

# Consolidation of Public Service Human Resource Data

In 2015 the Government embarked on an exercise known as the Capacity Assessment and rationalization of the Public Service (CARPS). The Objective was to ensure government functions are properly structured and staffed to facilitate transformation of the public service for efficient and effective service delivery.

One of the challenges encountered during the Assessment was unavailability of Human Resource data and payroll information from a centralized source. This brought up the need to develop a Unified Human Resource Information System.

To find out more on the progress and successes realized, we had one on one with Secretary/Management Consultancy Services Directorate, State department of Public Service , David Kanji



Secretary/Management Consultancy Services Directorate, State Department for Public Service

## Introduction

The State Department, in collaboration with the National Treasury and other Stakeholders in the Public Service notably Salaries and Remuneration Commission; Public Service Commission, Teachers Service Commission; Council of Governors; State Corporations Advisory Committee and Inspectorate of State Corporations is in the process of consolidating Human Resource and Payroll Data from all Ministries/Departments, Counties, State Corporations, Agencies, Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices through the Unified Human Resource (UHR) Information System.

**The rolling out of the Unified Human Resource (UHR) Information System for the public service is ongoing. Tell us more about this & the rationale behind its development.**

A little history will assist here. In 2015, the Government embarked on an exercise known as the Capacity Assessment and Rationalization of the Pub-

lic Service (CARPS). Its objective was to ensure that Government functions are properly structured and staffed to facilitate transformation of the Public Service for efficient and effective service delivery in the Public Service. The Public Service organizations include: The Civil Service, National Police Service, Teaching Service, Judiciary, Kenya Defence Forces, County Governments, SAGAs (including Public Universities, State Corporations, Tertiary Institutions, Subsidiary Institutions and Funds), Parliamentary Service, Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices.

The main challenge encountered by the consultants in undertaking the CARPS assignment was unavailability of the required Human Resource data and payroll information from a single source for quick Government decision making on Payroll management, wage bill management, human resource management, budgeting and planning. The Consultants therefore, had to mine data from each institution's HR systems across the entire public ser-

vices and manually consolidate the information, since the data formats were not standardized.

One of the key findings of the CARPS Report, therefore, was that the Kenya Public Service does not have a unified Human Resource Information System and that Public Service institutions use different and independent (stand-alone) Human Resource Information (HRI) Systems to undertake various HR management functions and reporting. The CARPS report therefore recommended the development, implementation and adoption of a "Unified Human Resource and Payroll Number generating system for the Public Service".

Rationale: Lack of a Unified Human Resource (UHR) Information System greatly limits the Government's ability to make sound decisions on wage bill management, human resource management, budgeting and planning thereby undermining efficiency and accountability in staffing for service delivery. Further, the continued use of



Launch of the UHR and Upgraded GHRIS Infrastructure at KSG Nairobi by CS Hon. Aisha Jumwa Katana on 19th Dec 2022

stand-alone HR systems for management of human resource functions across the Public Service results in weak controls in human resource and wage-bill management.

In addition, the fragmentation and inconsistency of Human Resource and payroll Data in the Public Service becomes untenable at a time when the Government is digitizing its functions and services for effective service delivery. In line with the Government's digital agenda, it's absolutely necessary to ensure that Public Service Human Resource data (including pensions) is consolidated, consistent, accurate and available from a single data warehouse.

**What is the expected impact of the UHR system to human resource management in the public service?**

The establishment of a primary single source of Government consolidated HR and Wage-bill information will;

- (i) Improve value-for-money and accountability by enabling sound decision-making on wage bill management, human resource management, budgeting and planning by the Government;
- (ii) Enhance access to timely data and reduce manual processes in the human resources management operations;
- (iii) Reduce overall costs of HR operations and invest-

- ments in systems across the Public Service; and
- (iv) Standardize and enable digitization of human resource practices across the Public Service.

**Is the UHR System replacing GHRIS System? What is the difference between the two?**

Management of Payroll and HR Data in the Public Service (except some state agencies) is done through two Systems namely the Integrated Payroll and Personnel Database (IPPD) system the Government Human Resource Information System (GHRIS).

The IPPD system was introduced in 1998 to administer payroll, initially targeting the mainstream Civil Service and the Disciplined Service. The scope of usage has since expanded to include the Teaching Service, the Military, the County Governments and Assemblies, as well as the various Commissions, Independent Offices, State Corporations, and Semi-Autonomous Government Agencies. The system is an assembly of more than 170 stand-alone installations in Government Ministries, Departments, Counties and Agencies (MDCAs). This System is therefore old and does not have the capacity to host the envisaged consolidated data from all public institutions. Since it is a stand-alone Installation, it makes it difficult to access HR data when required outside the installation site.

The GHRIS, on the other hand, was established in 2011 to replace the aging IPPD system by expanding the scope of functionality beyond payroll administration. It was also aimed at providing access to a wider range of users, and automating the full range of HR processes in the Public Service. Like IPPD, it is becoming obsolete given that it is more than 10 years old. Further, its low connectivity – bandwidth greatly lowers the number of concurrent users who can access the system thereby lowering its accessibility. This is especially during peak periods such as when employees are accessing their pay slips and P9 forms for income tax return purposes. Further, infrastructure capacity (hardware and software) is inadequate given the size of the data that requires consolidation.

The new UHR System involves deployment and configuration of a High-performance private cloud solution built on a Nutanix HCI for hosting HR and Payroll applications & databases; an integrated backup and recovery solution built on Veeam for data protection of critical applications; a High speed 10 switched network infrastructure built on Extreme VSP switching platform for interconnecting the HCI nodes; an Application Delivery Controllers built on Fortinet Forti DC 1200F for application load balancing and high availability; and Microsoft Operating System through Virtual Machines deployed in the private cloud infrastructure and Database licenses applied to Database server deployed for host the UHR server.

The UHR System is an upgrade IPPD/GHRIS Systems. Once the required data is consolidated in the UHR System and the necessary modules are uploaded, the UHR System becomes the single warehouse supporting HR and Payroll Data man-

agement in the Public Service. Consequently, the IPPD and GHRIS will be available to run other stand-alone applications but will not be the source of the Unified Data.

**Implementation of the first phase of the UHR System is almost over. Tell us more about this. Where are we?**

The development of a UHR Information System for the Public Service entailed:

- (i) Delivery, Installation, Testing, and Commissioning of a Hyper Convergence (HCI) GRIS Infrastructure; and
- (ii) Software Development.

The State Department has acquired new ICT infrastructure whose features include: High performance computing hardware infrastructure providing shared server and storage resources services; Resilient network, server and storage infrastructure that supports security and business continuity goals; Ability to support Public Service growing numbers with a scalable and adaptive network infrastructure; and ability to offer high availability, virtualization of the various High-Performance Computing (HPC) tiers and continuous operations of the human resource information processing and ensure efficient and effective service delivery through the digital platform as promised by the Government.

Further, the UHR development project comprised a number of Software development phases each of which is dedicated to automate a manageable set of HR processes. The first phase entailed development of three (3) HR functions namely, Payroll Administration, Leave Management, and Pensions Claim. These were prioritized due to their critical impact on service delivery and the management of public wage-bill.

**Table 1:**

Phase	Public Service Subsectors	UPN Compliance	Roll-out Activity
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ministries / State Departments</li> <li>• Disciplined Services</li> <li>• County Governments</li> <li>• County Assemblies</li> </ul>	UPN ready	Migrate to UHR
2	UPN-Compatible Commissions, State Corporations and Agencies using IPPD and GHRIS	UPN ready	Migrate to UHR
3	Teaching Service	Not UPN compliant	Adopt UPN & Migrate to UHR
4	Non-UPN Compatible Commissions, State Corporations and Agencies using IPPD	Not UPN compliant	Adopt UPN & Migrate to UHR
5	All Commissions, State Corporations, Public Universities, and Agencies utilizing HR/Payroll system other than the IPPD system	Not UPN compliant	Adopt UPN & Migrate to UHR

The State Department is now finalizing six other modules namely Recruitment and Selection; Training and Development; Leave module developed; Pension module; Establishment Control; Third Party Deductions and Emeriti Identification.

**Roll-out of the UHR System.** The Payroll management Module is now ready from use and will be in use from 1st March, 2023. The UHR System will be rolled out to the entire Public Service in five (5) phases based on the UPN-readiness of the various Public Service subsectors, as follows:

**The payroll module was recently developed and rolled out. Was there a pilot exercise done for MCDAs? If so which MCDAs were selected for the exercise? What lessons were learned from this exercise?**

Payroll Administration module is among the three (3) priority UHR software modules that successfully underwent pilot testing stage in eleven (11) selected Ministries, Departments, Counties and Agencies (MDCAs), having previously undergone validation by key stakeholders in the Public Service twice at the Kenya School of Government. The Pilot project was done in the following organizations:

The National Treasury; Ministry of Health; State Department for Interior and Citizen Affairs – Interior; State Department for Interior and Citizen Affairs – Immigration; State Department for Infrastructure; State Department for Early Learning and Basic Education; County Government of Kiambu; County Government of Mandera; County Assembly of Nakuru County Assembly of Marsabit; State Department for Public Service

The lessons learnt is that development of modules is not complete until it goes through a series of pilot tests and that no module is rolled out at 100 percent completion. Continuous re-engineering is necessary.

**When will the second phase kick-off? What should we expect in the second phase?**

As shown in Table 1, the second phase will kick off in April/May, 2023 when the system will be rolled out to all UPN-Compatible Commissions, State Corporations and Agencies currently using IPPD and GHRIS and whose staff have been allocated the UPN Numbers.

**Successfully rolling out the UHR system will be highly dependent on Unified Payroll Number (UPN). What happens to public entities that are not UPN Compliant. Like state corporations using IPPD, Commissions and agencies utilizing other payroll systems aside from IPPD?**

In order to facilitate the desired consolidation of HR/Pay-

roll information in the Public Service, each public servant is required to have a lifetime unique identification under the Unified Payroll Number (UPN) Generation/Allocation Module centrally managed by the Ministry responsible for Public Service. It is imperative to note that acquisition of Unified Payroll Numbers (UPNs) is a prerequisite for a Public Service organization to use the shared Unified HR platform.

The Head of the Public Service issued a Circular to all Ministries/Departments, Counties, State Corporations, Agencies, Constitutional Commissions and Independent Offices directing that they migrate to the new system vide Circular Letter No. OP.CAB.1/31A 4th August 2022. We have received high levels of compliance and in the process of analysing the received information and we will isolate those that do not comply and seek direction from the Head of the Public Service.

**What plans are there to enhance the integration of the UHR System with other key systems? Which are these key systems?**

Once the required data is consolidated, the UHR System will then be linked to the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMIS), Pensions Management Information System, Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) iTax, National Registration Bureau (NRB) among others key Government systems for ease of access by Government. This is expected to take place in 2023/24 FY.

**It is noted that counties have already shifted to UHR System. What challenges have you experienced so far? What lessons have you learnt?**

The Counties have largely complied. The biggest challenge is that the counties also inherited staff of the previous local authorities whose terms and conditions of service are different from other county staff. Further, counties continue recruiting huge numbers of casuals. These two categories are still being paid outside the computerized system. We intend to ensure issuance with UPN to allow them to be paid through the UHR System.

**What are the key reform opportunities you would suggest to be included in the next strategy as far as human resource management in public sector is concerned?**

- i. Training and capacity building for UHR Staff and finalization of 6 Prototyped Modules be funded as priority
- ii. Funds for projected activities be released promptly on request and as per the workplan
- iii. Hosting of the UHR Data in a secure secondary site