Building new Customs IT Systems: Challenges for Strategic HRM a small Customs Force
Research Objectives

1. What challenges do development projects pose for strategic HRM?

2. Re-inventing the capabilities of the customs workforce through the use of strategic HRM
   - Re-engineering of work-methods
   - Selection and recruitment
   - Training and development
   - Staff turnover/retention
Current Situation

- Application for EU accession in July 2009
- Alignment Process in EU legislation
- Gradual reorganization of administration
  - Blue Prints
  - Interoperability Study
  - IPA
- Building new Customs IT Systems
The Project

A major re-engineering of Customs IT systems

• International demands, EU application
• Increased need for interoperability
• Demands of business
Structure of the Icelandic Administration

Director General
Snorri Olsen

Internal Audit
Ástráður Karl Guðmundsson
Director

Office of the Director General
Sigurður Skúli Bergsson
Deputy Director General
Linda Rut Benediktsdóttir
Director, SQC

Administration Div.
Edda Ólína Sigurðardóttir
Director
Karl F. Garðarsson
Director

Collection Div.
Karl F. Garðarsson
Director

Customs Div.
Karen Bragadóttir
Director

Human Resource Div.
Unnur Ýr Kristjánsdóttir
Director
Re-engineering of Work Methods

Project Management Approach

• Logical continuation of trend already started
• Way to break down large tasks and assign responsibility
• Focus on team work and communication
• Emphasis on coordination of work-methods
• Retention of knowledge (filing, group IT systems, institutional know how)
Re-engineering of Work Culture

How do we achieve this?

• In changing the organisational culture we are looking towards the
  • Mission Statement
  • values, visions, norms and working “language”
• Assigning responsibility
• Focusing on communication
• Sense of ownership
• Values - Trust, Cooperation & Drive.
Selection and Recruitment

• Small society, limited HRM resources
• Individuals with the required skills are in high demand
• Staff with the exact qualifications and knowledge not available – has to be tailor-made
• Nature of development projects makes distinctive qualifications and skills difficult to identify
• Therefore focus on right combination of individuals in the group
• In order to make the group functional we needed different skillsets from different individuals
How do we attract qualified applicants?

- Aim to present The Project as an opportunity
- Value of The Project for society
- Initiative – independence – creative thinking - inspiration
- Unusual advertisement
- Emphasis on contribution to society and an important international development project in job interviews
Do you want to be a part of one of the largest projects in Icelandic government in the coming years?
Training and Development

• **Challenge: Assessment of skills and training needs**
  - Focus on training in the Future Vision of Customs
  - Project management training – level playing field
  - Knowledge of legal aspects and specialized customs issues must be deepened
  - Solid knowledge of public administration and Customs business
Staff Retention

Challenge: how do we retain desirable employees?

- Excellent work environment
- Flexibility – reconciliation between work, private, and family life
- Interesting tasks, constant development and individual “buy-in”
- International angle
Concluding Remarks

• The project is in early stages
• The research in question focuses on a mapping of the change process, trying out innovative ways in HRM and building the foundations for future organisational changes.
  1. Was the method applied for the selection of staff a correct one?
  2. Were the methods in T&D correct?
  3. What is the experience and job satisfaction of the employees of the project?
  4. Progress of the project vs. initial expectations
Research Methods?

What research methods are best suitable to analyse and monitor the progress of The Project?

Qualitative and/or quantitative research methods

• Statistical data
• Periodic questionnaires
• Focus groups
• Individual interviews
• Bench-marking