by further involving the relevant stakeholders including the idea submitter.

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1. Introduction

Innovation and creativity is imperative for organisations today. Organisations that do not give any importance whatsoever to continuously challenging their current ways of doing things and to come up with creative and innovative ideas, will simply fail in the face of the competitive and the ever changing environment. This is also becoming true of the Public Service, which is now more than ever before being continuously challenged to contain costs, make efficiency gains and to keep abreast with its private sector counterparts.

The Public Service would like to encourage and promote feasible and value-adding ideas from amongst its employees through the implementation of a formal and structured scheme. These kind of schemes are an effective way of improving the performance of an organisation by encouraging a culture of employee involvement and continuous improvement.

Since the Public Service currently lacks an effective formal facility through which ideas are channelled, we run the risk of losing good ideas held at different strata of the organisation that could, if implemented, enhance the performance of the Public Service.

2. The Scope of the Framework

The IDEA system aims to:

1. Encourage a culture shift in our ways of thinking and to promote a culture of continuously challenging existing ways of working or doing things.
2. Allow Public Service employees to structure their ideas and to present them within a formal suggestion framework.
3. Create a system capable of handling ideas quickly and effectively.
4. Support the generation of ideas and to reward, on a yearly basis, the owners of the best ideas, approved for implementation.
5. Encourage idea generation which will be beneficial to the Public Service and its clients in terms of process improvements, cost-saving initiatives, service development and delivery, resolution of technical or operational problems, and any other ideas that could be of value to the organisation and stakeholders.

3. The Importance of Management Commitment

Idea generation is only possible when the organisational climate and culture embrace it. Management, both middle and top, are therefore critical in facilitating this culture. Just like any other process implemented within the the Public Service, the IDEA system will require the full understanding and commitment of all the management team towards improving the environment conducive to idea generation.

4. The IDEA Generation Framework

Anyone or any group of employees who has an idea, immaterial of the scale or the impact that it may be perceived to have, now has the facility to channel it directly to the IDEA Administrator through the system

- o An idea needs to be well thought out and it should be presented with enough detail and in a clear manner, such that the benefits that the Public Service would gain from implementing such an initiative are evident.
- o Suggestions and ideas shall be inserted on the IDEA Intranet portal www.idea.gov.mt. Alternatively, employees who do not have access to the portal may contact the IDEA Administrator on telephone number: 2200 1356 to obtain the necessary form. Directors Corporate Services, or equivalent, will also make available this form to employees who do not have access to the government intranet.
- o Ideas submitted through the system will be vetted by the IDEA Council in first the instance. They will be evaluated, and if found suitable according to the established criteria, sent to the pertinent stakeholders to advice on whether these can be implemented. If the idea is green lit for implementation, the idea submitter is asked on whether s/he would like to participate in the implementation process. However, this does not necessarily mean that s/he needs to be the implementer of the idea. The relevant ministry/department is asked to present an action plan which will then be monitored by the Idea Council. Nonetheless, it is the responsibility of the respective ministry/department to implement the idea.
- o The following are the eligibility areas for this incentive:
 1. Improvements and process efficiency;
 2. Elimination of unnecessary bureaucracy, simplification of procedures, reduction in paperwork, improvement to the design of forms/equipment/processes, better use of technology;
 3. Cost-saving initiatives;
 4. Improved service delivery;
 5. Service development;
 6. Resolution of a technical or business problem;
 7. Improvements in the use of resources, materials, space, etc; or cut down on wastage and damage;
 8. Improvements in service quality, service standards;
 9. Reduction in service time;
 10. Achievement of Public Service, Ministry or Department goals;
 11. Any other ideas, the implementation of which, may be considered of benefit to the Public Service and/or its stakeholders including the general public.
- o The Idea Council, may ask the owner of the idea to elaborate further on his/her suggestion, as necessary.
- o As indicated on the Suggestion form, each idea will be evaluated on the basis of a number of evaluation criteria, as follows:
 1. Originality of the idea – how original the idea is, whether it is an adaptation of something that already exists or whether it is something that is completely new.
 2. Expected positive impact – the impact that the implementation of the idea would have on the organisation, its people and stakeholders, and the environment.
 3. Ease of implementation – how easy it is to implement the idea, how long it will take to be implemented, and the HR effort and financial resources required.
 4. Idea leads to organisational efficiency and/or effectiveness – how much the idea will positively influence the efficiency and effectiveness of the Public Service, Ministry or department.

5. Idea leads to cost savings – to what extent the implementation of the idea will reduce costs for the Public Service.

Other considerations

- o The scheme will not be anonymous to the IDEA Council, however, the idea submitter may opt to be anonymous to the general users of the system.
- o It is the responsibility of the Organisation and not the idea originator to absorb any risks associated with the implementation of the suggestion. The role of the individual is to come up with creative, innovative and feasible ideas which are then considered by the Idea Council.
- o One individual may build on the idea of another individual and this will be considered as a separate idea.

05. The Reward Structure

An event shall be organised, during which all employees participating in the initiative during the year, are invited, and the owners of the best-scoring ideas rewarded.

Each owner of an idea approved for implementation will be presented with a certificate.