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# Jordan Customs: Roll-out of Human Resource and Training Reforms

AMIR II Achievement of Market-Friendly Initiatives and Results

May 2006

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**JORDAN AMIR II**

Achievement of Market-Friendly Initiatives and Results

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Jordan Customs: Roll-out of Human  
Resource and Training Reforms

Final Report  
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## **Abstract**

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This report is the concluding report of the combined Human Capital Development and Management project and the follow up Roll-out of Human Resource and Training Reforms project. It provides a summary of the key design features of the project, the achievements and the lessons learnt. It also highlights the on-going tasks that will assist sustainability of the projects and the continuing independent use of the new software package by Jordan Customs.

## **Abbreviations and Acronyms**

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HCDM	Human Capital Development and Management
HR	Human Resources
HRM	Human Resource Management
JC	Jordan Customs
OJT	On the Job Training
SAT	Systems Approach to Training
TC	Training Center
RFP	Request for Proposal

## Table of Contents

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Data Page .....	ii
Abstract .....	iii
Abbreviations and Acronyms .....	iv
Table of Contents .....	v
Executive Summary .....	1
1. Background .....	3
2. Methodology .....	4
3. Milestones .....	10
4. Achievements .....	14
5. Lessons learnt .....	17
6. Recommendations .....	20
Annex 1 Project Plans: HCDM and Post-AMIR .....	22
Annex 2 Key JC jobs – a comparative analysis .....	23
Annex 3 AMIR workshops .....	29

## Executive Summary

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This USAID-funded AMIR Program report provides an overview of the two major human resource (HR) and training projects that have been conducted with Jordan Customs (JC) over the past three years. The overall aim of the projects was to introduce new HR and training business processes that are supported by a contemporary Arabicized software package.

Key outcomes from these consultancies are:

- Modification, installation, evaluation and purchase of the new software package
- Implementation of a number of new HR business processes based on individual JC job descriptions
- Implementation of the Systems Approach to Training (SAT) approach to instructional design
- Integration of HR Directorate and Training Center personnel for tasks with common components
- Migration of HR files into the new system
- Training of key personnel on system use and business reforms
- Scheduling the turning off of the old HR system

The following recommendations, described in detail at the end of this report, are provided as a reference for future and possibly on-going external support for JC as they extend the use of the HR system and embed the SAT approach into all instructional design work at the Training Center. These include:

- **Evaluate roll-out.** The post-AMIR Program project plan will not be complete until the findings of a roll-out evaluation have been considered and included in the project plan. The Total Customs Quality Management Directorate is the appropriate internal group to conduct this evaluation.
- **HR and Training Centre key project staff are exempt from job rotations until the project is complete**
- **Consult with the vendor regarding outstanding items which need to be completed during the maintenance year.** There is considerable work to be done by JC before the vendor can meet their commitments. If JC does not assign system privileges and design business rules for career and succession planning during the maintenance year then the contract for the vendor to undertake system modifications in these areas will become null and void.
- **Post-AMIR Program business tasks on the project plan need to be progressed.** Progress on many business reforms have been ‘on hold’ during system training, testing and implementation. If the project plan objectives in relation to business reforms are to be met then progress in this area needs to resume. The major tasks include:
  - Develop a plan to implement the strategy to align pay and performance
  - Continue the deployment of other HR features of the new system
  - Commence training senior executives according to defined program
  - Train all personnel involved in training design in the SAT process and establish a timetable for completion of courses in the new format.

The consultants stress the need for JC to pursue the post AMIR project plan with vigor and focus and to pursue the opportunity to gain external assistance for the HR and Training Center if possible. These tasks, see Annex 1, need to be completed if the software potential is to be realized and if JC is to take its place alongside modern Customs' administrations.

## 1. Background

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The roll-out of HR and training reforms were developed from the earlier Human Capital Development and Management (HCDM) Project. This closing report incorporates both projects and covers the following timeframes:

- The HCDM project – July 2004 through to July 2005
- The Roll-out of HR and Training Reforms – September 2005 through to May 2006.

Earlier USAID-funded AMIR Program work undertaken by a number of different consultants early in 2004 led to the establishment of the HCDM project. The most important of these are documented in the AMIR Program reports, 'Human Resource Development – Phase 1', June 2004, prepared by Walter Hekala and John Howard, and 'Systems Approach to Training (SAT)', June 2004, prepared by Gaétan Turgeon. These two earlier reports recommended the establishment of a systems approach to training and the need for Jordan Customs (JC) jobs to be defined, documented and linked to a series of job specific competencies. The Hekala and Howard report was already suggesting that the job descriptions would be simply a component of a program of wider HRM reforms.

Reference will also be made in this report to the following preceding AMIR Program reports:

- HCDM – Phase 1, November 2004
- Critical Skills – Gap Analysis and Closing the Gap, February 2005
- HCDM – Phase 2, March 2005
- HCDM – Phase 3, June 2005
- Roll-out of Human Resource and Training Reforms – Phase 1, October 2005
- HCDM System Post-Pilot Assessment, October 2005
- Customs Institutional Development: Roll-out of HR Training, November 2005

The aim of the HCDM and the secondary Roll-out of HR and Training Reforms has been to select and implement a software system that could support an ambitious series of HR and training reforms for JC. The timing of the HR and training reforms coincided with the AMIR Program and JC partnership reviewing and modernizing many key Customs' business processes. The extension of the HCDM project into a secondary consultancy indicates that the scope of the original HCDM evolved and strengthened as the potential of both the new technology was understood and a more holistic approach to HR activities was appreciated by JC and all members of the consultancy team.

This report covers the work of the HR consulting team:

- Ruth Perrett, lead consultant. Involvement on a part-time basis covering regular short-term work with JC and the AMIR Program, and remote advisory activity.
- Ruba Afana, AMIR Program local full-time consultant.
- Ghadah Nazzal, AMIR Program local consultant. Involvement on a parttime basis covering short-term project, training and advisory activity.

The integration of IT consultancies and the HR consulting team is a critical component of this project and so inevitably references to the work of the IT team will be included in this report.

## 2. Methodology

The project followed a common methodology, namely:

- Identification of project, its aims and resourcing
- Gaining USAID and client support for the project
- Project planning to allocate tasks, monitor and review project progress
- Developing roles and responsibilities
- Using supplementary plans e.g. client action plans, change management plan, communication plan etc when necessary to complement the project plan
- Evaluating and reporting processes established

The HCDM and Roll-out of HR and Training Reform projects included all of the above strategies and those which proved to be of particular significance included resourcing, planning, governance and monitoring.

### 2.1 Resourcing

#### 2.1.1 Human resourcing

The following chart identifies key AMIR resources.

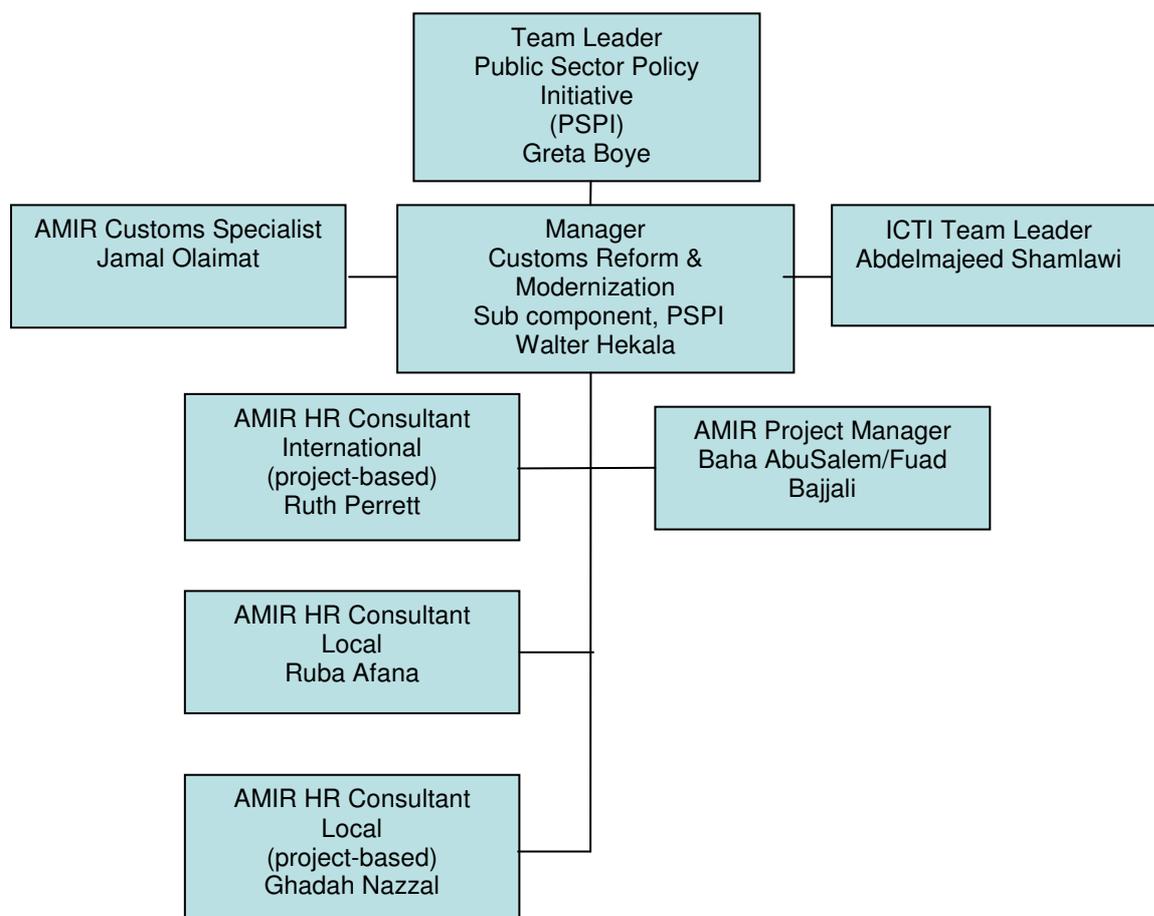


Fig.1

The time spent on the projects varied from Ms Afana being full time during peak periods of activity to other members of the team working on a number of projects of which the

AMIR Program project is one. Hence their time was contracted on an as- needs basis or for particular components of the project plan.

The original AMIR Program project manager unfortunately left the project part way through but was replaced with a suitable time made available for project handover. The international HR consultant did not return to Jordan for the final six months of the project, providing remote consultancy advice only. This lack of face-to-face contact may have slowed the pace of progress on business tasks towards the end of the project.

The critical issue about the team working on the project is the variety of skill sets represented. Fig.2. below documents the spread of skills across the team.

Team members	Skill sets									
	Experience with customs administrations	IT and systems expertise	HR systems experience	HR and training management expertise	Project management expertise	Bi-lingual - Arabic & English	Coaching and training expertise	Change management	High level communication (listening, influencing, negotiating)	Problem solving
G Boye					*			*	*	*
W Hekala	*			*	*		*	*	*	*
A Shamlawi		*			*	*		*	*	*
B Abu Salem F Bajjali		*			*	*		*	*	*
J Olaimat	*					*		*	*	*
R Perrett	*		*	*			*	*	*	*
R Afana				*		*	*	*	*	*
G Nazzal			*	*		*	*	*	*	*

Fig. 2

The skill mix proved particularly important in a complex project. The ability for IT specialists and HR specialists to listen to one another and accommodate each others views and understandings were essential for this project to be a success. Also the bi-lingual skills and the ability to coach and support others through a major change process were key to the issue of the project’s sustainability post AMIR. The success of the project rested heavily on the integration of these skill sets and the ability of a diverse group of people with varying involvement in the project to work cooperatively.

### **2.1.2 Financial resourcing**

Early proposals established in the AMIR Program report ‘A Systems Approach to Training’ concentrated on introducing a disciplined approach to instructional design. In a follow-up report AMIR Program consultant Andrew Ford looked at how SAT might be supported through a purpose-built software program. Early budget estimates suggested at that time were around the \$150,000 mark, but at that stage the scope of the project was quite narrow. As the scope of the project expanded and the potential for an integrated HR and training system incorporating all HR and training business reforms was clarified, a revised project goal emerged. It was not surprising therefore that the early budget estimates proved less than adequate.

The total budget for the final HCDM and Roll-out of HR and Training Reforms projects amounted to \$909,223 over a period of some two years. Such a financial investment has implemented a system which allows JC to implement transparent and contemporary HR processes related to how people are recruited, rotated, promoted, trained, assessed and how all personnel functions are managed. The software package required significant modification to accommodate the SAT instructional design process. However, the results are a seamless system that provides JC with the ability to plan, manage and report on all aspects of HRM including training. The software is very user-friendly and has an ability to extend its day to day use to operational managers as well as HR and training personnel. This will bring people management in JC in line with the devolved approach to HR management employed in modern customs’ administrations.

### **2.2 Planning**

Initially planning was done independently by the HR team and the IT team. A major step in the project was the combination of the two workplans to provide all team members with an integrated business and IT system project plan. This initiative, undertaken by the AMIR Project Manager, assisted in highlighting the need for a more integrated approach to the project to ensure business activity and system activity dependencies were well understood.

Project management training was conducted early on in the project and many team members were able to benefit from that training. In addition some team members qualified by the Project Management Institute as certified Project Management Professionals during the project adding further expertise in the area of planning. This level of expertise assisted in highlighting high risk tasks and sub task accountabilities.

The scope of many of the business tasks is broad both in understanding and complex in implementation. The timeframes for completion of some of these has lead to the identification of post-AMIR tasks. This is appropriate in a project such as this where small scale controllable implementation has been used as a learning process for JC personnel providing them with the knowledge and skill to undertake full scale implementation. This is a purposeful approach in building confidence and establishing the profile of the corporate functions with operational managers in JC Customs Houses.

The integrated project plan is at Annex 1.

## **2.3 Governance**

The process of establishing and maintaining an agreed project decision-making structure within AMIR and JC, which also involving the system vendor for part of the project, was a challenge. Delegations in JC were initially held at a very high level with the Director General signing off on some low level operational issues. Such a system threatened the success of the project on many occasions due to the delays in waiting for such a high level decision.

AMIR took two approaches to this issue which is documented in full in AMIR report 'HCDM – Phase 1, November 2004':

- Assisting JC in having their HR delegations reviewed to relieve the DG of operational HR decisions and empower the HR and training areas to manage their own operational activities
- Extending the mandate of the Knowledge Management Committee to include the overseeing of this project.

There was some delay between implementing these reforms and the establishment of a responsible and viable decision making framework. The chief difficulties included changes in who was acting as chair of the Knowledge Management Committee and the reluctance of JC people to confidently assume their new responsibilities. The established culture of JC managers to major decisions was very risk averse in relation to making decisions and so it took time to support managers in this new role.

The AMIR team also sought to jointly define roles and responsibilities for both the Knowledge Management Committee and the JC Project Team. This attempt to define the decision making process further was more successful with the JC Project Team than the Knowledge Management Committee. The process of reaching decisions regarding modifications to the HR software and the design of the SharePoint portal which supported the SAT software is documented in AMIR report 'HCDM – Phase 3, June 2005' and highlights this issue.

Defining roles, responsibilities and approaches to decision making was a way of modeling good governance practices to JC. This was not a key objective for the project but rather a component of good business practice that was introduced to Customs' personnel at all levels of operation who were involved in the project. Middle level managers in particular showed interest in developing such practice in their own areas of influence and the consultants were encouraged by this transference of skills to the HR and training workplace.

## **2.4 Relationship management**

The governance issues are at the heart of the AMIR and JC partnership. This partnership was a very successful one in general. However there were times when JC indicated that some of AMIR activities were seen as interfering in their internal decision making arrangements. These issues were quickly resolved through discussion and a level of accommodation from both parties. The fact that these issues arose highlighted the importance of constantly attending to and nurturing the AMIR and JC partnership.

At the operational level there was a similar need to both pressure JC to progress tasks while at the same time recognizing their own limitations given that all JC's key players were also doing their own jobs full time. This drew extensively on the interpersonal skill sets of those in the AMIR team, particularly those who spent most time on the project and had the most face-to-face contact with JC HR, training and IT staff. It was critical to maintain the highest level of cooperation at all times. The AMIR team was also required to engage in a great deal of coaching when introducing new HR and training business practices. This was extremely time-consuming. There was a clear recognition that the pace of change was high and the risk to project sustainability was equally high if JC operational HR and training staff were to reject changes due to a lack of understanding or a sense of being overwhelmed by AMIR's expectations.

AMIR sought to support and coach JC staff through a series of skill enhancement workshops that ran throughout the project. These activities also helped promote the HR and training functions within JC as well as increasing the confidence of these staff in their own abilities. Evidence of this is seen in how members of the JC Project Team addressed the Knowledge Management Committee. They became more confident in providing reports to the committee and also in taking a firm stand on issues that needed resolution. This growth in individuals in the Training and HR sections in particular suggests that the work and resources invested in relationship management have borne fruit at the individual level and at the organizational level.

## **2.4 Monitoring**

The AMIR Project Manager had carriage of project monitoring and regular assessment, however regular meetings with the AMIR Program Customs Reform and Modernization (CRM) Manager occurred particularly during periods of high activity to ensure good communication. This was essential with the AMIR team working from a number of sites and with many tasks being single person tasks. In addition the vendor's team was working from an additional site and at times needed to be included in these meetings.

The monitoring process led to many struggles over the project plan but given the nature of the AMIR team as described above, the monitoring resulted in critical deadlines such as those necessary to finalize USAID funding for the purchase of the software, for example, were met. In addition a great deal of problem solving was done during such meetings through the bringing together of team members with differing skill sets and differing approaches to the project. The benefits of this collaborative monitoring were particularly obvious during periods of pressure.

### **3. Milestones**

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There are some specific milestones that need to be highlighted in a final report.

#### **3.1 Job Descriptions as the basis for HR reforms**

When the project began JC had no job descriptions for individual jobs. Establishing a HR regime that centered on documented customs jobs became one of the earliest tasks. The local HR consultants worked very closely with JC HR staff to help them to understand the purpose of job descriptions and to help design a simple first generation job template for JC.

The process was slow and began with a small sample of headquarters jobs before spreading to include operational jobs in Customs Houses. The beginning of the process is documented in AMIR Report 'HCDM – Phase 1, November 2004'. The completion of first generation job descriptions occurred in September 2005 and was reviewed by a committee that included operational managers. JC now had job descriptions for all of their employees.

The second generation job descriptions included competencies that had been identified. This process was much quicker but was lead by a local HR consultant with JC reviewing the results. While this is not a preferred process, timing was of the essence and meeting integrated project plan deadlines was important.

The template for job descriptions is now one that is comparable with most modern customs' administrations and provides a very sound model to use for recruitment, rotation, training, promotion and as an adjunct to performance assessment.

A comparative study was completed in April 2004 that looked at JC job descriptions and the composite key customs' jobs as described in AMIR report 'Human Resource Development – Phase 1', June 2004. This study has not been published as a separate AMIR report and is therefore presented in full as Annex 2 to this report. The study indicates that many of the key JC jobs are described in similar terms to the composite key jobs. There is still much duplication in JC job descriptions but the proposed career planning activity will provide additional support to aggregating similar jobs and defining JC jobs more closely with those of the composite Customs key jobs.

#### **3.2 Selection of system vendor**

The IT consultants led the activities related to the RFP and the selection of the system vendor, and informed the HR side of the team as this process progressed. It was at this time that it was recognized that an integrated project plan and full team meetings were held. The RFP process was complex by nature in that the many stages of the SAT process were unfamiliar to all generic HR software vendors. This resulted in many potential HR software vendors not responding to the RFP. The other important criterion was the need for the system to be fully arabicized which ruled out other potential respondents.

The successful tender was a consortium of a generic HR software group and an IT company able to provide an appropriate solution for the SAT component of the

request for proposals (RFP). This process took longer than expected and through this process it became obvious that early budget predictions had been inadequate.

Collaborative discussions with the successful vendor got underway on 23 May 2005 as reported in AMIR Program Report 'HCDM – Phase 3, June 2005'. These discussions revealed the amount of work that needed to be done consultatively to successfully bring about a seamless HR and SAT product which met JC requirements in relation to existing HR processes as well as meeting AMIR's requirements for all continuing HR and training business reforms.

These early discussions were tedious for all parties but essential if the development and modifications of the software in preparation for a pilot was to proceed. Perseverance, patience and an ability to accommodate others was demonstrated by all parties. This was essential at this stage of the project and the consultants believe the pilot may not have eventuated without all parties being committed to a successful outcome.

### **3.4 SAT and training reforms**

SAT is a training regime that ensures that new training courses and modifications to training courses are closely aligned to the business practice and business priorities. It is essentially an instructional design package that guides the course designer through an extensive series of steps and so is very useful for expert practitioners in technical areas to become training design experts by following this process. The process was documented in AMIR Program report 'Systems Approach to Training (SAT)', prepared by Gaétan Turgeon.

The HR consultants had made the decision early in 2005 that implementing a full blown SAT process, as per Turgeon, required training resources that were well beyond that of the JC training centre. However the principles behind SAT were a good match for what JC needed to make their training regime relevant and credible. Hence through the collaborative discussions with JC and the software vendor a modified SAT process was developed and adopted. This process is documented in AMIR report 'HCDM – Phase 3, June 2005'.

In addition to the SAT approach, AMIR consultants worked with JC training staff to introduce the concept of a formalized on the job training (OJT) regime. There were a series of ad-hoc training activities happening in some Customs Houses but these were not managed by the training centre nor was the content of the training reviewed for consistency of standards, consistency of processes and consistency with centralized training programs such as 'customs procedures'.

The Training Centre responded well to this approach with the Training Centre Manager demonstrating strong leadership on this issue. A pilot program was established in the later half of 2005 with the pilot reported on in AMIR report 'Roll-out of Human Resource and Training Reforms – Phase 1, October 2005'. Establishing the infrastructure for a national roll out of OJT has been a huge initiative that has the potential to reap strong rewards in relation to consistency of customs processes at the national level.

### **3.5 Pilot and pilot evaluation**

Jordan Customs HR and training personnel began ‘trialing’ the new system in October 2005 having established a set of protocols for reporting and fixing software ‘bugs’ with the vendors.

This period was busy for JC as they coped with HR and training ‘business as usual’ on the old systems and also found time to use and test the new software with a set of 100 personnel files that had been migrated into the new program. During this time the AMIR team was:

- Preparing the way for completing all protocols required to purchase the software should the pilot evaluation be successful
- Supporting and coaching HR and training staff to
  - accept the new software’s unfamiliar approach to familiar tasks
  - reschedule well established daily routines differently to accommodate time for testing
  - define ‘bugs’ accurately in relation to vendor’s proposal and the RFP.

The JC training and HR staff were not familiar with the level of discipline required to complete the pilot testing, however they worked very hard to meet deadlines and adhere to the terms of the RFP. This process is well documented in AMIR report ‘Roll-out of Human Resource and Training Reforms – Phase 1, October 2005’.

The AMIR Program contracted short-term consultant Amir Tahami to undertake an independent post-pilot evaluation. His report is entitled ‘HCDM System Post-Pilot Assessment, October 2005’ and documented an evaluation that concluded that AMIR should purchase the new software and proceed with JC to a full national roll-out. Recommendations were also made in the report regarding high priority activities to focus on during roll-out.

### **3.6 System roll-out**

The accuracy of data used during the pilot was a major concern and hence one that occupied the consultants in planning for the roll-out. Data cleansing in preparation for migration was initially thought to be beyond the resources available within JC HR area. However JC preferred to tackle this task themselves and they provided the vendor with cleansed data for migration that required very little further attention following verification. The migration of data resulted in all personnel files being available for use in the new package.

Initially the old and new systems were being run in parallel but JC now has only one HR operative accessing the old system. The old system is expected to be switched off within the month. This progress indicates a high level of acceptance of the new system by HR staff with very little on-going attachment to the old system. This suggests that:

- The time taken on coaching and change management by AMIR consultants has paid handsome dividends
- The vendor’s system training program was effective

- The intuitive and user friendly nature of the system is encouraging an efficient and quick transference to the new system.

The pilot identified some discrepancies in personnel records as a result of both the HR and Finance Directorates collecting personnel data. This issue needed to be resolved so that JC had a single collector of HR data and a single source for reporting HR information. Both HR and Finance Directorates are meeting and finalizing processes, and a solution is expected to be promulgated soon.

The vendor completed a training schedule during roll-out that was important in picking up key HR, training and IT staff who were unable to attend training conducted during the pilot phase of the project. As this was conducted as ‘train the trainer’ training JC is now in a good position to train new people who need to use the HR and training software.

### **3.7 JC acceptance**

AMIR Program received the Director General’s signature on the roll-out acceptance plan on second May 2006. This sign-off is accompanied by a short list of commitments by JC and the vendor to finalize a few outstanding issues.

The most important of these are the finalization of business rules for career planning and succession planning and the adoption of these into the new software, the finalization of the requirements of the attendance system and the establishment of privileges for access and use of the new system. The vendor will complete their commitments during the maintenance year and JC will work with AMIR in the final months of AMIR’s program on the career and succession planning business rules.

## **4. Achievements**

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Apart from the project milestones, there are a number of achievements that were critical elements in meeting those milestones. It is only through the journey of the project that these achievements have emerged and in reviewing the project they have been recognized as contributing significantly to the success of a project of this type.

### **4.1 Project scope**

The expansion of the project scope as mentioned above resulted in an expanded budget and an extended project timeframe. However the final results are much more far reaching in their ability to influence Customs' modernization program as a whole. This project has set in place a HR system and a linked training regime that will support improvements in organizational design, improvements in customs' operational practices and proposed changes in customs connection to the broader Jordan Civil Service. The corporate functions of HR and training will enable change rather than impede change and so hasten the Director General's ability to action his agenda for the future operation of JC.

The project scope was also flexible enough to encompass small but important consultancies conducted by specialists that could support the 'main game'. Two of these are of particular importance:

- John Howard conducted an assessment of senior executive skill sets and made recommendations for a program to prepare the executives for the change program ahead. This consultancy is documented in AMIR report 'Critical Skills – Gap Analysis and Closing the Gap, February 2005'.
- Ken Donaldson conducted a review of the current salary structure of JC officers and prepared recommendations that looked at alternative methods to salary structuring. Ken's consultancy is documented in AMIR report 'Customs Institutional Development: Roll-out of HR Training, November 2005

The recommendations of these linked projects have influenced the overall project plan as well as post-AMIR recommendations in this report.

### **4.2 Project sustainability**

A number of initiatives were directly aimed at maximizing project sustainability post-AMIR. These initiatives included:

- Building the skill set of the JC HR and training staff and other key JC people
- Improving the skill set of the JC executives to manage change projects
- Developing a working relationship between the HR Directorate and the Training Centre
- Working with JC key staff on the 'big picture' level as well as the specific task level

JC skill sets were identified at the very beginning of the program and reported on in the first AMIR report of this project 'HCDM – Phase 1, November 2004' as an important area for consultants to address. AMIR resourced a large number of

workshops that addressed the skill sets of not just the HR and training centre staff but also the knowledge and skill sets of key players in the project including project planners, IT key players and the Senior Executive group including the Director General. All of the AMIR workshops designed solely for the HR and training staff were aimed at establishing a working relationship and an appreciation of the connections between each others work and raising their skill levels so they could independently and competently manage the new HR and training business processes. A full listing of these activities is at Annex 3.

These joint workshops, conducted away from the workplace during non work time, allowed individuals to develop a better appreciation of the contribution they made to the 'big picture' of their particular Customs' function as well as to the 'big picture' of Customs' operations. This holistic view of the workplace was not familiar to any of the HR or training people. While some were uninterested in this new approach to work, others embraced it and their involvement in the AMIR project increased and their co-operation and commitment were also enhanced.

The success of these activities and the amount of time the consultants spent in face to face contact in coaching and encouragement mode lead to high levels of trust between AMIR consultants and the JC HR and training staff. This allowed JC folk to ask questions without fear of ridicule, admit fears and approach their project tasks in an atmosphere of positive learning.

These activities all relate to hard issues such as skill improvement and soft issues such as building trust and confidence. Both have been important in our attempts to build in project sustainability and have been major achievements of the AMIR team.

### **4.3 IT and business integration**

HR consultants and IT consultants aren't renowned for having a great deal in common, nor are they regarded as groups that communicate easily with one another. This project demanded that both parties were able to work together if the project plan was to be achieved.

The instigator of the integration of the two groups of consultants was AMIR's first project manager who worked tirelessly with all parties: AMIR consultants, JC HR and IT personnel, vendor personnel. He spent a lot of time with JC people and was a successful listener in responding to the frustrations of the HR consultants in putting on hold their reforms to attend to system/software priorities.

Having established the need for integration and demonstrating that the integration could succeed, he unfortunately left the project. However by establishing an integrated model and demonstrating the benefits of the model, the team was able to sustain this approach under the new project manager.

The model itself would have been difficult to maintain without all parties having well developed communication skills. This achievement was a crucial element in the project's success.

#### **4.4 Pace of change**

The timeframe for the project extended considerably and some of this is due to the increased scope of the project as mentioned above. The other issue contributing to the extended project timeframe is the priority and time spent on pacing the business reforms to the ability of the JC to absorb and respond positively to ever increasing new organizational and HR and training knowledge.

There were times when the progress of the project was frustratingly slow. However the consultants had agreed that we had to pace our work to what JC could accommodate. The reading of the JC environment was aided by the abilities of our local HR consultant, who was close to full time on this project. She had a good understanding of pressures existing in the HR Directorate and the Training Centre. She also had the ability to know when to push hard and get an exemplary response from those who had additional capacity to contribute to the project.

It was proved on many occasions to push for further progress during a period of internal stress was counterproductive to our project. The consultants believe that pacing reforms according to the capacities of the JC was a real project achievement.

## **5. Lessons learnt**

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A number of important lessons have been learnt through the progress of this project and may prove useful to others working in this field.

### **5.1 Project scope and budget**

The important issue in relation to scope and budget is that without an ability to review and redefine both, this project would have had only a very limited impact on how JC manage the HR function. Project flexibility and decision makers with the ability to envisage future possibilities and embrace and support high risk projects proved essential to this project.

### **5.2 Team membership and team operation**

Team members' skill sets and team member continuity are both important issues. As this project spanned such a long timeframe it was inevitable that there were some changes in the team. However these were kept to a minimum and others in the team supported new members to 'come up to scratch' quickly.

The integration of the HR and IT specialists proved critical and there would have been some benefit in getting the two working together sooner. The SAT process was defined before the HR team was in place and required some modifications once the HR people analyzed JC's resource capabilities. This was confusing to JC training personnel initially and could have been avoided if the HR team had been bought on board earlier.

Co-operation between the HR and IT people was essential during the lead up to the pilot and during the pilot process. This meant HR business tasks being put on hold which has led to some HR tasks still being incomplete. The lesson here is that both HR and IT need to be able to accommodate whole of project goals in the first instance rather than be too wedded to their own component of the project plan.

### **5.3 Planning**

The team integration mentioned above was enhanced through the integration of the project plan. This combined project plan made it easier for overall project monitoring but also highlighted interdependencies and therefore tasks of high risk.

The ability to employ full project planning principles is now recognized as critical to a complex and lengthy project. The consultants and JC personnel would have benefited from breaking down tasks further and being held more individually accountable for specific tasks.

The sharing of the project plan with JC occurred about half way through the project. The plan was shared with the Knowledge Management Committee in an endeavor to highlight the urgency of particular activities. There would have been additional value in sharing the plan with them from the start and where possible involving them in the development of particular parts of the project plan.

## 5.4 Governance

There would have been value in getting JC involved in defining roles, responsibilities and decision making processes earlier in the project. The timing of their involvement related in this case to the ability to gain high level project support. In future projects, early involvement of the client in these matters would be beneficial.

## 5.5 Client key players

The rotation and departure of JC key players throughout the period of the project made the identification of ‘back up’ key players and contingency plans for training, workshops and sharing new knowledge very important. While some attention was given to this issue the consultant was still left with some key new system knowledge leaving JC with insufficient back up in place.

It is therefore critical to constantly monitor the capacity of the HR and training areas to sustain the new knowledge and new processes. In JC resources in the corporate areas are few and the capacities heavily stretched making it hard to lock in contingency plans. However in future projects this should be seen as a critical part of overall project planning.

## 5.6 Project sustainability

The following issues are all linked to project sustainability:

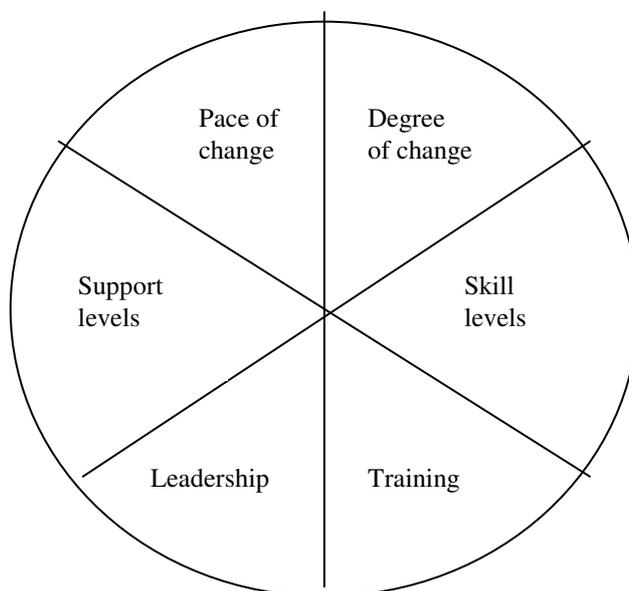


Fig.3.

These issues revolve around the soft skills of assessing client’s readiness for new and complex information, their capacity to change and the style of support key players gained internally and from AMIR.

The project taught the consultants the value of continually monitoring this assessment and testing the assessment through continual face to face contact in the clients own workplace. This helped ensure the project underwent constant reality checks and

avoided the dangers of developing a sound theoretical or academic project progressed at arms length from the client with little chance of long-term sustainability.

## **6. Recommendations**

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The recommendations are written for a post AMIR audience and designed to assist in the on-going modernization of HR and training functions in JC.

### **6.1 Roll-out evaluation**

A roll-out evaluation is necessary to ensure that the post-AMIR project plan is complete. It is recommended that a simple evaluation be initiated by the Knowledge Management Committee with the results incorporated into the post AMIR project plan. The Total Customs Quality Management Directorate should be well prepared to undertake the evaluation with a report being prepared and delivered to the Knowledge Management Committee.

### **6.2 Acceptance Plan**

The memo attached to the acceptance plan refers to some further work to be done and it is recommended that these items need to be followed up with the vendor:

- Establish business rules for Career and Succession Planning to ensure that modifications to the new software can be made during the maintenance year
- Assign system privileges in preparation for next release of MenaME
- Connect new attendance module which meets already prepared specifications

These are business and system issues and need consultation with the vendor but some considerable work needs to be completed by JC in the first instance, particularly in relation to the Career and Succession Planning business rules and the assigning of privileges.

### **6.3 Post-AMIR Project Plan**

The consultants stress the need for JC to pursue the post-AMIR project plan with vigor and focus. These tasks, see Annex 1, are necessary to complete if the software potential is to be realized and if JC is to take its place alongside modern Customs' administrations.

The main HR tasks are quite complex and will take some time. In addition to tasks identified in 6.2 above, they include:

- Developing the next generation job descriptions. This step includes the recognition of competencies and the aggregation of similar jobs as recommended in the analysis report at Annex 2
- Reviewing and implementing improved evaluation processes in line with the strategy to align performance and pay
- Deliver information sessions to managers so that they can manage simple personnel functions such as leave and annual evaluations.

Training Center tasks in the post AMIR project plan include tasks that:

- Train JC trainers and course designers in SAT methodology and schedule all training courses to be modified to confirm with the new methodology

- Monitor and support the implementation of OJT in all Customs Houses.

The Training Centre has some catch up training activities to attend to as they recently lost their key player who had the most knowledge and experience with the new system.

#### **6.4 Post-AMIR sustainability**

Post-AMIR project sustainability will revolve around many of the similar issues to those presented in Fig.3. It is critical that all HR and Training Centre staff are well trained and supported as they continue to tackle new tasks in addition to ‘business as usual’.

The consultants recommend that HR and Training Centre staff are exempt from rotation out of these specialized areas until the project is completed. This will help maintain skill levels and allow the key players to train and provide new system experiences to others in the Directorate/Centre.

The consultants also recommend further external HR and training expertise be provided to ensure the appropriate level of leadership and support during the post AMIR phase of the project. This will be particularly important if the devolution of day to day HR management to operational managers is to progress. The notion of managers undertaking annual evaluations and approving leave from their desktops will require considerable executive level support and influence. Such support may require external leadership as well as considerable leadership from the HR Directorate and the Training Center.

The JC has the ability and the technology to become a model of modernization in HR and training if they are able to complete this project and demonstrate sustainability in both new business reforms and their use of the new ‘state of the art’ technology.

**Annex 1      Project Plans: HCDM and Post-AMIR**

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## **Annex 2 Key JC jobs – a comparative analysis**

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### **Background**

In the AMIR report ‘Human Resource Development – FINAL’, June 2004’, Mr W. Hekala and Mr J. Howard established a series of composite key customs’ job descriptions based on key job descriptions from customs’ administrations in the United States, Canada, New Zealand, Australia and the United Kingdom. This significant study established a framework for job design across key customs’ functions.

During 2005, the HCDM consultants worked with JC to develop job descriptions for all JC jobs. These job descriptions reflect how jobs currently operate. As part of the HCDM project, the task of comparing JC job descriptions with the composite key Customs’ jobs in the above study was identified as a means of providing guidance about further HR work in relation to the modernization of key customs’ functions. This analysis is provided in response to this task.

Other AMIR reports that have also been considered in this analysis of jobs include:

- Border Process Re Engineering Phase 1 and 2, January 2005
- Intelligence and Information Management in Jordan Customs, December 2003

### **Approach**

As JC is only part way through the modernization and reform process it is unlikely that their job descriptions would at this stage meet the very high standards established through the description of composite key job descriptions. That is, the composite jobs reflect modern customs administrations many of which have undergone a number of changes in attempts to improve how jobs are designed and how the impact of technology can be best utilized to improve both border control and trade and passenger facilitation. Job design in these administrations has also been influenced by contemporary knowledge of how organizations endeavor to attract and retain good staff.

However to undertake a comparison part way through the modernization process is expected to provide some guidance to further HRM activity during the next few years.

The analysis is in two parts. Part one compares like jobs. It makes no judgment on performance of JC key functional areas but rather analyses how jobs are described. Part 2 looks at consistent issues that arise from the analysis that relate to strategic HRM.

## **Part 1 – Analysis of job descriptions**

- **Inspectors**

The JC Inspector, Vehicle Technical Inspector and Inspector/Examiner job descriptions all contain some duties similar to activities listed under the composite Inspector job. For example the JC jobs refer to ‘inspect and test ...’ while the composite Inspector lists ‘search all types of conveyances’. So the difference between the JC and composite inspector jobs at this point in JC’s modernization program is about the scope of the job. The composite Inspector position is much more complex and covers a broader range of activities such as ‘undertake record of interview’ and ‘examine all types of documentation to ensure compliance with national legislation’. In doing so the composite Inspector position provides a frontline generic title that identifies a ‘family’ of jobs that frontline officers are trained to undertake. Currently all frontline officers need to complete customs procedures training so they are trained to undertake a wide range of frontline activities.

It becomes obvious by looking at other JC frontline job descriptions that the JC Inspector and other allied inspector jobs (Vehicle Technical Inspector, Inspector/Examiner) are in fact surrounded by a number of administrative assistants with very specific documentation and document checking duties. These include job titles such as Reception and Manifest Officer, Transaction Processing Officer, Vehicles Registry Officer, Entry and Exit Controller and the Operator/Officer to name a few.

The minute breakdown of jobs into a myriad of smaller and closely controlled jobs has been replaced in modern administrations by generic key jobs or the identification of a job family with a broad range of responsibilities that an employee can be asked to perform. This approach is designed to make work more interesting due to the wide range of separate tasks that can be performed. In addition this approach allows the organization to have more flexibility in how it utilizes its employees.

The other major difference between the JC Inspector position and the composite Inspector job suggests a limited impact of advanced technology at this stage and a culture in which continuous improvement and team based operation, particularly in relation to contributing towards producing intelligence or developing networks is still lacking.

There is a sound argument for JC to consider consolidating a number of related frontline jobs under the job title Inspector. This would provide each Director with more flexibility in how he/she resourced their Customs House.

- **Investigator**

The composite Investigator job as demonstrated in many modern customs administrations is someone who undertakes formal investigations into breaches of customs legislation. This customs function usually works hand in hand with other investigative and judicial agencies with clear guidelines to its own powers and with a clear mandate that is respected by other investigative and judicial agencies.

There appears to be no clear comparative job description in JC. Where a breach of JC legislation is discovered, the breach appears to be escalated administratively and in many cases the issue is settled by an administrative agreement. JC does not conduct formal investigations in line with those mounted by modern customs administrations. If such investigations are warranted they are done by Jordan security forces.

- **Auditor**

The composite Auditor job is a position that provides useful intelligence to border control and revenue activities through activities which check compliance with customs legislation.

While the term auditor is widely used in JC and there are a number of JC audit job descriptions at the border and in headquarters, they bear little resemblance to the composite Auditor job.

The important component of the composite Auditor role that is missing from any of the JC Auditor job descriptions is the audit of premises and systems of importers and exporters. JC is beginning to develop stronger relations with the private sector through AMIR/JC initiatives such as the chain of supply project. However, this close contact with the private sector trading environment is just starting to develop and is still a new field of endeavor for JC and therefore the auditor's external role is likewise immature in its development. The skill set and training for this form of advanced audit work is therefore not reflected in any of the JC Auditor job descriptions.

The title of auditor is one that is used for many administrative assistant activities or documentary compliance checking. It is important that administrative compliance checking is not confused with the audit function demonstrated by modern customs administrations.

During the second generation of job descriptions it will be important to assist JC HR section to revise the use of the term audit in job descriptions and to review if the more comprehensive approach to the auditing of systems and premises is developing as integral elements of the audit function.

- **Intelligence Analyst**

AMIR recommended the establishment of an intelligence function in 2003, so the Intelligence Section is still very new and small in number. The section was established to provide intelligence to JC border posts to inform risk management decisions and to assist in reducing smuggling and corruption.

At this time the section is really only beginning to respond with an appropriate level of leadership required to introduce a new key operational function and has only limited influence with border operations. Therefore the job is presently limited in relation to the composite Intelligence Analyst position. The composite position is one that is fully integrated with the work of customs' front line officers, with high demands on successful internal communication and with access to sophisticated technological support.

The AMIR/JC work undertaken in relation to the establishment and training of intelligence analysts has as yet to bear fruit and hence a comparative exercise with job descriptions is more likely to be beneficial during the second generation of JC job descriptions. However the composite Intelligence Analyst job provides clear guidance to the Head of the Intelligence Section and the HR Directorate.

- **Corporate Support Specialists – IT, HR and Finance**

The corporate support functions are well established in JC and the job descriptions were some of the first to be completed. The context for these corporate support functions make comparisons with the composite jobs difficult as the Civil Service Bylaws provide particular frameworks in which these Directorates operate. For instance the Finance Directorate doesn't manage the JC budget and likewise many of the HR activities that might be expected to be handled independently by the HR Directorate are under the control of the Civil Service centralized agency (???). Hence some of the technical components of these positions are absent compared with the composite jobs.

The other constraint that these three directorates suffer from is a lack of integration with JC operational functions. For example the composite IT job makes it very clear that the position is a service orientated one providing high quality specialist services, establishing internal IT policies and input to planning and holistic management of the customs administration. The lack of these duties in the JC job descriptions is as much to do with the scope and expectations from corporate support functions as it is to do with the lack of understanding of the potential of corporate support functions to impact positively on the effectiveness and efficiency of JC operations.

This is a cultural shift that may take some time to rectify but with strong leadership, specialist recruitment and training, the corporate support functions could well meet the standards established in the composite job descriptions during the second generation of job descriptions.

- **Tariff/Import/Entry Specialist**

The JC Clearance Unit Officer's job description is a mix of decision making activities related to tariff and duty and an administrative compliance officer ensuring documentation and legal compliance are in order.

This is quite similar to the activities listed in the tariff/import/entry composite specialist job. In addition the 'relationships with other internal and external positions' section of the JC job description provides a similar view of the job having critical links with other government regulatory and standards bodies and a thorough knowledge of all laws, regulations and rulings related to goods entering and exiting the country.

In this case the paper comparison of the JC job and the composite job suggest a strong relationship between the two. There appears to be only a matter of depth of knowledge gained through training and experience and how that is demonstrated on the job that could separate the two like jobs. This is not a statement on performance or achievement but simply one on the description of the job.

## **Part 2 – Consistent Issues Arising related to Strategic HRM**

- **Classification and structural issues**

One issue that is unrelated to the key jobs but has surfaced as part of this analysis is the scope of control of senior managers in JC.

The job descriptions for officers at the director, section or unit level indicate that many of them have very wide ranging supervisory responsibilities. For supervisor responsibilities to be carried out effectively there needs to be a limit to the numbers supervised and this is achieved in modern administrations through the introduction of team based structures with team leaders having management and supervisory responsibilities. This level of supervision supports a performance management process, on-the-job training activities, career and succession planning.

Related to this issue is that of formalized and stable organization structures. This issue was raised by JC officers in a workshop reported in AMIR's 'Border Process Reengineering Phase 1 & 2' report. The workshop conducted a SWOT analysis about opportunities for continuous improvement, benchmarking and reengineering. The instability of the organization chart was identified as a threat to improvements. Likewise the HCDM project also found difficulty in identifying and documenting jobs because of the constant changes to the organization chart. It would seem that this uncertainty has an impact not just in terms of human resource management but also in terms of operational improvements.

- **Job Families**

As indicated in the analysis of the Inspector job, there is a good opportunity in the second generation of job descriptions for HR and Training to begin the task of reducing the number of individual job descriptions to begin looking at job families and the training for those aligned to each family. This process which modernized administrations have undertaken provides the organization with enormous flexibility in how and where staff are utilized, as well as providing a much stronger basis for job satisfaction and staff retention through offering jobs with a higher level of task diversity.

This task would be of particular benefit with frontline and corporate support jobs.

- **Cultural Issues**

The cultural issues that have surfaced through the job description analysis relate to the higher order competencies that are listed in many of the composite jobs as core or job specific competencies. These include initiative, contributing to wider team or organizational activities, lateral thinking, networking, decision making and problem solving. These go across all of the key composite jobs. These competencies are not as evident in JC officer level job descriptions and suggest a culture in which jobs focus highly on single tasks rather than a culture in which broad functional based jobs are more integrated with other functions which combine to provide better organizational outcomes.

Some of the operational modernization projects undertaken in JC have yet to be reflected in how work is done. For example the considerable work done to introduce an active intelligence function that is closely integrated with frontline management and activity is still not evident through intelligence or frontline job descriptions.

The JC mandate and the scope of the Civil Service Bylaws ensure that some areas operation will not be able to have job descriptions that relate closely to the composite jobs. This needs to be taken into consideration when using the composite jobs as a reference point for the development of second generation job descriptions or as the basis for any future comparative research.

## **Conclusion**

The JC job descriptions provide an enormous step forward in HRM. They are the basis for all HRM activity and provide a strong first point of call for the design of all training activity.

This analysis indicates that many of the key JC jobs are described in similar terms to the composite key jobs. In addition the analysis has provided suggestions for the next generation of job descriptions that will bring JC in line with contemporary HRM practices as well as provide JC management with more resourcing flexibility and JC officers with more interesting and satisfying jobs.

### **Annex 3 AMIR workshops**

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1. Project management course July 2003
2. Systems Approach to Training Course April 2004
3. Intellectual Property Rights Course November 2004
4. Team building workshop – HR and Training Centre December 2004
5. HR and Training Executive workshop (SAT) December 2004
6. HR and TC skills workshop February 2005
7. Workshop on change management (A case study) February 2005
8. Train the trainer for HR and TC March 2005
9. PC skills upgrade for Training Center March 2005
10. PC skills upgrade for HR March-April 2005
11. MS Sharepoint portal server training July 2005
12. On the job training workshop July 2005
13. Change Management workshop August 2005
14. HCDM Presentation to the DG September 2005
15. On the job training - awareness session December 2005
16. Develop Competency Standards March 2006
17. Testing job descriptions  
(core & technical competencies) March 2006
18. On the job training workshop March 2006
19. Effective performance evaluation workshop April 2006