

CRFM OPERATIONS MANUAL

Volume 4
Programme Support Services

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Section 4.1 Human Resource Management and Development

The CRFM is a CARICOM organization. Accordingly, unless otherwise stated the CRFM Secretariat's applicable Human Resources policy guideline is the Staff Rules and Regulations of the Caribbean Community Secretariat (CARISEC), Georgetown, Guyana, a copies of which are available for reference.

The purpose of this section of the Operations Manual, therefore, is to provide a summary of major HR policies, to draw attention to CRFM Secretariat interpretations or application of the CARISEC policy, and to identify those policies which are uniquely applicable to the CRFM staff of the CRFM Secretariat.

4.1.1 CRFM's Human Resource Management Philosophy

CRFM Secretariat is committed to ensuring that employees are:

- Treated with respect and dignity.
- Provided with an explanation of job responsibilities and expected standards of performance.
- Provided with relevant training.
- Evaluated periodically as a basis for constructive progress reviews.
- Provided an opportunity for personal growth and development consistent with the goals of the Secretariat.
- Provided a safe and healthy place to work.

Employees with questions or concerns about discrimination in the workplace are encouraged to bring these issues to the attention of their supervisor. Employees can raise concerns and make reports without fear of reprisal. Anyone found to be engaging in unlawful discrimination will be subject to disciplinary action:

4.1.2 Code of Conduct

The CRFM Secretariat's Code of Conduct requires that staff:

- Conduct themselves at all times to project a positive image of the CRFM Secretariat, CARICOM and its Member States;
- Observe the highest standards of professionalism and integrity at all times and in all duties;
- Ensure they are not in position in which they have or could have a conflict of interest;
- Respect the confidentiality of the CRFM Secretariat's business
- Strive constantly for excellence in scientific work, in management and in administration;
- Seek always to develop personal and professional skills and knowledge and endeavour to share these with others;
- Foster trust among colleagues in all dealings and avoid all discriminatory practices;
- Strive at all times to cooperate fully with colleagues, clients and with collaborators;
- Give a full day's work for a full day's pay, giving earnest effort and best thought to the performance of all duties; and
- Remember always CRFM Secretariat's commitment to Fisheries and to all the people of the Caribbean Community.

The CRFM Secretariat endeavours to recruit competent staff who demonstrate commitment to the goals and objectives of the Secretariat and who are willing to commit themselves to the CRFM Secretariat's conduct.

4.1.3 Employment Practices, Policies and Procedures

For the purpose of this manual, an "employee" of CRFM is a person who regularly works for CRFM on a wage or salary basis. "Employees" may include regular full-time, regular part-time, and temporary persons. The word "employee" is used interchangeably with "staff".

1. Employee Classification

CRFM Secretariat staff fall into several categories. These categories include Technical and Support Staff. The Technical Staff grades extend from Grades 8 through 15 and embrace a multi-disciplinary group providing technical and administrative services.

The Technical Staff are supported by the following:

- (a) Graduate / Research Assistants
- (b) Administrative Staff

(a) Graduate / Research Assistants

Graduate / Research Assistants are MSc. graduates recruited and attached to Senior Technical Staff for specific periods, with one (1) year renewable contracts.

(b) Administrative Support

Comprise Staff who would not normally possess a University degree. In some cases University Graduates have applied for these positions.

2. Job Descriptions

The purpose of Job Descriptions is to ensure that the important duties and responsibilities for each position in the CRFM Secretariat are set out in a uniform and consistent way. When each Job Description, either new or revised, is prepared and approved, it becomes an official CRFM Secretariat document. Each employee is therefore required to become thoroughly familiar with the Description, not only for his or her own job, but for those of his or her superiors and / or subordinates. Appendix 1.1 under Volume I details the content Job Descriptions.

(a) Creation of Positions

New positions shall be created only when a clear and current need has been demonstrated. The Forum and / or the **Executive Director's** approvals are required to create any new position depending on the position.

(b) Reviews

When a vacancy occurs, each Manager is required to review the current description to determine validity before the vacancy is filled. Reviews of all Job Descriptions will be routinely undertaken on a triennial basis or as the need arises.

(c) New Jobs

The CRFM Secretariat encourages its Managers to suggest methods by which hierarchical or functional units may be changed into new job types. These suggestions should be forwarded to the **Corporate Services Department**. The CRFM Secretariat's goal is to strive for the most efficient operation possible in both economic and human development terms. It is Management's responsibility to be constantly aware of this goal and to work toward achieving it.

The Job Description process is an excellent opportunity to exercise this responsibility.

3. Validation of Selection Procedures

(a) Selection

A recruitment decision is one of the most critical decisions a manager has to make. Correcting faulty decisions can be both painful and costly in human and organizational terms. Therefore, every effort must be made to ensure that the best candidate is hired. The recruitment process is described in this section.

Upon receipt of recommendations on filling of a vacancy from the **Executive Director** or his / her nominee; a panel will be arranged to interview short-listed applicants. The **Corporate Services Manager** will write to short-listed applicants, inviting them to attend an interview. With that letter an application form is enclosed for completion. (See Form appended)

Having selected the most suitable applicant, the referees listed in the Application Form should be contacted for verification of the information provided and their opinions of the applicant sought. A recommendation should then be forwarded to the **Executive Director** or his / her nominee(s) for approval.

(b) Documentation of New Employees

The **Corporate Services Department** is responsible for having the new employee fill out all pre-employment forms, benefit applications and enrollment forms. A photograph should be taken for the CRFM Secretariat's Identification Card. On the employee's first day of work, basic information on pay policy, leave policy, benefits, parking and working hours will be discussed. Arrangements for orientation will also be made at this time.

4. Pre-Employment Screening

Consistent procedures will be followed concerning new hires, the processing of rehires and other employee selection procedures.

Job-related duties and qualifications will provide the basis for initial screening of applications. All applications and resumes received will undergo initial screening for the minimum qualifications. These screenings will be conducted by the **Corporate Services Department**.

Applications will be screened to select those individuals to be short-listed and to be interviewed for the position.

The **Corporate Services Department** will be responsible for verification of employment information provided by the applicant.

Information to be verified from prior employers includes the following:

- *Dates of employment;*
- *Positions held;*
- *Salary at time of termination; and*
- *Job performance*

The applicant should be advised that verification of information provided in applications will be sought by CRFM.

Every individual offered a position must confirm his/her availability for employment within three business days of confirmation of receipt of an offer of employment. The **Corporate Services Department** will not inform other candidates that the position has been filled until the new employee has confirmed acceptance.

5. Technical and Support Staff Applications and Interviews

(a) Executive Director and Deputy Executive Director

The procedures for recruitment shall be as follows:

- (i) A Recruitment Company will be contacted to place advertisements internally and externally.
- (ii) A report of all applications of applicants must be presented for review by the Executive Committee of the Forum or a sub-committee established by the Forum to address Human Resource matters.
- (iii) The Executive Committee / Sub- Committee of the Forum shall prepare and recommend a short-list to the Forum for approval.
- (iv) The Forum shall recommend the short-list to the Ministerial Council for approval.
- (v) An Interview panel shall be approved by the Forum. This panel may include as membership the Recruiting Company.

(b) *Technical and Support Staff*

- (i) The Corporate Services Manager will place advertisements internally and externally for vacancies.
- (ii) A short list will be prepared in consultation with the Programme Managers for submission to the Executive Director.
- (iii) An interview panel will be recommended by the Corporate Services Manager. The panel should include the Corporate Services Manager and the Programme Manager concerned.

Applications from former officials other than those who have been discharged or summarily dismissed may be considered.

6. Interviews and Qualifications

After interviews are concluded and where two or more current members of Staff have comparable skill, ability and merit, and have the highest scores or ratings, the individual with the most relevant experience will be appointed.

The normal qualification for appointment shall be as specified in CRFM Secretariat's Minimum Education / Experience Profile. The relevant qualification and experience may from time to time be determined by the CRFM Secretariat.

Where difficulty is experienced in recruiting Staff with the requisite qualifications consideration will be given to candidates who possess relevant previous experience.

7. Pre-employment Medical Examination

Staff appointments shall be subject to the candidate undergoing a medical exam prior to the commencement of employment. The CRFM Secretariat's medical advisor must certify whether the person concerned is in good health and fit to discharge his/her duties

8. Application Follow-Through

The successful candidate, having been notified and having accepted the job offer will be issued a formal job letter setting out the terms and conditions of employment.

The new employee is required to complete Life and Medical Insurance forms and other necessary documents e.g. PAYE, Social Security. A file should be opened for the employee with the application form, transcript of references, offer of employment letter and Job / Position Description outlining his / her duties.

CHECK LIST	
Application Form	
Transcript of reference	
Offer Letter of Employment	
Job Specification and Description	
Tax Information	
National Insurance Information	
Other Requirements for Particular Country List	
Health Plan	
Life Plan	
Pension Plan	

9. Probation

New employees are required to serve a probationary period of three (3) months. During the probationary period, the new employee should become acquainted with the CRFM Secretariat and with the specific requirements of his / her position, and demonstrate his / her ability to perform assigned duties. During this period, as part of the orientation exercise, the employee's supervisor is responsible for explaining office / departmental procedures, employment guidelines, job expectations, and evaluation procedures. The probationary period provides an opportunity for the Secretariat to ascertain whether the employee's service in the position should be continued.

At the end of the probationary period, the supervisor will evaluate the employee's performance and a written recommendation concerning the employee's future status with the CRFM Secretariat shall be submitted to the Director for review.

In the event a supervisor makes the recommendation not to grant the employee a regular appointment, the Executive Director shall determine whether the employee will be given a permanent appointment. The probationary period may be extended for a maximum period of three (3) months, at the end of which, if performance continues to be below expectations, employment may be terminated.

All employees shall be subject to a period of probation. The Forum is responsible for ensuring the probationary review of the Executive Director.

10. Rehires

Applications received from former employees will be processed using the same procedure and standards that govern all other applications. The **Corporate Services Manager** will review the former employee's performance records and circumstances surrounding the conclusion of previous employment with the CRFM Secretariat and provide a report.

A former employee, on reappointment, shall be regarded as a first appointee except in case of former employees affected by redundancy. This category of employee however shall not be subject to the first appointment allowances and benefits.

The CRFM Secretariat may rehire employees released or terminated through medical disability at its discretion. However, the CRFM Secretariat will not employ anyone terminated by discharge or summary dismissal.

4.1.4 Recruitment and Selection

1. Manpower Planning

The development of CRFM Secretariat's Manpower Plan and inventory is premised on the following:

- An approved Organogram and Job Structure with identified job content and qualification profiles to impact on the recruitment and placement programme.
- A wage and salary administration system reflective of Regional trends to attract qualified candidates and to re-inforce their mastery of tasks.
- A performance evaluation system which provides an objective means of appraising performance and task mastery as well as identifying those who are ready for further development, while allowing the CRFM Secretariat to monitor, audit and report on the effectiveness of systems.
- An employee-records system providing current and complete information facilitate the CRFM Secretariat's planning process while identifying management, technical and administrative training and development programmes.

The major elements of the Manpower Planning Systems will include:

- Job Performance Standards
- Qualification Profiles
- Identification of qualified Staff and personnel to be recruited
- Training facility requirements
- Training course outlines
- An internal development system (Succession Planning) to identify, train a place existing Staff in scheduled current and future job openings.

2. Recruitment Policy

The CRFM Secretariat's approved Manpower Plan developed in a three year cycle, shall be the basis for the Recruitment Policy.

In addition, vacancies may arise during any three year- period for any of the following reasons:

- The Resignation of an Incumbent
- The Death of an Incumbent
- The Separation of an Incumbent

Once a vacancy has arisen, authorization to recruit will be sought from the Executive Director or his / her nominee.

Vacancies shall be filled by the following means:

(a) *By Promotions*

Promotions are reassignments to jobs having a higher level or position and shall be based specific selection criteria such as qualifications and job performance. Promotions can be two types:

- (i) In-class promotion where an employee moves from a junior to a more senior where knowledge and skill requirements are in the same domain.
- (ii) Organisation promotion, where moving to a higher rated job requires differ sets of knowledge and skills with major differences in the kind, scope 0 complexity of responsibilities.

(b) *By Transfers*

Transfers occur within grade movements and are non-promotional movements. While responsibilities and duties change they are similar in scope and responsibility as the old job.

(c) *By Recruitment*

Applications for vacancies shall be invited from existing Staff. An advertisement will be placed throughout the Region in the case of the recruitment of Technical Staff, and outside the Region for Senior Management positions, when so determined by the **Executive Director or the Forum**. For **Support Staff**, the advertisement is placed in-country where such Staff is to be located.

If information is misrepresented or omitted on an application or resume, or if misrepresentations are made by an applicant in an interview, the CRFM Secretariat reserves the right to revoke any offer of employment whenever such discrepancy is discovered.

3. Hiring of Relatives

An appointment shall not be offered to a person who bears any of the following relationships to a staff member - i.e. father, mother, son, daughter, brother or sister - except in the case where the Secretariat is unable to recruit another suitably qualified person for the post. The spouse of a staff member may be appointed provided that he or she is fully qualified for the post for which he or she is being considered and that the spouse is not given any preference by virtue of the relationship to the staff member. In any case, a staff member who bears any of the relationships specified in this section to another staff member shall not be assigned to serve in a post which is superior or subordinate in the line of authority to that staff member and shall disqualify himself or herself from participating in the process of arriving at or reviewing an administrative decision affecting the status or entitlements of the staff member to whom he or she is related.

4. Period of Appointment

Appointments shall be on a contract of three years duration or less with provision for termination during the period of the contract. A period of notice of not less than three months will normally be provided. However, a contract may be terminated within a shorter period of time if payment is provided in lieu of notice.

If accumulated vacation leave exceeds the period of notice, the CRFM Secretariat shall pay to the staff a sum corresponding to the additional days in excess of the period of notice.

5. Contract of Employment

The term of employment of an employee shall be governed by a Contract which shall consist of an offer of appointment signed by the Executive Director or a representative of the Executive Director authorized for the purpose and a declaration of acceptance signed by the employee.

The offer of appointment shall state:

- That the appointment is subject to the provisions of these Regulations;
- The type and duration of the appointment;
- The category, grade and salary pertaining to the appointment and the salary range associated with the Grade;
- The date upon which it is proposed that the appointment becomes effective; and
- Any special conditions.

The offer of appointment shall be made in the context of a requirement for pre-employment medical examination.

A copy of the Human Resource Manual and a declaration of acceptance to be signed by the employee shall be transmitted together with the offer of appointment.

The date upon which the appointment is effective shall be confirmed by a notification when the employee assumes duties.

Notice of the renewal of contract shall be on the basis of a performance review which shall be conducted at least three months prior to the expiry date of the contract. In the event a member of staff has accumulated vacation leave, he / she may be sent on leave during the notice period. Staff are not entitled to sick leave during the period of notice.

6. Amendment of Contract of Employment

The terms of any contract of employment may be modified, without prejudice to the acquired rights of employees, by the Executive Director in order to bring them in conformity with any measure relating to the conditions of employment which the Forum may decide to apply to serving employees.

7. Recruitment at Different Levels

There are varying procedures for recruiting different levels of staff. They are explained below:

(a) CRFM Directors

The recruitment of the Executive Director and Deputy Director will be consistent with modern recruitment and selection practices. Specifically:

- Clearly defined competency frameworks i.e. knowledge, skill, attitude, qualification and experience
- Advertisements and wide circulation of the notice of vacancy
- Establishment of a Selection Sub Committee including representation from the CARICOM Secretariat and the Executive Committee to short-list suitable candidates
- Selection of candidates using criteria based on the competency framework by the Selection Committee
- Recommendations for appointment in priority order to be made by the Selection Committee to the Executive Committee with final approval by the CARICOM Secretariat.

(b) Recruitment of Short-Term Consultants

Programme Managers should prepare clear, specific and attainable terms of reference including details of the qualifications required for the CRFM Secretariat to recruit and enter into the contracts with the consultant.

A short list of consultants is prepared by the relevant Programme Manager and submitted to the Consultant Selection Committee which makes the final selection of consultant.

In the initial stage of the consultancy, the consultant will attend a briefing session with the relevant CRFM Secretariat staff to clarify the expectations and assignment details. Recruitment of Staff

(c) Recruitment of Staff

Each approved staff vacancy will be advertised - professional staff vacancies are advertised regionally; administrative and finance and technical support staff vacancies are advertised in the country where the vacancy exists.

Candidates are short listed and interviewed by a panel appointed by management. An approved grading instrument will guide the panel. Emphasis is placed on the specific competencies determined for the particular position. A copy of the interview guide appears in Appendix 4.4.

8. Work Permits and Visas

The requirement for and provision of work permits and visas for CRFM Secretariat staff are governed by Agreements between the Governments of Belize, and St. Vincent and the Grenadines, relating to the support, privileges and immunities to be granted in connection with the CRFM.

The CRFM Secretariat is committed to recruiting a highly talented and diverse workforce.

If information is misrepresented or omitted on an application or resume, or if misrepresentations are made by an applicant in an interview, the CRFM Secretariat reserves the right to revoke any offer of employment whenever such discrepancy discovered.

9. Orientation

The employee orientation goals are as follows:

- To acquaint the employee with **CRFM Secretariat's** plans and programmes, operational systems and Manuals.
- To establish good employee - employer communication
- To reduce the anxieties of a new environment and new responsibilities

- To build a teamwork spirit
- To inform the employee of the **CRFM Secretariat's** achievement, and
- To provide the employee with information about the **CRFM Secretariat's** benefit package and to explain the participation eligibility dates for the plans available.

In order for employees to become acquainted with the values, culture and mandate of CRFM, all new employees will receive a general orientation conducted by the Executive Director in person or as delegated, within a month of first appointment.

Employees are presented with all codes, keys, and procedures needed to function within the workplace. The new employee's supervisor should introduce the new hire to staff throughout the organization as soon as practicable. Discussions regarding duties and scope of position, CRFM's evaluation procedures should be used to guide the new employee.

During these orientation sessions, the employee will be provided a verbal summary of employment policies, practices, procedures, compensation and benefits. All reference documents including the Operations Manual must be accessible to staff.

All new employees are expected to become familiar with the contents of the CRFM Operations Manual.

The employee's supervisor is responsible for assisting the employee in completing all benefit enrollment procedures with **CRFM Secretariat**.

Staff will be made cognizant of the terms and conditions governing their employment. A visit to Headquarters may be included as part of the orientation programme, where appropriate. The Orientation Programme for Staff will include, *inter alia*:

- An orientation meeting convened by the **CRFM Services Manager** with a view to introducing the new employee to the organization, its structure and various units.
- Meeting with immediate Supervisor / Manager in order for discussions to be held on the following:
 - the role and function of the Unit and Organisation,
 - individual tasks to be undertaken,
 - performance standards and level of exertion and
 - key job objectives to be discussed and mutually agreed upon.

- The new employee will be required to sign as having agreed to the job objectives set out. This document will be placed on his personal file.
- Introduction to Staff Members.
- Interviews / discussions with Unit Managers and Senior Managers, where appropriate, in order to obtain an overview of the functions of the Institute's various Departments.
- Briefings on the various operating systems and Manuals in use in the Organisation, including benefit packages, and requirements for enrollment into the Institute's various benefit schemes and associations.
- Tours of the **CRFM Secretariat's** facilities in-country.

All orientation programmes will be conducted in the country of recruitment. As may be deemed necessary, Staff already in service may be included in the Orientation Programmes.

An Official's home, for the purposes of these Regulations shall be determined at the time of appointment or his / her country of domicile. Unless there are compelling reasons to make an exception an Official's home shall be deemed to be in the country of which he / she is a National at the time of the appointment. An Official's home shall remain unchanged for the duration of his / her service, unless there are compelling reasons for permitting a change.

4.1.5 Personnel Files and Personal Information

The CRFM Secretariat maintains confidential personnel files for each employee. These files contain documentation such as new hire documentation, performance evaluations, disciplinary warning notices and letters of commendation. An employee is entitled to review his or her personal file in accordance with appropriate administrative procedures for the management of such files.

Employees should ensure that their files are up-to-date by notifying the officer responsible for human resource management of any changes in name, telephone number, home address, marital status, number of dependents, academic achievements, individuals to be notified in case of any emergency, and so forth.

CRFM Secretariat employees are valuable members of the institution and can be assured that the Secretariat will not release information contained in their personnel files to other employees or outside agencies, except as authorized by the employee, or where deemed necessary by the Secretariat at its discretion.

4.1.6 CRFM Standards

1. Hours of Work

It is the CRFM Secretariat's policy for its offices to have office hours aligned with those of the public service in the countries in which they are located.

The CRFM Secretariat's work week is defined as Monday to Friday. Full-time employees work forty (40) hours per week, divided into eight (8) hour increments generally between 8:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m., respectively for Head Office (Belize), and 8:30a.m. and 4:30p.m. for the Eastern Caribbean Office in St. Vincent and the Grenadines Monday through Friday, with one (1) hour for lunch. This schedule may vary according to the nature of the functions to be performed.

2. Attendance and Punctuality

Unanticipated absences or tardiness can severely diminish performance and interrupt the quality and level of service CRFM Secretariat provides to clients, and members of CRFM community. Therefore, the CRFM Secretariat expects all of its employees to be diligent and professional in their attendance and punctuality. Employees are expected to embrace and adhere to the standards laid out in this Manual and any other supporting documentation.

It is increasingly important in Human Resource Management Systems to have objective, non discriminatory ways to measure employee performance. Attendance has been one traditional standard because adequate attendance by all employees is necessary for any business to conduct its activities. Poor attendance disrupts production, hinders both daily and long-range planning and makes it difficult to function effectively.

3. Attendance Procedures

Each employee, Professional and Technical, has a responsibility to be on the job at the prescribed time every day. At each office location each employee has an important, designated job to perform, and unexpected and unauthorized absences disrupt the CRFM Secretariat's operations.

The CRFM Secretariat therefore defines its Attendance Policy in these terms:

(a) *Tardiness*

This occurs when an employee is habitually not on the job at the time when work is normally scheduled to begin without prior authorization for adjustments in the hours of work.

In regard to tardiness the following procedures shall be followed:

- Tardiness will be subject to written reprimand. The Supervisor / Manager shall endeavour to discover the cause of an employee's tardiness. If there are not extenuating

circumstances the Supervisor / Manager shall issue written reprimands to the employee. Copies of such reprimands will be placed in the employee's personal file.

(b) Absence

The failure of an employee to report during the hours he or she is normally scheduled to work. All CRFM Secretariat employees who display attendance problems shall first be counseled by their immediate superior. If the problem persists, disciplinary action may be taken.

(i) Excused Absence

This occurs when an employee notifies his or her immediate Supervisor / Manager of anticipated absence for an acceptable reason such as illness, personal or family emergency and the like. The Supervisor / Manager will give the employee permission to be absent, noting such permission in writing. Where exigencies arise and notice is not possible, the Supervisor / Manager will consider the matter on a case by case basis.

(ii) Unexcused Absence

This is defined as an employee's failure to notify the immediate Supervisor / Manager to obtain permission for absence.

(c) Attendance Records

Attendance records for designated staff are to be submitted on a monthly basis to the **Corporate Services Manager** for preparation of Staff Attendance Analyses Reports for the **Executive Director**.

4. Official Travel

The CRFM Secretariat encourages the participation of its employees in events, meetings, workshops, and seminars etc., related to the employee's professional responsibilities. Official travel requests must be authorized in advance by the Executive Director. Requests should be made utilizing the relevant Travel Authority and Advance Form.

Authorized and documented travel carries accidental death insurance coverage while an employee is conducting the Secretariat's business overseas, under the terms of the policy. Employees must file a Travel Expense Form within ten (10) days after the trip return date. Original receipts for reimbursable expenses (not copies) must be attached to all such submissions.

Prior to official travel, visa requirements for staff must be established by the Administrative Unit of the CRFM Secretariat. Where visa applications are required, the relevant staff will be responsible for filing the application at the diplomatic mission of the country which is the main destination of the visit. If supporting documentation is required, staff should ensure that such documentation is obtained in a timely manner.

5. Communication with the Media

In order to provide consistent and accurate information in response to media inquiries about the operation of the CRFM, employees of the Secretariat are not authorized to speak with the media on behalf of the CRFM, without prior approval from the Executive Director.

All media communication should be directed to, and approved by the Executive Director or other person designated by him. Whenever staff are contacted for media interviews, they should direct the calls to the Executive Director or Deputy Director to further coordinate and facilitate the interview with the member of staff. Approvals for such interviews are not automatic.

6. Confidentiality

Employees who have access to records and other personal information including proprietary information, financial data, and intellectual property to which the CRFM Secretariat holds rights, must not discuss, divulge or disseminate such information else without proper authorization.

Examples of confidential information may include the following:

- Employee personal information
- Payroll information
- Financial data, reports and statistics
- Project, grant proposals and plans
- Research information
- Computer data and processes
- Computer codes and passwords

Employees who obtain such information without authorization or who release, disclose or utilize this information for non-CRFM-related purposes violate the Secretariat's confidentiality policy and will be subject to disciplinary action, including termination of employment.

7. Dress Code and Personal Appearance

The CRFM Secretariat's commitment to excellence and its position in the Caribbean community require standards of personal appearance from employees that are consistent with departmental standards and with the high expectations of our clients and our various constituencies. All CRFM Secretariat employees are expected to take pride and care in their personal appearance, dress, and grooming. This is essential for presenting a professional image at all times. It is therefore expected that all employees will exercise good judgment and dress appropriately for their jobs.

These are the factors that should be taken into consideration when determining appropriate dress:

- The nature of an employee's work;
- Safety considerations, such as necessary precautions when working in hazardous work areas
- The extent of public contact, if any, and the normal expectations of outside parties with whom employees will work;
- The prevailing dress practices of other workers in similar jobs.

Supervisors should be sensitive to cultural differences in dress and should accommodate such diversity provided that the style of dress is neat in appearance.

Department supervisors and managers are responsible for monitoring and enforcing the dress code policy. If an employee's attire is questionable or does not comply with established departmental standards, the supervisor / manager will hold a private discussion with the employee regarding the inappropriateness of the attire. Persistent refusal to comply with recommended standards of attire will be regarded as a breach of discipline.

9. Drug-free Workplace and Substance Abuse

The CRFM Secretariat is committed to providing our employees with a safe environment free of illegal drugs and alcohol misuse or substance abuse. Misuse of alcohol, over-the-counter or prescription drugs, as well as use of illegal drugs are inconsistent with all these commitments and will not be tolerated.

Employees are expected to be capable of performing the essential functions of their job– which means able to perform all their job functions safely and efficiently – whenever they are working, present on the CRFM Secretariat's property, operating the Secretariat's vehicles or officially representing the Secretariat. The CRFM Secretariat also expects employees to refrain from illegal drug activities such as trafficking, which could seriously damage the Secretariat's reputation or operations.

Employees are warned against "alcohol misuse." Alcohol misuse includes:

- Working, being present on the CRFM Secretariat's property, or operating the Secretariat's vehicles while impaired by alcohol;
- Consuming alcoholic beverages while working or operating a CRFM Secretariat vehicle;
- Abusing alcohol off-the-job to the extent that attendance or on-the-job performance problems occur.

Employees who refuse to adhere to this policy could be subject to disciplinary action, including termination.

10. Policy against Harassment

The CRFM Secretariat is committed to creating and maintaining a work environment in which its employees are treated with dignity, decency and respect. The Secretariat is committed to providing its employees with a work environment that is free from implicit and explicit behavior used to control, influence or affect the well being of any member of staff. The accomplishment of this goal is essential to the mission of the Secretariat, its commitment to excellence and the respect of all individuals.

Sexual Harassment is any unwanted or unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when submission to or rejection of this conduct explicitly or implicitly affects an individual's employment, causes unreasonable interference with an individual's work performance or creates an intimidating, hostile or offensive work environment.

Breach of this policy may result in disciplinary action being taken against the offender.

11. Right to Privacy

The CRFM Secretariat recognizes employees' rights to privacy and will adopt some basic principles to preserve this right.

Confidential / Personal correspondence e.g. salary matters, medical certificates etc should not be routed to the **Executive Director** or any Manager via the Registry / Messenger Service. Such correspondence should be placed on the relevant personal files and hand-delivered to the respective Officer.

Similarly, when these files / correspondence have been actioned, they should be returned in the same manner as they were routed. In other words, this class of mail should not be routed via Registry Messenger Service.

4.1.7 Health and Safety

1. Safety and Security

The CRFM Secretariat is committed to promoting and providing our employees with a safe and secure work environment.

2. Safety in the Workplace

Both the CRFM Secretariat and its employees share in the responsibility of creating a safe, healthy and secure work environment.

Below are some safety and security guidelines:

- When an accident or injury occurs, report it immediately to management, even if it appears to be minor at the time.
- Follow all emergency procedures in case of a fire or emergency situations. Above all, remain calm.
- Report unsafe conditions to management.
- Keep hallways, storage areas and stairs free of debris and clutter.
- Emergency exit signs must be visible and unobstructed.
- Wear all required safety equipment.
- Obey all “No Smoking” signs.
- All keys given in the course of employment are the property of the CRFM Secretariat. Protect and use them with extra care and return them to the proper place or authority at the end of use

4.1.8 Leave

1. Vacation Leave

Vacation leave is considered essential from the standpoint of operational efficiency and personal well being. Every effort should be made by the CRFM Secretariat to ensure that everyone takes their annual leave at such times as may be mutually agreed while at the same time ensuring that operational plans are not adversely affected.

All CRFM Secretariat staff are entitled to annual leave as stipulated in their letters of appointment. A Leave Application and approval form is Appendix 4.1.

Vacation time is accrued and accounted for on a fiscal-year basis, which runs from April 1 – March 31 inclusive. Vacation time may be carried forward; however, the maximum number of accumulated days may not exceed thirty (30) at any time.

Upon termination of employment, an employee will be compensated for earned but unused vacation time, provided that the Secretariat has received a written notice of resignation at least thirty (30) days prior to resignation.

The procedure for approval of vacation leave is as follows:

The Corporate Services Manager is responsible for ensuring that adequate records of vacation and other forms of leave; are kept up to date.

2. Other Forms of Leave

The following forms of leave are supervised, approved, and monitored by the Corporate Services Manager and the Executive Director:

(a) *Compensatory*

All staff in travel status on CRFM Secretariat business requiring them to travel, or remain in travel status, on a weekend are compensated on the basis of one half day for each day in this status on weekends.

Special activities requiring additional time and authorized by the Executive Director are compensated on a time-for-time basis.

(b) *Illness*

Medical information on individual employees is treated confidentially. CRFM will take reasonable precautions to protect such information from inappropriate disclosure. Managers and other employees have a responsibility to respect and maintain the confidentiality of employee medical information. Anyone inappropriately disclosing such information is subject to disciplinary action.

CRFM staff should follow sick leave procedures as outlined in Staff Rules of CARICOM Secretariat.

When an employee is absent for more than two (2) consecutive days, the CRFM Secretariat requires the employee to submit a certificate from a physician indicating the period of illness. Failure to provide certification of illness may result in denial of sick leave pay.

Unused sick leave cannot be accumulated in future years.

(c) *Compassionate*

The CRFM Secretariat recognizes that bereavement is a difficult time for an employee. The CRFM Secretariat will therefore make every effort to ensure that an employee is able to attend to necessary family matters during bereavement and will provide an employee with time off upon the death of an immediate family member. All such leave is subject to prior supervisory approval. Immediate family consists of a spouse, child, mother, father, sister, brother, mother-in-law, father-in-law, grandparents or grandchild. If additional time is needed, the employee may use accumulated vacation time. If vacation time is not available, the employee may request leave without pay.

CRFM Secretariat's staff are entitled to one-half day's leave for attending funerals.

In the event of a death in a staff member's immediate family, which has taken place locally, there is an entitlement of up to three working days at the discretion of the Executive Director. All time off must be taken on consecutive days.

If the death occurs abroad, then the staff member's entitlement is up to five consecutive days at the discretion of the Executive Director.

The Executive Director will determine whether consideration can be given to the granting of Compassionate Leave in cases other than bereavement.

(d) Maternity

Technical / professional staff are entitled to 14 weeks leave - seven weeks before the date of confinement and seven weeks after the date of confinement.

Employees with two years of service are granted maternity leave with full pay.

Employees with less than two years of service are granted maternity leave on a prorated basis.

In cases where the national system compensates staff during maternity leave, such compensation must be deducted from the salary received by staff.

4.1.9 Performance Management and Development

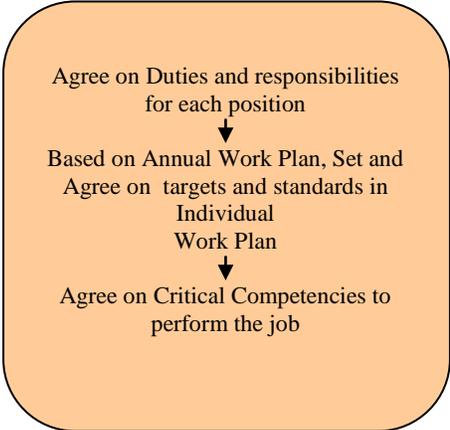
1. Performance Evaluation

The Secretariat believes that an effective performance evaluation system is essential for employee development and motivation. The goals of the performance management system are to achieve maximum staff performance and job satisfaction, benefiting both the individual and the CRFM Secretariat. The system is designed to follow and foster these employment practices:

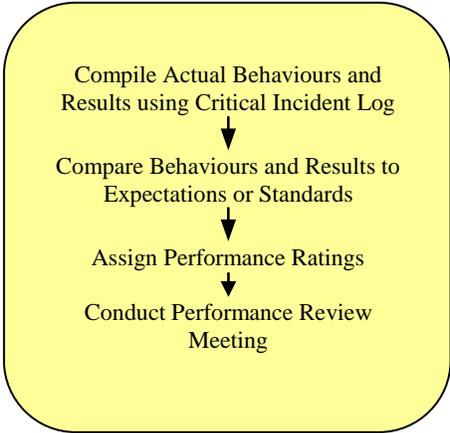
- dialogue between CRFM Secretariat staff;
- clear objectives and expectations understood by everyone;
- individual initiative in managing one's own work environment;
- appropriate and timely planning of activities;
- problem solving and performance improvement through feedback;
- fair and equitable work practices; and
- a manageable amount of work for all concerned.

The schematic below represents the Performance Management cycle:

PLANNING PHASE



Performance Management requires continual information gathering and ongoing feed back about performance. It doesn't happen just once a year.



EVALUATION PHASE



MONITORING PHASE

Regular reviews of individual performance are an important part of the CRFM Secretariat's Performance Evaluation Program. The purpose of regular performance evaluations is to keep employees' informed of their performance and to assist managers with communications of (a) an employee's progress and potential, and (b) performance areas that need to be developed.

All staff assigned to the CRFM Secretariat (professional, finance and administrative) are appraised annually, the exceptions being staff recruited for periods less than three calendar months.

The Secretariat will review administrative personnel formally at the end of their six (6) month probationary period, as well as annually, or prior to a promotion. Please note: performance evaluations do not always result in wage/salary increases.

Short term consultants, those on contracts in excess of three month, are appraised at the end of their assignments with the CRFM Secretariat.

The current CRFM Secretariat Appraisal Instrument is used, see *Appendix 4.2*.

The CRFM Secretariat's system of performance management links work planning and staff performance assessment in an on-going process. Effective staff performance is dependent upon a regular cycle whereby work plans are developed, implemented and reviewed.

The Executive Director should ensure that the entire Performance Management System represents good managerial practice, focuses on results and ensures equity, fairness and consistency.

The CRFM Secretariat recognizes the right of staff to be active participants in the Performance Management Process; the process wherein work is planned, results assessed and staff performance evaluated. The Executive Director shall approve work plans ensuring that they result in a manageable workload for staff and determining how work will be covered by staff absences.

(a) *The Appraisal Process*

The performance of the Deputy Executive Director and the Corporate Services Manager are appraised by the Executive Director.

The performance of the Executive Director should be appraised using a two-tiered system. He / she will be appraised initially by the Executive Committee and the Chairman of the Caribbean Fisheries Forum will function as the Reviewing Officer for such appraisals. The Executive Committee should ensure that an appropriate instrument of appraisal is utilized for appraising the performance of the Executive Director.

All increments and gratuities mature on March 31, and payments are made on or before June 30 of each calendar year. Programme Managers, Corporate Services Manager, Deputy Executive

Director and the Executive Director must therefore ensure that staff appraisals are finalized on or before May 31 of each year.

The Performance Management System is intended to provide an objective, consistent and uniform way to gauge employees' on-the-job performance. The process will promote successful goal attainment in the CRFM Secretariat by identifying those outputs, and the individuals, teams and work units responsible for their achievement that will lead to successful operations. Due cognizance should be taken of the fact that team work is an important aspect of service delivery in CRFM.

Each employee's performance shall be formally reviewed on an annual basis; however ongoing reviews form part of the Performance Management process. There are two major components - written appraisals and discussions with the employee.

Performance Appraisal data and information will be used for making decisions in the following major areas:

- (i) Organisational and Manpower planning
 - (ii) Employee training and development
 - (iii) Compensation administration
 - (iv) Employee movement (lateral transfer, demotion, promotion, layoffs and termination).
- (b) *Guidelines for the Performance Planning, Review and Career Development System***

The guidelines presented in this Section of the Manual are intended to assist Managers in the application of performance planning, review and career development.

(c) *Persons Involved in the Appraisal Procedure*

It is recommended that at least three (3) persons be involved in the appraisal process as follows:

- (i) The Employee as the Appraisee.
- (ii) The Employee's immediate Supervisor as the Appraiser.
- (iii) The Appraiser's Supervisor as the Reviewer.

There should be frequent monitoring of the employee's performance, with guidance and assistance given as needed, since the Appraiser's opinion must be based on the entire period under review and not on isolated periods and incidents.

Before discussing the appraisal with the employee the Appraiser must discuss same with the Reviewer. There should be full and frank discussion of the points highlighted in the Appraisal -

viz. the employee's strengths and weaknesses and the plan for correcting same so that the employee may realise his / her full potential.

(d) Appraisal Period

The annual Appraisal period, shall run from April 01 to March 31, except in the case of the new employee whose first appraisal shall be as follows:

- (i) First appraisal shall be done at the end of the first three months of the probationary period.
- (ii) If the employee is confirmed for appointment at the end of the first appraisal, the next appraisal will be conducted at the conclusion of the programme year in which end of the first three months of the probationary period falls. Thereafter assessment of the Staff Member will be undertaken on an annual basis, at the end each programme year, March 31.
- (iii) If the employee is not confirmed for appointment at the end of the first six months the probationary period, then the second appraisal may *be* executed at the end of the extension of the probationary period. The next appraisal will therefore take place at the end of the programme year in which the conclusion extension period of probation falls. Thereafter, the employee's assessment will take place at the end of the programme year, March 31.
- (iv) However, it should be pointed out that the employee's performance shall be reviewed at least quarterly for two main reasons:
 - The appraisee is given the chance to redeem himself / herself if necessary, for the rest of the annual appraisal period.
 - The appraiser's assessment is much more broad-based, thus reducing the prospect of bias based on a single major incident in the period immediately preceding the appraisal.

2. Training and Professional Development

(a) Policy

The CRFM Secretariat's policy on staff development is based upon the premise that both the Secretariat and the individual have a shared responsibility for developing an individual's potential to the point where his / her professional skills and personal abilities are improved to the extent that the individual can confidently compete for advancement opportunities.

The CRFM Secretariat recognizes the importance of the workplace as a learning environment. As such, staff development is more than the allocation of a limited budget on an annual basis. It

is a programme commitment to formal and informal opportunities for staff to develop through their work related experiences.

The CRFM Secretariat, through the Executive Director and the Corporate Services Manager, will endeavour to make known to its staff all opportunities for professional growth whether through training or programme exposure. The CRFM Secretariat believes in the importance of ensuring that each employee has the skills necessary to perform his / her job effectively.

The CRFM regards continuous staff training as an integral part of its institutional development. It will endeavor to train its staff continuously and support them in acquiring new skills, through some of the following methods:

- *Identifying training courses, seeking funding, and identifying staff to attend such courses, which will include visits and study tours to successful National and International Fisheries organizations.*
- *Encouraging staff to pursue further training on their own, for which CRFM may provide financial support whenever approved funds available.*
- *Professional staff will be encouraged to attend events organized by relevant professional bodies.*

Training or development programme shall be offered after a thorough needs assessment by the Corporate Service Manager in consultation with the Management and staff.

The CRFM Annual Training Plan will take into account information provided through training needs assessments, work and performance evaluations, information from capacity and other reviews and the Medium Term Plan which establishes the Secretariat's priorities for the upcoming year(s).

(b) *Training and Development Opportunities*

Opportunities for staff development for CRFM Secretariat staff as a whole, will result from joint workshop situations and from exposure to other institutions and programmes. Employees will be invited to attend meetings and training sessions in order to pursue self-enrichment training opportunities. In addition, employees will be permitted to attend local seminars and workshops pertaining to their area of work with the prior approval of the department head.

(c) *Training Needs Assessment*

The CRFM will review the needs and requirements for training employees under its jurisdiction at least annually. A systematic and continuing review of current and foreseeable organizational training needs provides a realistic basis upon which to plan, programme, budget, direct and evaluate a viable training plan. Such reviews will consider the broader issues that impact CRFM and its programme effectiveness as well as functional and individual training needs. Individual

training needs will be assessed within the context of the CRFM's strategic goals in order to ensure employees' performance competency and development.

(d) Study Leave

Study leave is leave from work approved by the Executive Director of CRFM for the purpose of formal study.

It is CRFM's objective to allow employees to take time off from work to pursue study related to their work or for personal development. However, this benefit will be offered within the context of the continued efficient operation of the CRFM.

(i) Employees to Whom Policy Applies

This policy applies to full-time positions only who have completed at least three years of continuous service and have a realistic prospect of providing significant service to CRFM in future.

An employee granted time off to attend classes or examinations may be required at any time to provide proof of such attendance.

(ii) Study Leave Considerations

Study leave is a privilege and may be granted, at the discretion of the Executive Director, for the purpose of allowing employees time off to further their education through study approved educational institutions.

Each request for time off and leave will be evaluated on its own merits and approval will depend upon consideration of the benefit in terms of the enhancement of the employee's value to the CRFM. Relevance of the field of study to CRFM will be determined by Management.

The scale of benefit including salary that will be provided during Study leave will be determined by the Executive Committee.

(iii) Duration of Study Leave

Study leave for study on a part time basis is limited to a three (3) year time frame. Extensions to this leave, up to an additional 12 months, may be granted by the Executive Committee.

There is no guarantee that the time off privilege will be extended beyond the four years.

The granting of leave does not imply endorsement of any particular course nor does it create any obligation or liability on the part of CRFM. Further successful completion of a course does not automatically entitle an officer to a salary increase or improvement in benefit.

A rejection of study leave does not imply a negative performance appraisal.

4.1.10 Discipline

Disciplinary procedures are intended to promote the highest standards of performance, decorum and deportment. CRFM regards discipline as primarily a developmental and not a punitive matter. Punishment and sanctions are to be invoked as a last resort when other means of behavioural change fail to produce the desired results.

1. Definition of Discipline

Discipline is the imposition of a sanction because of improper conduct, unacceptable or inadequate performance or negligence in the discharge of assigned duties. Sanctions can vary from reprimands to the imposition of various penalties up to and including dismissal.

2. Grounds for Disciplinary Action

Grounds for disciplinary action may include:

- incompetent or inadequate work performance;
- habitual absenteeism or lateness for work;
- misuse or careless use of confidential information;
- conflict of interest;
- dishonesty (theft, etc.);
- insubordination;
- fraudulent taking of leave;
- Sexual and other harassment; and
- Absence from work or duty station of position for more than three scheduled working days without appropriate approvals.

3. Guiding Principles

Disciplinary action will normally be preceded by positive preventative and corrective measures such as counseling. The CRFM Secretariat's procedures shall be guided by these principles:

- fairness;
- individuals are given every opportunity to explain and defend their actions with the assurance that their explanations will be given due consideration;

- Explanations are given to individuals as to why their actions raise concern and / or constitute misconduct, why disciplinary action may be warranted

Note:

Staff have the right to obtain advice and legal counsel where there appears to be serious misconduct and where as a consequence, disciplinary action may be contemplated or taken.

4. Procedures

When an unacceptable work-related situation is brought to the attention of the Executive Director, he or she will, if possible, call a meeting with the individual concerned to discuss the situation. It is recognized that it may be difficult to arrange a face to face meeting given the distances between the Head office and the Eastern Caribbean Office. The Executive Director will determine alternative arrangements appropriate to the situation if necessary and as promptly as possible.

During the discussion, the problem is drawn clearly to the attention of the individual.

The staff member is given an opportunity to explain or defend her / his action.

A plan for correcting the unacceptable situation is worked out jointly with the expectation that the individual will agree to correct her/his behaviour.

A minuted statement of the discussion agreed to and signed by the individual and the Executive Director shall be prepared and a copy put on the individual's file. Follow-up is built into the remedial plan.

Where these procedures fail to bring about the desired change, the Executive Director will determine whether to repeat the procedure or to initiate appropriate disciplinary action and if necessary and appropriate, consulting with the Chairman and the Executive Committee of the Forum.

In cases of gross misconduct or negligence, or abandonment of duties, the Executive Director may initiate sanctions up to and including termination, in consultation with the Chairman and the Executive Committee of the Forum.

5. Overview of Employee Mediation and Grievance Process

It is the policy of CRFM that an Employee Mediation and Grievance Process shall exist to allow for prompt, fair and orderly resolution of grievances arising out of employment or the working environment.

(a) Step 1: Informal Meeting with Supervisor

CRFM encourages direct communication between employees and supervisors to address grievances in a spirit of cooperation and compromise. Such dialogue should be conducted

without any undue delay. The onus is on the supervisor to initiate dialogue to respond to any concerns that have the potential to generate conflict or lower morale.

(b) Step 2: Mediation

Mediation provides an opportunity for two parties to openly discuss the grievance and reach a resolution that is mutually acceptable to both the Executive Director and the employee.

Mediation is the first step in the grievance process and involves the services of a neutral third person that assists an employee and management representative in resolving an employee grievance in a mutually acceptable manner. The mediation process can also be used in instances where conflicts arise between employees as a means of ensuring management's impartiality.

Depending on the gravity of the matter, when mediation results in a resolution of the grievance, parties may be requested to confirm their understanding in writing.

If a grievance involves an issue that the Executive Director has identified as not subject to mediation, the employee shall begin the grievance process at Step 3 of this policy.

(c) Step 3: Hearing Officer / Executive Committee of the Forum

In situations where mediation does not produce agreement or if a grievance involves an issue that the Secretariat has identified as not subject to mediation, employees may proceed to Step 3 by presenting the grievance to the Chairman of the Forum who will investigate the matter and make a recommendation.

(d) Step 4: Appeal to Decision

The Forum reserves the right to require that any decision taken at Step 3 above be ratified by the Forum prior to implementation. Employees may request that any matter that has gone through the mediation and grievance process without an amicable resolution be referred to the Forum for a Final Decision.

All participants in a grievance procedure (i.e., complainant, respondent, interviewees, witnesses, supervisors, members of the grievance panel, etc.) must maintain the confidentiality of the proceedings to ensure an unencumbered resolution process.

4.1.11 Terminations

1. Policy

An orderly approach for terminating employment should be followed for the benefit of all concerned.

2. Notice of Resignations

In keeping with the terms and conditions of the Letter of Appointment, the CRFM Secretariat requires a minimum of three months' notice of resignation, in writing, before termination of employment takes effect.

3. Termination of Employment

There are several types of termination. These include voluntary termination by resignation or retirement and involuntary termination by layoff, suspension or dismissal.

(a) Voluntary Terminations

The compulsory age of retirement is consistent with that stipulated by the CARICOM Secretariat. In the event that an employee voluntarily decides to leave or retire from CRFM Secretariat, staff are expected to give the Secretariat at least three months' notice or as stipulated in contract or specific terms of employment. Written notices of resignation or retirement should be submitted to the Executive Director.

A notice of resignation or retirement is expected to be a working notice to provide the employee's supervisor with an opportunity to ensure projects are completed and / or an opportunity to provide training to the employee who will be assuming the employee's position and responsibilities.

In addition, the Secretariat reserves the right to accept an employee's notice of resignation and to accelerate such notice and make the employee's resignation effective immediately, or on any other date prior to the employee's intended last day of work that the CRFM Secretariat deems appropriate. In such instances, the employee will be paid through the date designated by him / her in the letter of resignation as the intended last day of work.

Employees who fail to give appropriate written notice will be considered ineligible for future employment at the CRFM Secretariat.

With regard to Retirement, the normal retirement age shall be 60 years. An extension of appointment beyond this age requires authorisation from the Forum through the Executive Committee. The Executive Committee will recommend to the Forum whether or not employment should be extended and if extended, under what terms and conditions.

(b) Involuntary Terminations

(i) Layoff

A layoff is an involuntary termination of employment, either permanently or temporarily, due to business needs. On occasion, organizational needs and changes within the Secretariat may require existing staff positions to be eliminated. The Secretariat will strive to handle such layoffs

in a systematic and consistent manner and to help define opportunities that may be available to the employees that will be affected.

In general, the CRFM Secretariat will make every effort to give the employee the same advance notice as that expected from a resigning employee, i.e., at least two (2) weeks notice for exempt and non-exempt employees. When shortages of funds or of work are unforeseen, however, it may occasionally be necessary to lay off employees with less than the desired notice.

(ii) Dismissal

Dismissal for failure to meet performance expectations or misconduct should be documented in accordance with the Secretariat's established performance improvement counseling and progressive discipline procedures. A dismissal may result in the employee being ineligible for rehire at the CRFM Secretariat.

The grievance process will not be implemented when the employee is discharged due to performance issues, misconduct or due to a layoff.

(iii) End of Assignment

When a staff member's assignment is approaching maturity and the contract is six months to termination date, the following procedures apply:

(i) For Persons Other Than Programme Managers

The Programme Manager in consultation with the staff member prepares a "Phasing out Plan" broken down to reflect on a month by month basis a list of work plan activities to be completed on or before termination date.

This "phasing out plan" is submitted to the Deputy Executive Director to be endorsed for approval by the Executive Director.

On approval it is supervised by the Programme Manager and the status of its implementation reported to the Deputy Executive Director on a monthly basis.

With respect to Programme Managers, the Deputy Executive Director in consultation with the Programme Manager prepares a "phasing out plan" broken down on a monthly basis to reflect the list of work plan activities to be addressed in the final year of assignment.

This "Phasing out Plan" is submitted by the Deputy Executive Director to the Executive Director for approval.

On approval it is supervised by the Deputy executive Director and its status reviewed on a quarterly basis and progress reported to the Executive Director. If separation is by resignation which requires three months notice, then the Phasing out Plan will be reviewed on a bi-monthly basis and progress reported to the Executive Director.

(c) *Exit Interviews*

The final element of the "phasing-out plan" is an exit interview, which would be conducted for all staff members as described in the proposal for separation of staff on the maturity of their contracts. The interview process, which would be informed by a termination report, should include both CRFM Secretariat management and appropriate Programme Managers.

4.1.12 Compensation and Employment Benefits

1. Salary Administration Policy

Salaries are paid bi-monthly on the 10th and 25th (Headquarters, Belize) and monthly, on the 25th of each month (Eastern Caribbean Office). If these dates fall on a public holiday or weekend, salaries are paid on the preceding date to that date day.

The goal of the Salary Administration Policy is to provide a reasonable and workable framework to pay employees fair and equitable salaries to promote employee productivity and overall performance.

The compensation procedures for the CRFM Secretariat's Staff will ensure that each person receives a rate of pay and total compensation that is internally fair when compared with that received by other members of staff and externally competitive with that received by other professionals in the regional market-place, as well as counterparts at the National level.

The purpose of this Section is to enunciate the basics of the CRFM Secretariat's Salary Administration Policy.

2. Wage and Salary Policy Administration

The CRFM Secretariat's compensation policy shall be determined by the Forum, on the advice of the Executive Director. The administration of the policy will be monitored by the Corporate Services Manager who advises the Executive Director. The Corporate Services Department will be responsible for facilitating periodic salary reviews and making appropriate recommendations to the Executive Director. The following shall constitute the Salary Policy Administration procedures:

(a) *Salary Scales*

The salary scales for Technical Staff are the CARICOM Secretariat's Salary Scales. Support staff utilizes salary scales that are developed based on what obtains in the location.

(b) Merit Increases

In the context of the CRFM Secretariat, merit pay means an adjustment to base pay that relates directly to the employee's performance. In effect, no employee is guaranteed an automatic increase in base pay or an "across-the-board" or flat increase. CRFM Secretariat merit pay will be based on specific performance goals by the way of the Performance Appraisal System.

Each of the CRFM Secretariat's 14-pay Grades is designed with a minimum and maximum limit to provide room to reward employees for meritorious effort and output.

(c) Promotional Increases

Promotional increases shall be granted immediately upon an employee's assumption of a new job in a higher classification.

An employee shall be placed on such step in the higher pay grade as will result in an increase in salary of not more than two increments pertaining to the lower grade provided that the salary shall in no case be less than the commencing salary or greater than the maximum of the grade to which the employee has been promoted.

Where the Executive Director considers that the employee's experience and other qualifications for the duties and responsibilities of the job/position justify a higher salary he may grant additional increments.

If promotion takes effect on the employee's incremental date the new salary is calculated after the award of any increment due in the lower grade.

(d) Payment in Relation to Acting Appointments

Payment in relation to Acting Appointments shall be of two types:

- (i) Acting for Confirmation
- (ii) Caretaker Acting

Acting for Confirmation occurs where there are specific vacancies within the CRFM Secretariat and suitable internal candidates are given the opportunity to "act". The time limit for acting in such positions shall be for period up to six months and should not normally exceed one year. The allowance shall be payable upon the completion of the first 22 working days in action position.

Acting Appointments become effective from the date of the assumption of the higher responsibility. All acting appointments must be made in writing.

Caretaker Acting occurs when an employee is required to act temporarily in a higher grade for someone who is either on vacation leave, sick leave, on secondment or such like.

Caretaker Acting could be used to identify those employees with potential and exposed and develop them at a higher level.

It is recommended however, that employees below the mid-point of the Substantive Grade should not in normal circumstances, be required to act in a higher grade.

An employee should not be allowed to act higher than one Grade beyond the incumbent's present level.

The allowance should be payable upon completion of the first 22 working days in the acting position. Thereafter, each day of acting shall be calculated on a pro rata basis.

(c) Professional Staff

The Acting Premiums for Professional Staff, expressed as a percentage of basic pay, are as follows:

Substantive Grade	Acting Grade	Acting Premium (<% of Basic)	
		Acting for Confirmation	Caretaker Acting
8	9	8.0	5.0
9	10	8.0	5.0
10	11	8.0	5.0
11	12	8.0	5.0
12	13	8.0	5.0
13	14	8.0	5.0

(d) Support Staff

The Acting Premiums for Support Staff, expressed as a percentage of basic pay, are recommended as follows:

- (i) Grade 7 Employees Acting in Professional Grade 8.

A Grade 7 employee can only act in Grade 8.

The following acting premium, expressed as a percentage of the incumbent's current basic pay shall apply:

Substantive Grade	Acting Grade	Acting Premium (% of Basic)	
7	8	Acting for Confirmation	Caretaker A (tins)
		8%	5%

(ii) Grade 6 Supervisory Employees Acting Within own Classification, that is, Grade 7.

Substantive Grade	Acting Grade	Acting Premium (% of Basic)	
6	7	Acting for Confirmation	Caretaker Acting
		8%	5%

(iii) Support Staff Acting Within Supervisory Grade 6.

Acting Supervisory Premiums would apply to Grade 5.

Substantive Grade	Acting Grade	Acting Premium (% of Basic)	
5	6	Acting for Confirmation	Caretaker Acting
		8%	5%

3. Increments and Gratuities

Increments are awarded to staff members who are recruited within approved salary scales, and have performed satisfactory during the year under review.

All increments and gratuities (effective 1 April 1997) mature on 31 March, and payments are made on or before 30 June of each calendar year.

Staff recruited after April of any year will, at the end of that fiscal / programme year (31 March) be eligible for that portion of gratuity earned.

4. Overtime Compensation

Support staff may be paid for approved overtime or allowed compensatory time for overtime worked. Such overtime must have prior approval of the Executive Director.

5. Allowances

All staff are entitled to superannuation in the form of a gratuity, as per current CARICOM Secretariat guidelines.

6. Insurance and Other Benefits

(a) Health Insurance

Staff are covered by CARICOM's insurance plan. Details are available from the Corporate Services Manager

(b) Laissez Passer

Professional staff who travel frequently are issued the appropriate CARICOM travel documents

7. Auditing and Monitoring the Administration of the Compensation Programme

The CRFM Secretariat's Compensation Programme requires a high level of quality control. The System must be audited at Headquarters to compliance with its policies, procedures and rules.

In order to ensure compliance, the Corporate Services Department be responsible for audit reviews in the following areas in each Unit.

- Completeness and accuracy of Job and Position Descriptions.
- Adequacy / and use of performance standards for reviewing and rating employees performance.
- Proper classification and grading of Jobs and Positions.
- Pay policy lines that reflect the compensation philosophy and policies of CRFM Secretariat
- Relationship between pay adjustments and performance and performance level of pay.
- Provision of pay adjustments that reflect compensation policies and guidelines.
- Analysis of base pay, performance rating and pay adjustments for any kind of unapproved activity.

- Consistency of use of actual merit pay adjustments and funds budgeted for merit

The Corporate Services Department will carry out a variety of monitoring activities to report on the following and make recommendations for improving the Compensation Programme:

- The identification of individuals / Units not implementing the CRFM Secretariat's compensation programmes as designed, where there is no proper and consistent application of compensation and pay policies, and where the CRFM Secretariat's employees are not being fairly treated.

Notification of job activities and performance standards that are not accurately stated; performance appraisal schedules that are not being followed and Managers who fail to document support for actions they take that influence employee compensation opportunities.

Section 4.2 Finance

4.2.1 Assets

There are five types of assets:

1. Cash at Bank
2. Petty Cash
3. Employee / Consultant Advances
4. Prepaid Expenses
5. Capital Assets

4.2.2 Bank Accounts

The CRFM Secretariat has two Bank Accounts in each country where the CRFM Secretariat / Eastern Caribbean Office exist and one Bank Account in Suriname.

- one US dollar (Holding) account; (in Belize and St. Vincent and the Grenadines)
- one local currency (Operating) account.(in Belize and St. Vincent and the Grenadines)
- one Suriname currency account

Transfers from Member States or the CRFM Secretariat are made into the CRFM Secretariat's US dollar account in Belize City, Belize. Transfers from this account are made to the St. Vincent and the Grenadines, US dollar accounts.

The local currency (operating) accounts at each location are used to meet the CRFM Secretariat's financial obligations related to work programme implementation.

Member States contribution from Suriname is made into the CRFM Secretariat's Suriname Account in Suriname and transfer from this account is made into the CRFM Secretariat's US dollar Account in Belize.

1. Approval to Open Account

Changes to the CRFM Secretariat’s banking arrangements, including approval to open accounts, can only be made on the written approval of the Executive Director.

2. Signing Authorities

Two signing authorities are specified and exercised for the CRFM Secretariat’s bank accounts. Signing authorities are restricted, to the extent possible, to those with executive or administrative responsibilities. In instances when the signing authorities in place provide for two signatures and the established signing authorities include two of the following categories of staff - executive, and administrative - the authorities on any given financial instrument (e.g. cheque, bank transfer etc.) will be from two different categories of staff.

If situations occur where this is not possible due to absences of all of one or more categories of staff, then a representative of the missing category must “countersign” the payment document used to generate the banking instrument on return to the office. In addition, limits have been established for specific categories of expenditures (e.g. salary, travel, overpayment, etc.) by staff and approved by the Executive Director.

3. Positions with Signing Authority

There will be two signatories to each cheque - two primary or one primary and one secondary. At the CRFM Secretariat (Headquarters) and at the Eastern Caribbean Office, persons occupying the following posts will be named signatories to bank accounts:

Location / Country	Level	Authorized Staff
Belize	Primary	Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director, Corporate Services Manager
	Secondary	Senior Finance Officer
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	Primary	Executive Director, Programme Manager, Fisheries Management and Development
	Secondary	Programme Manager, Research and Resource Assessment

No employee will sign a banking instrument which results in the release of funds to him or herself. In extraordinary situations where this is impossible, the “countersign” verification procedure will apply (see Subsection 4.2.2.3, above).

Authorizations - Levels and Process

US\$1 - \$500	2 primary, 1 primary plus 1 secondary, or 2 secondary
US\$501 - \$3000	1 primary plus 1 secondary
Over US\$3000	2 of the named primary one of which must be the Executive Director

1. Minimization of Account Balances

Accounts balances are to be kept to the minimum required to ensure that work continues; however, caution will be exercised to ensure that balances are not so low that the CRFM Secretariat's work programme is impeded while accounts are replenished.

2. Maintaining Imprest Journals

- (i) A separate Imprest Journal must be maintained for each major bank account.
- (ii) All entries on the Imprest Journal must be entered chronologically and in sequence.
- (iii)
 - (a) Where cheques are cancelled prior to entry on the Imprest Journal, enter CANCELLED in the Payee column and enter a 'nil' amount in the amount column.
 - (b) Where cheques are cancelled subsequent to issuance to the creditor, these are termed VOID CHEQUES. Issue Stop Payment instructions to the bank, signed by the cheque signatories, giving details of cheque number, date, payee and amount.
 - (c) Reinstate the amount of the void cheque on the Imprest Journal by use of a journal voucher (JV) and indicate VOID on the Imprest Journal next to the relevant cheque particulars, giving the JV reference information.
 - (d) Imprest Journals must be updated daily. Individual receipts and expenditures are to be allocated to the relevant General Ledger Account and Subproject.
 - (e) The Bank Balance column must reflect all daily transactions.
 - (f) On the final day of the month ensure that all transactions for that month are entered on the Imprest Journal (inclusive of valid bank advices received during the month). A cut-off date should be established. Any cheques/receipts entered after that date should refer to the next month's transactions.
 - (g) The headings on the Imprest Journal should be as follows:

Column		Description
1.	Date	shows date of cheque
2.	Payee	to whom the cheque has been made payable particulars of the expense
3.	Description	amounts received
4.	Receipts	the total value of the cheque or bank advice
5.	Payments	the cash balance
6.	Balance	the number of the cheque issued
7.	Cheque No.	the project as per the chart of accounts to which
8.	Project No.	this expense is to be allocated
9.	General Ledger A / C	the allocation to the general ledger account as per the chart of accounts
10.	Comments	any notations to be made about the recipient or payment

3. Bank Reconciliation

Detailed Instructions to Bank Reconciliation Form

- (a) **Balance in Bank** - Enter the balance as per the bank statement as stated on the last day of the relevant month. Overdraft balances are to be put in brackets.
- (b) **Deposit in Transit** - Refers to deposits made in relevant month but not reflected in bank statement. Ensure that the duplicate of the deposit slip has been stamped in the relevant month. Insert the date the outstanding deposit was recorded on the bank statement
- (c) **Outstanding Cheques** - List and total all outstanding cheques. All cheques outstanding more than 6 months from cheque date, automatically become void and must be included in "Cheques Voided" and excluded from the list of outstanding cheques.
- (d) **Adjustments to be made by Bank** - Where the bank has made errors/omissions etc., these are reflected here and should be communicated to bank officials and followed up by letter.

- (e) Adjusted closing bank balance should be reconciled with the Adjusted Closing Cash Book balance.
- (f) **Opening Balance** - At the beginning of the new fiscal year, agree this balance to the closing balance on the financial statements of the previous year. Subsequently, agree to closing cash book balance on bank reconciliation statement for previous month.
- (g) **Receipts** - Enter the total receipts for the month. All receipts must be supported by an official receipt. Receipts should be issued in numerical sequence and the original of cancelled receipts should be filed.
 - (i) **Cheques Voided** - If a cheque has been voided a note should be made in the cash book and reference should be made to the stop payment instructions. In the event that supporting documents are re-routed for payment, the voucher must indicate that a cheque had been voided. Cross reference to Journal Voucher Number.
- (h) **Payments** - All cheques must be issued in numerical sequence, supported by an expense voucher and original documents. Correct accounting allocations should be made on the expense voucher prior to approval of the voucher. Bank charges and other amounts debited to the bank account should be entered into the Cash Book. Enter on the reconciliation form the total payments for the month.
- (i) Where the Cash book has not been closed off for a particular period and adjustments are required, then these should be made in the month's transactions. In the event, however, the Cash Book has been closed off for the month, adjustments should be entered in the following month's transactions and properly referenced.

4. **Receipt of Funds**

Preparation of Official Receipt

5. **Receipt of Cash**

1. All receipt of cash and cheques must be acknowledged by use of an Official Receipt. This receipt must be prepared on the actual date of receipt of funds or check notification.
2. Review bank credit advices received during transaction period for telegraphic transfers credited to the bank account.
3. The Official Receipt is the posting document to the Imprest Account Journal. The payer, nature of transaction, date, amount and account allocation being indicated on the receipts.

4. ALL MONIES RECEIVED MUST BE BANKED PROMPTLY (I.E NOT LATER THAN THE BUSINESS DAY FOLLOWING THE DATE OF RECEIPT) AND INTACT. CASH RECEIVED SHOULD NEVER BE USED FOR PETTY CASH PURPOSES, BUT DEPOSITED TO THE BANK.
5. All monies deposited must be evidenced by a deposit slip duplicate stamped by the recipient bank. The sequence number on the Official Receipt must be indicated on the duplicate deposit slip, to leave a satisfactory audit trail.
6. File official receipts with supporting documentation attached in numerical sequence by month.
7. Cancelled receipts must be filed sequentially along with valid receipts.

Local Goods and Services – General

All payments for goods and services with the exception of cash advances and petty cash payments must be supported by the following:

- (a) Relevant expense voucher approved by an authorised officer. The Officer approving payment and the payee must not be the same individuals.
- (b) Supplier's original documents.
- (c) An authorised purchase order.
- (d) Invoices should be:
 - (i) Agreed to the purchase order for description and prices.
 - (ii) Checked for mathematical accuracy.
 - (iii) Checked for goods and services received.

Direct Debit Transactions – Bank Charges / Bank Interest / Transfer Of Funds

1. Summarise bank charges, bank interest and bank transfers and record on the Imprest Journal for the relevant month.
2. Prepare a “nominal” expense voucher for these items and allocate on the Imprest Journal.

This would ensure that all expenditures are recorded in the Imprest Journal via an expense voucher.

The Official Receipt

The Official Receipt is a three part form used for acknowledging all funds received and reflects the accounting entries to be made.

The receipt is distributed as follows:

- **Part 1:** The original to be given to the payer
- **Part 2:** The CFMU copy which is submitted with the Batch Control form to the CFMU
- **Part 3:** The copy to be filed at the Assessment Unit with the supporting documents, i.e. credit advices; etc.

Official Receipt	
No.#	This form is sequentially prenumbered and indicates the Unit that is in receipt of the funds
Date: ___/___/___ mm dd yy	This indicates the date the funds are received by the Unit
Received from:	The name of the payor issuing the funds is entered i.e. the donor agency etc.
The sum of currency:	The amount of funds received is entered in words and figures
Payment of:	The currency in which the funds were received
Payment mode:	A brief narrative of the reason for payment of the funds
Received by:	The way in which funds were received. If by cheque, note the cheque number
Date deposited: ___/___/___ mm dd yy	Signed by the Administrative Officer and initialed by the Corporate Services Manager, Executive Director or Unit Leader
Bank Account #:	The date the funds are deposited in the bank. This should agree with the duplicate deposit slip.
Project amount DR:	The account number as designated by the bank.
	This reflects the respective bank account to which the funds should be debited. The total of debits must equal the total of credits.

4.2.3 Petty Cash

The Petty Cash Revolving Fund is maintained at BZ\$500 (US\$250) in Belizean dollars in Belize and EC\$1,000 (US\$372) in EC dollars in St. Vincent and the Grenadines. These funds are replenished whenever the balance on hand reaches approximately BZ\$100 or EC\$500.00 respectively.

Any single payment from the Petty Cash Fund should not exceed BZ\$150.00 or EC\$110.00.

The Petty Cash Vouchers must be supported by original bills and receipts as is appropriate and should be duly authorized by the Sr. Finance Officer, or in his / her absence, the Corporate Services Manager, or the Executive Director, prior to making payment in Belize and by the Programme Managers in St. Vincent and the Grenadines.

The official CRFM Secretariat Custodian for the Petty Cash Revolving Fund is the Administrative Officer / Accounting Assistant. However, the Senior Finance Officer has the final authority over payments from this fund. Regular spot checks should be conducted on this fund by the Senior Finance Officer.

Replenishment is conducted through the submission of a Petty Cash Journal which is supported by the Petty Cash Vouchers reflecting the signatures of both the recipient and the CRFM Secretariat custodian. A cheque is then issued on a CRFM Secretariat Expense Voucher for an amount equivalent to the total of the Petty Cash Journal.

4.2.4 Employee / Consultant Advances

1. Employee Advances

All employee advances are issued based on fully authorized travel requirements. All requests for travel advance should be submitted on an official "Travel Authority and Advance" request form. No advance will be issued unless approved by the Executive Director or in his absence, the Deputy Executive Director. This will be issued on an Expense Voucher and charged to the respective advance account in the General Ledger until the advance is liquidated.

Upon returning from a mission, the traveler is required to submit his travel voucher, which should fully liquidate his advance, within seven (7) working days after his return to post. All travel reimbursement vouchers should be supported by original receipts for all expenses except food. If the amount of actual disbursements does not fully retire the amount advanced, the traveler is required to pay the balance owing immediately, and an official receipt will be issued and used to record the payment in the General Ledgers. In the case where the expenses exceed the amount advanced, the CRFM Secretariat will issue a cheque in favour of the traveler for the amount in excess of the advanced figure.

2. Consultant Advances

The same regulations contained in 4.2.4.1 above apply to Consultants, with the exception that the advance is issued based on the contractual agreement, and any other contractual clauses within the agreement that may affect the advance being issued.

4.2.5 Prepaid Expenses

Rent and insurance are prepaid in accordance with the lease agreement and insurance policy.

4.2.6 Capital Assets

4.2.6.1 Acquisition of Assets

6.2.1.1

The CRFM Secretariat should maintain an Assets Register of property, including their serial numbers.

All Unit purchases and / or acquisition of goods with a price tag of, or in excess of EC\$200 (US\$75); Bz\$150 (US\$75) will be deemed a capital asset acquisition.

For such Unit purchases a "purchase requisition or purchase order form "must be prepared and submitted to the Executive Director, Programme Manager or Corporate Services Manager for approval to purchase.

All such purchases must be recorded in the CRFM Secretariat Assets Register. The information provided therein will be arranged as per the type of asset; date of acquisition/disposal; acquisition price; accumulated depreciation; location; source of asset (donation, purchase using donor funds, etc.) and disposal date. Bi-annual valuations will be done so as to establish the bases for appropriate insurance coverage of these assets.

Purchases of goods with a price tag of under EC\$200 or BZ\$150, while needing the approval of the Executive Director, are not designated capital assets. These are classified as consumables - "loose" tools, minor equipment, and materials needed in the implementation of the annual work plan. Purchase orders approved by the Programme Manager or the Executive Director are needed to effect such purchases.

Acquisition of capital assets will be in accordance with the approved Annual Work Plan and Budget.

4.2.6.2 Disposal of Assets

The disposal of any asset should be documented on a “Property Disposal Authorization” (PDA) form. This form should fully document the name, description, serial number, estimated value, reason for disposal, date of disposal, how disposal was conducted (destroyed / sold / discarded / etc.), and should include the signature of the Executive Director. The Executive Director has the final decision for the disposal of all assets.

If the asset is sold, the proceeds shall be credited to the general revenues of the CRFM Secretariat. The removal of the assets from the Assets Register will be conducted through the proper accounting procedures by the Corporate Services Manager.

4.2.6.3 Physical Inventories

Physical inventories shall be taken of supplies, equipment or other property of the CRFM Secretariat at such intervals deemed necessary to ensure adequate control over such property.

4.2.7 Advances to Countries

4.2.7.1 Administrative

- (i) It is imperative that the Programme Managers obtain a Government Disbursement Report from the Permanent Secretaries in each country on a three-monthly basis, and it is their responsibility to provide the Senior Finance Office with this report in order to update the records.
- (ii) Since all the countries use one bank account for all of CRFM Secretariat activities, the Government Disbursement Report should be accompanied by a copy of the reconciled cash book which should tally with the Funds on Hand figures being reported in the Government Disbursement Report.
- (iii) Initial advances will be given for a six month period. Thereafter, advances will be issued on a quarterly basis, depending on the outstanding advance balance being shown on the Government Disbursement Report.

4.2.8 Financial

- (i) With the objective of tracking advances that have been issued to determine the age of each, an advance numbering system has been set up as follows:

100	313	6	001

The corresponding country code for each country will be assigned so as to identify which country received the advance. Likewise, the activity number will be assigned to identify the specific receiving activity. The last digit of the current programme year will be assigned in order to separate the advances so as to more easily determine the age of the advance. For each activity, a sequential number will be assigned so as to determine how many advances have been granted to that activity, and in order to monitor the balance of the budget for each programme year.

- (ii) An accountability date will be set up so as to determine by what time a certain advance should have been fully disbursed. This date will be one quarter following the end of the period for which the advance was requested. If a balance still exists at that date, this amount will be deducted from the next advance amount being requested.
- (iii) A "Country Advance Control Ledger" is to be used to keep track of the advances and retirements.
- (iv) For each advance request, a copy of the reconciled cash book should be submitted which should reconcile with the Funds on Hand Balance being shown on the Government Disbursement Report. This is necessary for internal control purposes in determining how much additional advance should be issued, and will also serve as proof that what is being reported is actually what exists in the bank.
- (v) If a Government Disbursement Report is not received within the prescribed period, it is the responsibility of the Corporate Services Manager, upon the advice of the Sr. Finance Officer, to notify the Programme Managers requesting an update as soon as possible.
- (vi) Should discrepancies arise in determining the advance balance of any sub project, the responsible officers will be advised of this through the Corporate Services Manager.
- (vii) It is the responsibility of the Sr. Finance Officer to submit an Advance Aging Report on a three-monthly basis and present it to the Programme Manager through the Corporate Services Manager, in order to keep everyone updated on the status of advances within each subproject activity. Along with this report, notices will be forwarded to specific sub projects with delinquent advances.

4.2.9 Monitoring

At three monthly intervals, all Programme Managers submit their quarterly work plans and budgets to the Executive Director for approval. All acquisition of capital assets and services (consultancies) in excess of US\$500 (EC\$1,350, Bz\$1,000) must be recorded in the request.

Approval of the three monthly work plan and budget will result in monthly releases to implement same by the Executive Director.

The approved Annual Work Plan and Budget is the basis of all actions. Notwithstanding its approval by the Forum the acquisition of goods and services is not automatic.

4.2.10 Requisitions

With the exception of Petty Cash purchases, the purchase of any item/service should be documented through the use of a Purchase/Service Requisition Form. This form serves as the authority under which the Purchase Order is prepared. All Requisitions should be supported by an estimate or documentation from competitive bidders - prepared by the Administrative Officer / Accounting Assistant.

In cases where the services or items are being single sourced, this should be so indicated on the form and the cost appropriately entered.

All Requisitions should provide a full description of the items or services being purchased, suggested source of supply, name of the person submitting the request, date by when the goods are required, and quantity. In addition, it should indicate the accounting codes that will be charged for the purchases. These codes will be provided by the Senior Finance Officer.

All Purchase / Service Requisition forms will be prepared and signed by any of the Administrative Officers or Senior Finance Officer, who will serve as Purchasing Officers. Approval on this form will be based upon the signature of any one of the following persons: Executive Director, Deputy Executive Director and Corporate Services Manager.

4.2.11 Purchase Orders

Once the Purchase / Service Requisition form has been duly authorized, a Purchase Order form will be prepared by any of the Administrative Officers and signed by the Executive Director or Programme Manager for presentation to the supplier. This document represents the official agreement between CRFM Secretariat and the supplier to provide a service or goods, and for the CRFM Secretariat to provide payment upon satisfactory receipt and acceptance of said goods / services.

4.2.12 Processing Payments

All payments other than Petty Cash payments, must be done through an expense voucher with proper authorization by the Corporate Services Manager and the Executive Director.

The Expense Voucher forms the basis upon which cheques are prepared and signed. In this context, the Expense Voucher should be properly supported with original invoices or request for

payments, copy of Purchase Order and Requisition, or a copy of the payment clause from contracts.

All Expense Vouchers should indicate the appropriate G/L and sub project numbers per the approved CRFM Secretariat Chart of Accounts and approved Annual Work Plan and Budget.

4.2.13 Processing Accounts Payable

Payment of Accounts Payables is done according to the terms of payment on the vendor's statement.

Payment must be done through an Expense voucher as indicated in Subsection 4.2.1.2 above.

In the event that an original invoice cannot be obtained, the Administrative Officer must certify that the copy being used is a true copy of the original invoice and that payment has not yet been made.

4.2.14 Distribution of Costs

All costs should be allocated to the appropriate sub projects involved in any expenditure, according to the official Chart of Accounts – See Appendix 5.5 - 1

4.2.15 Payroll Calculations, Recording and Reconciliation

The official Leave Year (LY) for CRFM Secretariat is from April 1 of the current year to March 31 of the following year. The Leave Year is comprised of 24 pay periods each running from the 1st to the 15th, and the 16th to the 31st of each month. Pay days are on the 10th and 25th of each month. If any of these pay days should fall on a weekend or holiday, the pay day shall then become the preceding work day to that date. The Eastern Caribbean Office operates under the same Leave Year with the exception that salary payments are made once monthly on the 25th of each month.

A Statement of Earnings and Leave (SEL) which will provide a record of accumulated earnings, and deductions should accompany each pay cheque. The original SEL will be given to the staff member and a master copy will be kept on file in the Executive director's office.

Payroll calculations will be in accordance with the contract agreement for all staff except where the laws of the land should indicate differently.

4.2.16 Bank Reconciliation

Bank reconciliations are completed on a monthly basis and the reconciliation are signed off by the Corporate services Manager. Copies of the bank reconciliation together with copies of the bank statement and cancelled cheques completed within the Eastern Caribbean Office are forwarded to the Head Office, Belize by the end of each month. All reconciliations, bank statements and cancelled cheques are maintained at the Head Office, Belize to facilitate audit purposes. All original documentation is maintained on file at the Head office, Belize

4.2.17 Budget

The budget is presented in the Annual Work Plan.

Planning Cycle

The official Programme Year of CRFM Secretariat consists of a period of twelve months commencing on April 1 to March 31.

Budget Preparation

Each Programme Manager is responsible for the preparation of his/her individual budget under their respective WBSs.

This first draft of the budget should be presented at the Executive Committee of the Forum meeting which is held annually every December.

BUDGET MONITORING AND CONTROL

All expenditure and program activities are conducted according to the approved budget and work plan. This is monitored by the respective Programme Managers, Deputy Executive Director, Senior Finance Officer, and Executive Director.

Monitoring of expenditure is also conducted through the information provided on Purchase / Service Requisition Form.

BUDGET ADJUSTMENTS

Budgets are present at Annual Work Plan and Budget meetings and suggestions and adjustments are presented to the presenter. The presenter then modifies his Budget and Annual Work Plan and re-presents it to the Deputy Executive Director. The Deputy Executive Director reviews and makes recommendations to the Executive Director.

The Executive Director then reviews, makes recommendations, and approves this re-drafted Annual Work Plan and Budget for presentation to the Executive Committee of the Forum. The Executive Committee of the Forum then make recommendations and changes for a final presentation to the Forum, which in turn approve as is or make further adjustments to he budget and work plan.

BUDGET APPROVAL

Final approval of the Annual Work Plan and Budget lies with the Ministerial Council.

Regular Reports

The cut-off date for monthly reporting is the 25th of each month.

The Quarterly Progress Reports and the Annual Program Report, all of which have significant financial reporting requirements, are described in Subsection 4.2.16 above.

FUNDING

The CRFM Secretariat receives funding from CARICOM Member States contributions and Donor funded contribution.

MONITORING

Internal oversight and monitoring is done by the CARICOM Secretariat

AUDIT

An annual audit is conducted each year by external auditors appointed by the Forum.

4.2.18 Year End Closing

Year end closing is on the 31st of March (25th of March in the Eastern Caribbean Office).

Section 4.3 Information Technology / Computer Use Policy

4.3.1. Introduction

This policy covers the use of CRFM Secretariat computers, computer facilities and the CRFM email and internet database by all CRFM employees.

All users are required to utilize CRFM computing facilities in an effective, efficient, ethical and lawful manner. The Executive Director has ultimate approval for all CRFM computing activities and permission must be obtained from the Executive Director for all usage not covered by this policy. The Executive Director may delegate this authority to a Systems Administrator. In certain cases the Executive Director through the Systems Administrator reserves the right to intercept individual user files and communications and if deemed necessary, provide any evidence of misuse to the relevant authorities.

4.3.2 Requirements for the Use of CRFM Computing Facilities

1. Users must comply with all applicable local laws and regulations
2. The email and internet system is a business tool to be used primarily for business purposes and not for pleasure.
3. Users must be truthful and accurate in personal and computer identification.
4. Employees who need to access personal email from the office may use web mail such as hotmail.
5. Office data should be stored in the acceptable and cleared location on the network. This is necessary in order to ensure that data back-up is carried out as scheduled.

4.3.3. Routine Logging and Monitoring

Certain central service and network activities from workstations connected to the network may be routinely logged and monitored. These activities include:

1. use of passwords and accounts accessed;
2. time and duration of network activity;

3. access to Web pages;
4. access to network software;
5. volume of data storage and transfers

4.3.4. Right to Examine Computers and Equipment

1. CRFM-owned computers and equipment may be examined to detect illegal software and or files.
2. Unauthorized changing of system security settings to allow online games or any other online system to run is not permitted. In a case where this becomes necessary for a business purpose, the Executive Director or Systems Administrator must be consulted.

4.3.5. Unauthorized use of CRFM Computing Facilities

1. CRFM's computing facilities may not be used to create, access, display, store or transfer material which would be objectionable by reasonable standards or contravenes any applicable local or overseas laws.
2. The transmission of confidential information to non-CRFM members is forbidden.
3. CRFM's computing facilities may not be used to gain unauthorized access to resources of this or other institutions, organizations, or individuals.
4. The unauthorized use of the CRFM logo is prohibited.
5. Passwords and logins for programmes must not be provided to visitors at your desk or otherwise.
6. Use of false or misleading information for the purpose of obtaining access to unauthorized resources is prohibited.
7. Accessing, altering, copying, moving, or removing information, proprietary software or other files (including programs, libraries, data and electronic mail) from any network system or files of other users without prior authorization is prohibited. The opening of email attachments from unknown sources and the down loading and sending of games, movies, screen savers and executable files from the Internet is prohibited.
8. CRFM's computing facilities may not be used for the purpose of making unauthorized copies of copyrighted materials. Users should assume all software, graphic images, music, and the like are copyrighted. Copying or downloading copyrighted materials

without the authorization of the copyright owner is against the law, and may result in civil and criminal penalties, including fines and imprisonment.

9. The addition, alteration and removal of information from the CRFM website without appropriate authorization is forbidden. The Heads of Units/ Divisions may delegate the authority to alter any web page to an appropriate person. The Executive Director or Systems Administrator may delegate authority to alter the central CRFM website.

4.3.6. Damage or impairment of CRFM resources

1. The deliberate transmission of material that may contain a virus or other harmful or disruptive component is prohibited. This includes intentionally, recklessly or negligently damaging any system (e.g., by the introduction of any so-called "virus", "worm", or "trojan-horse" programme).
2. Users must not open attachments to emails that they have not specifically requested from an unknown contact.

4.3.7. Unauthorized commercial activities

The following activities constitute a breach of acceptable computing practices at CRFM:

1. Using CRFM's resources for one's own commercial gain, or for other commercial purposes not officially approved by the CRFM Management, including web advertisements;
2. Using CRFM's resources to operate or support a non-CRFM related business;
3. The CRFM email system must not be used to send unsolicited emails to members of an email group unless the message relates to an approved CRFM activity. This includes, but is not limited to, notification of approved CRFM events; dissemination of information relating to the CRFM's activities and CRFM approved news releases.
4. Advertising messages must not be sent through the CRFM email system or placed on a CRFM website with the following exceptions:
 - (i) Events conducted by professional associations with which the CRFM has a reciprocal agreement.
 - (ii) Emails advertising job vacancies can only be sent by the CRFM Secretariat, Local fisheries organizations or other authorized personnel / bodies.
 - (iii) Messages approved by the Executive Director, the Forum or the CRFM Ministerial Council

4.3.8. Discrimination and Harassment: Electronic Mail

1. The CRFM email system must not be used to transmit messages which contain, or may be considered to contain obscene, profane, indecent, violent, threatening, discriminatory or defamatory material.
2. The CRFM's computing facilities may not be used in a manner that will, or may be likely to, harass abuse, defame, discriminate, or otherwise offend another person.
3. The CRFM email system must not be used to threaten or harass anyone.
4. The viewing or transmitting of pornographic material from the internet is expressly forbidden.
5. The use of discourteous or abusive or offensive language is prohibited.

4.3.9. Compliance with the Computer Policy

1. CRFM will not tolerate the use of the email or internet for purposes other than as approved by CRFM. The use of the computer system which is contrary to the policy may result in the following:
 - (i) Counseling or Disciplinary Action
 - (ii) Termination of employment
2. If any person at CRFM becomes aware of the misuse of the computer system, that person should immediately report it to the Executive Director for investigation. If anyone is offended, humiliated, intimidated or embarrassed by the use of an email or internet by other employees, that person should also report it to the Chairperson of the Board of Directors.
3. CRFM is committed to the terms of this policy and will thoroughly investigate and deal with all incidents of breach of this policy.
4. Failure to comply with this policy may result in the CRFM initiating Disciplinary Procedures against the individual(s) concerned.