

STRATEGY STATEMENT

2017 - 2020



An Binse um Achomhairc i dtaobh Cosaint Idirnáisiúnta
The International Protection Appeals Tribunal

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the Strategy Statement of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (hereinafter referred to as 'the Tribunal'). The Strategy outlines how the Tribunal will perform its functions efficiently and how it will dispose of its business as expeditiously, as may be consistent with fairness and natural justice.

Following the introduction of a 'single procedure' for the determination of applications for international protection, with the commencement of the International Protection Act 2015 on the 31st of December 2016, the administration and business in connection with the performance of any functions of the Refugee Appeals Tribunal under the Refugee Act 1996, the European Communities (Eligibility for Protection) Regulations 2006, the European Union (Subsidiary Protection) Regulations 2013 and the European Union (Dublin System) Regulations 2014, were transferred to the Tribunal.

With the majority of the case-load pending before the Tribunal on the date of the commencement of the new legislation having to be transferred to the International Protection Officer for a recommendation on the subsidiary protection and humanitarian leave to remain elements of the application for international protection, the Tribunal has had the unique opportunity to review its systems and procedures for the efficient and fair administration of appeals under the new legislation.

The Tribunal carries out its work in an ever-changing environment and is affected by developments at national, EU and international level, such as the migration crisis, developing EU legislation and case-law as well as the implementation of the 'single procedure' in Ireland. The Tribunal's priorities for 2017 – 2020 are to:

- render high quality decisions as expeditiously as may be consistent with fairness and natural justice
- foster an adaptive and flexible organisation that effectively manages its intake and workload
- continue to build an organisation that values its staff, its members and its customers as well as the stakeholders with whom it cooperates while promoting management excellence

This Statement will be kept under constant review to ensure that it reflects current priorities and remains adaptable to developments in the area of international protection at national, EU and international level.

I look forward to working with colleagues and stakeholders in the period ahead.

Hilkeka Becker
Chairperson (Interim)
July 2017

1. Strategy in Context

The most substantial reform of the international protection process in the State in nearly two decades came into effect on the 31st of December 2016 with the commencement by the then Tánaiste and Minister for Justice and Equality of the main provisions in the International Protection Act 2015.

This is the first strategy statement of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal (hereinafter referred to as ‘the Tribunal’), which was established on the commencement of the International Protection Act 2015 on the 31st of December 2016. On that date, the functions of the former Refugee Appeals Tribunal transferred to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal.

The Tribunal is funded by monies voted through the Dáil through the vote of the Minister for Justice and Equality. The Tribunal falls under the Department’s Vote (Vote 24) and the Secretary General of the Department is the Accounting Officer for the Tribunal. Accordingly, all costs including staff salaries, fees payable to members of the Tribunal, legal fees and all accommodation/utilities and other running and maintenance costs are approved and funded by the Department through the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service. (INIS).

This Strategy Statement sets out the context of the work of the Tribunal as well as its objectives and performance indicators for the conduct of its business, together with the strategies to achieve them.

The Chairperson and Registrar acknowledge that the Tribunal’s objectives will only be achieved with the same level of dedication and commitment that staff and members gave to their respective roles in the former Refugee Appeals Tribunal and if adequate resources are available to the Tribunal to meet its targets.

[1.1] Applications for International Protection in Ireland

Applications for Refugee Status in Ireland were steadily declining since their peak of over 11,000 in 2002. However, as a result of the migration crisis in 2015, applications for international protection in Ireland rose from 1,448 in 2014 to 3,276 in 2015. While the number of applications fell back to 2,244 in 2016, they remained significantly higher than in 2014 and in light of ongoing large-scale movements into the EU across the Mediterranean Sea and via other migration routes, it is expected that there will not be a significant decrease in applications in the period covered by this Statement.

Moreover, at the end of 2016, over 1,700 applications against a recommendation from the Refugee Applications Commissioner that refugee status be refused, which were pending before the Tribunal at the time of the commencement of the new legislation had to be transferred to an International Protection Officer for the consideration of the applicants' possible entitlement to subsidiary protection and the consideration of the granting of permission to remain. It is expected that a significant proportion of those cases will be returned to the Tribunal following the submission of appeals under Section 40 of the International Protection Act 2015. Additionally, there were 1,550 asylum cases and over 400 Subsidiary Protection cases pending in the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner at the end of 2016, which in addition to any new applications submitted in 2017, will have to be decided and, depending on the outcome, may be appealed to the Tribunal.

It is therefore likely that the caseload of the Tribunal will rise significantly over the coming period and it is imperative that the Tribunal is equipped, both with regard to staffing numbers and the availability of Tribunal Members who are trained and experienced in the efficient delivery of high quality determinations of international protection appeals.

[1.2] **The 'Single Procedure'**

The 2015 Act provides for applications for international protection (refugee status and subsidiary protection) as well as permission to remain cases to be processed as part of a 'single procedure'. This compares to the previous multi-layered process, which involved multiple bodies and procedures and was identified in the 'Report of the Working Group on the Protection Process including Direct Provision and Supports for Asylum Seekers' (June 2015) as a key cause of long delays in the system.

The new 'single procedure', which brings Ireland in line with protection determination procedures in all other EU Member States, will result in the determination of status for applicants at a much earlier stage than previously, resulting in shorter stays in the direct provision system for individual applicants and consequential financial savings for the State. The 2015 Act also creates new governance arrangements for the protection system. All applications for international protection (and permission to remain matters) are now being examined by International Protection Officers who shall be independent in the performance of their functions and will make a recommendation to the Minister for Justice and Equality whether to:

- give the applicant a refugee declaration
- not give the applicant a refugee declaration but give the applicant a subsidiary protection declaration; or
- give neither a refugee declaration nor a subsidiary protection declaration to the applicant.

The latter two recommendations are appealable to the Tribunal, which will either set aside or affirm the recommendation in a determination that is, save for the exceptional circumstances listed in section 47(3) of the 2015 Act, binding on the Minister for Justice and Equality but may be subject to judicial review.

Moreover, the 2015 Act extended the remit of the Tribunal to deal with two new types of appeals:

- Appeals against a recommendation by an International Protection Officer that an application be deemed inadmissible
- Appeals against a recommendation by an International Protection Officer that the Minister for Justice and Equality refuse to give his or her consent to the making of a subsequent application for international protection.

The provision of additional resources and high quality training to support the work of the International Protection Officers is expected to have a significant impact on the quality and rate of decision making at first instance. This will impact on the number of cases which will be appealed to the Tribunal, with corresponding resource implications for the Tribunal, which are expected to evolve in the period covered by this Strategy Statement.

[1.3] Other Relevant Legislative Changes

The most significant legislative change affecting the work of the Tribunal was the commencement of the International Protection Act 2015 on the 31st of December 2016. The implementation of the legislation is ongoing and many cases will continue to fall under the transitional provisions contained in the legislation, requiring particularly anxious scrutiny in ensuring the correct application of the relevant provisions in each case before the Tribunal.

Moreover, it is expected that the European Union (Dublin System) Regulations 2014 will be amended in order to facilitate the ongoing utilisation of the Dublin system.

Since the 14th of October 2014, the Freedom of Information Act 2014 applies to the Tribunal. The Act requires bodies covered by the legislation to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis outside of freedom of information requests, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. The Tribunal is committed to ensuring full compliance with the Act.

Furthermore, the Tribunal is in the process of ensuring that it is fully compliant with the General Data Protection Regulation, which will apply from the 25th of May 2018.

2. Introduction to the Tribunal

- [2.1] The International Protection Appeals Tribunal was established in accordance with section 61 of the International Protection Act 2015 (hereinafter referred to as 'the Act'). The Act was commenced on the 31st of December 2016, at which time the functions of the former Refugee Appeals Tribunal transferred to the International Protection Appeals Tribunal.

The Tribunal is a statutorily independent body and exercises a quasi-judicial function under the International Protection Act 2015. The Tribunal decides appeals of those persons in respect of whom an international protection officer has recommended that they should not be given a refugee declaration and should be given a subsidiary protection declaration and of persons in respect of whom an international protection officer has recommended that they should be given neither a refugee declaration nor a subsidiary protection declaration. The Tribunal also determines appeals under the Dublin System Regulations, as well as appeals against recommendations that an application be deemed inadmissible and appeals against recommendations that the making of a subsequent application not be permitted. The Tribunal's predecessor was recognised by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) as a 'court or tribunal' for the purpose of Article 267 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

The Tribunal consists of a Chairperson, a Registrar, not more than 2 Deputy Chairpersons, and such number of ordinary Members appointed in a whole time or part-time capacity, as the Minister for Justice and Equality, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, considers necessary for the expeditious performance of the functions of the Tribunal. The Chairperson is tasked with ensuring that the functions of the Tribunal are performed efficiently and that the business assigned to each Member is disposed of as expeditiously as may be consistent with fairness and natural justice. The Registrar, in consultation with the Chairperson, is tasked to manage and control the staff and administration of the Tribunal, and to perform such other functions as may be conferred on him or her by the Chairperson.

The Registrar also has responsibility for assigning the appeals to be determined to Members of the Tribunal, having regard to the need to ensure the efficient management of the work of, and the expeditious performance of its functions by, the Tribunal, consistent with fairness and natural justice, and having regard to any Guidelines issued by the Chairperson.

Administrative staff are assigned to the Tribunal from the Department of Justice and Equality.

In accordance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, the Department of Justice and Equality is required to have a written oversight agreement with the Tribunal, which clearly defines the terms of the Tribunal's relationship with the Minister/Department. The Oversight Agreement reflects, inter alia, details of the Performance Delivery Agreement (PDA) between the Department/Minister and the Tribunal.

The PDA acts as a performance contract between the Department and the Tribunal and formalises the agreed level of performance/service and the resources to be provided by the Department to enable the delivery of such. Providing improved efficiency and effectiveness in the delivery of public services is the primary intention of the PDA. The Code indicates that Department's Statement of Strategy is to be the anchor document to the content and objectives of the Performance Delivery Agreement and that should take account of the Tribunal's legal framework.

3. Mandate

- [3.1] The Mandate of the Tribunal is to determine appeals from persons in respect of whom an International Protection Officer has recommended that their application for either form of international protection be refused at first instance. The Tribunal may affirm the recommendation at first instance or set aside the recommendation and recommend to the Minister for Justice and Equality that refugee status or, as the case may be, subsidiary protection status, be granted.
- [3.2] In accordance with section 2 of the Act, ‘refugee’ means *“a person, other than a person to whom section 10 applies,¹ who, owing to a well-founded fear of being persecuted for reasons of race, religion, nationality, political opinion or membership of a particular social group, is outside his or her country of nationality and is unable or, owing to such fear, is unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country, or a stateless person, who, being outside of the country of former habitual residence for the same reasons as mentioned above, is unable or, owing to such fear, unwilling to return to it”*.
- [3.3] A ‘person eligible for subsidiary protection’ means *“a third country national or a stateless person who does not qualify as a refugee but in respect of whom substantial grounds have been shown for believing that the person concerned, if returned to his or her country of origin, or in the case of a stateless person, to his or her country of former habitual residence, would face a real risk of suffering serious harm as defined in Article 15 [of Directive 2004/83/EC]², and to whom Article 17(1) and (2) do not apply, and is unable, or, owing to such risk, unwilling to avail himself or herself of the protection of that country”*.
- [3.4] With the commencement of the International Protection Act 2015 on the 31st of December 2016, the Tribunal’s remit was expanded to determine also appeals against an International Protection Officer’s recommendation to deem an application for international protection inadmissible pursuant to section 21(2) of the Act as well as appeals against an International Protection Officer’s recommendation that a subsequent application for international protection not be allowed pursuant to section 22(5) of the Act.

¹ Section 10 of the International Protection Act 2015 sets out the circumstances in which a person is excluded from being a refugee. A person is excluded if he or she is receiving protection from organs or agencies of the United Nations or from another country. A person is also excluded where there are serious reasons for considering that he or she has committed a serious crime or is guilty of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

² Council Directive 2004/83/EC of 29 April 2004 on minimum standards for the qualification and status of third country nationals or stateless persons as refugees or as persons who otherwise need international protection and the content of the protection granted (the ‘Qualification Directive’).

- [3.5] The Tribunal is also tasked with determining appeals under the Dublin procedure, which determines the appropriate European country to determine an asylum application.

4. Mission Statement

[4.1] The Mission Statement of the International Protection Appeals Tribunal in accordance with the International Protection Act 2015 and other relevant national, European and international law is:

- (i) To determine appeals from persons in respect of whom an international protection officer has recommended that they should not be given a refugee declaration and should be given a subsidiary protection declaration and of persons in respect of whom an international protection officer has recommended that they should be given neither a refugee declaration nor a subsidiary protection declaration. The Tribunal also determines appeals under the Dublin System Regulations, as well as appeals against recommendations that an application be deemed inadmissible and appeals against recommendations that the making of a subsequent application not be permitted;
- (ii) To determine appeals against an International Protection Officer's recommendation to deem an application for international protection inadmissible pursuant to section 21(2) of the Act as well as appeals against an International Protection Officer's recommendation that a subsequent application for international protection not be allowed pursuant to section 22(5) of the Act; and
- (iii) To determine appeals under the Dublin procedure, which determines the appropriate European country to determine an asylum application;

and in so doing, to provide a high quality service through the implementation of policies and procedures which are fair and open, treating all applicants and stakeholders with courtesy and sensitivity.

[4.2] The Tribunal will strive to determine all appeals:

- in accordance with the law;
- in accordance with fairness and natural justice;
- with respect for the dignity of applicants;
- efficiently;
- with the highest standard of professional competence;
- in a spirit of openness and transparency in how the appeals process is managed.

5. Values and Principles underpinning the operation of the Tribunal

The Tribunal is committed to carrying out its duties in accordance with the following key values: -

- 1. Independence with Accountability**
- 2. Commitment to Excellence and value for money**
- 3. Respect**
- 4. Commitment to Staff and Tribunal Members**

[5.1] Independence with Accountability

The International Protection Appeals Tribunal is statutorily independent in performance of its functions and is committed to maintain such independence in the delivery of its quasi-judicial functions. Its predecessor, the Refugee Appeals Tribunal, was recognised by the Court of Justice of the European Union (CJEU) as a ‘court or tribunal’ in line with Article 267 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union (TFEU).

Accountability in our work will be ensured through reports to the Minister for Justice and Equality in relation to any function that the Chairperson performs under the International Protection Act 2015, if requested to do so by the Minister or if the Chairperson considers it appropriate to do so. Moreover, an annual report to the Minister will be made by the Chairperson no later than 3 months after the end of each year, which the Minister shall cause to be laid before the Houses of the Oireachtas not more than 30 days after he or she receives it.

[5.2] Commitment to Excellence and value for money

The International Protection Appeals Tribunal is committed to:

- applying the highest professional, fair and equitable standards in delivering its services;
- the operation of fair procedures, striving for consistency in decision making;

- issuing determinations of appeals as expeditiously as possible as may be consistent with fairness and natural justice.
- ensuring that best possible value-for-money is obtained by optimising the best use of available resources without compromising quality.
- utilising technology to improve services, performance and the working environment for staff and stakeholders.

[5.3] Respect

The International Protection Appeals Tribunal will afford courtesy and respect to all applicants and other stakeholders, including appreciation of cultural and linguistic differences.

To make our services and information accessible to people with disabilities in line with the requirements of national disability legislation.

To make provisions for the child-sensitive administration of appeals from minor applicants in line with Ireland's obligations under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the provisions contained in Article 17 of Council Directive 2005/85/EC on minimum standards on procedures in Member States for granting and withdrawing refugee status, in particular the best interest of the child as a primary consideration.

[5.4] Commitment to Staff and Tribunal Members

The Tribunal is committed to

- fostering an environment in which all staff can apply, and further develop, their skills to work effectively, developing their potential to the benefit of the Tribunal, its stakeholders and the Department and the wider Public Service;
- encouraging a culture of communication, participation, openness and mutual respect within the Tribunal and vis-à-vis its stakeholders, the Department and the wider Public Service; accountability in our work; and
- the provision of regular training, peer reviews and other professional development supports to Tribunal Members in order to ensure their efficient and timely delivery of high quality determinations.

6. Implementation and Review of Strategy Statement

- [6.1] This Strategic plan will guide the Tribunal in drafting an Annual Business Plan. The Annual Business Plan will detail how each Unit within the Tribunal will work towards achieving the goals and objectives set out in this Strategy Statement. The Annual Business Plan will also form the basis for defining the role profiles of staff in the Performance Management Development System.
- [6.2] The Tribunal's desire to deliver a quality customer service is set out in our revised Customer Service Action Plan.
- [6.3] The Annual Report of the Tribunal will report against key performance indicators that will be included in the business plans of each business unit.
- [6.4] The Strategy Statement is for a period of three years, but will be reviewed annually as part of the drafting of the Annual Business Plan, to ensure that it remains relevant in relation to ongoing policy developments.

7. Critical Success Factors underpinning the Strategy Statement

[7.1] The achievement of our goals and objectives are conditional upon a number of factors, including: -

- the availability of an appropriate level of suitably qualified and experienced administrative staff;
- qualified, experienced and available Tribunal Members to consider and decide cases;
- financial resources;
- resources to meet training needs and to participate at EU and International meetings;
- Continual enhancement of IT systems to meet ongoing needs and challenges;
- the scheduling of a sufficient number of hearings which involves a complex arrangement to ensure the presence of Members, Presenting Officers, the Applicant, legal representatives and interpreters;
- the availability of the applicant and his/her legal representative for oral hearing;
- the availability of Presenting Officers from the Department of Justice and Equality's International Protection Office whose recommendations at first instance are being appealed to the Tribunal;
- the availability of interpreters to interpret at oral hearings.

[7.2] Some of these factors are external to the Tribunal in the sense that the Tribunal has little control in relation to them. While the Tribunal has limited ability to control such external factors, it will seek to minimise the extent to which such external factors can impact negatively on the work of the Tribunal.

8. High Level Goals

This Strategy Statement outlines a number of High Level Goals which will guide the work of the Tribunal over the next three years. It identifies the Strategic Objectives, which are the necessary components of the High Level Goals. It also identifies the strategic actions, which will be undertaken to achieve the objectives and goals. The following five High Level Goals have been identified as the key goals that the Tribunal will focus on in the three-year period from 2017 to 2020.

High Level Goal 1:

To administer, consider and decide appeals to the highest professional standards.

High Level Goal 2:

Manage the transition to the new legislative basis and structures of the Tribunal following commencement of the International Protection Act 2015

High Level Goal 3:

To achieve and maintain quality standards through the provision of training and professional development supports to Tribunal Members

High Level Goal 4:

To efficiently and actively manage cases in the Superior Courts to which the Tribunal is a party and to provide instructions and/or observations where appropriate

High Level Goal 5

Provide quality service to the highest professional standards with a particular focus on achieving value for money in the deployment of the Tribunal's physical and human resources

High Level Goal 1:

To administer, consider and decide appeals to the highest professional standards.

Strategic Objectives to support goal

1. Ensure the consistent application of the law and Tribunal guidelines in all appeal decisions.
2. Determine cases in a timely and efficient manner while ensuring quality, fairness and impartiality.
3. Monitor the standard of Tribunal Members' Decisions.

Strategic Actions to achieve objectives

- Network with equivalent organisations and expert bodies in other jurisdictions and provide reports to Members and staff of relevant developments in respect of international protection issues.
- Continue engagement in consultations with user groups and stakeholders.
- Develop, implement and monitor a quality assurance system and periodically assess the quality of Member's Decisions.
- Develop policies and procedures to standardise consideration of appeals and decision making, thereby ensuring that all applicants are dealt with fair, open and impartial procedures.

High Level Goal 2:

Manage the transition to the new legislative basis and structures of the Tribunal following commencement of the International Protection Act 2015

Strategic Objectives to support goal

1. Ensure that all processes and procedures are in place to facilitate an efficient and legally sound transition to the new legal requirements.
2. Liaise with the Irish Naturalisation and Immigration Service (INIS) and relevant parties regarding proposed and planned legislative and administrative changes.

Strategic Actions to achieve objectives

- Assist the Department in drafting required revised Regulations and associated information and guidance.
- Review all Guidelines issued by the Chairperson to ensure that they meet new legislative requirements and draft new Guidelines as necessary.
- Assist the Department in the recruitment and training processes for Members of the Tribunal.
- Review and update all Tribunal documentation, procedures and IT requirements to comply with the provisions of legislation.
- Provide comprehensive training programme for the Tribunal administrative staff on the legislative and administrative changes.
- Maintain co-operation and liaison with relevant agencies and stakeholders regarding the new legislative framework.
- Communicate with relevant stakeholders to inform them of any relevant developments or changes in procedures.

High Level Goal 3:

To achieve and maintain quality standards through the provision of training and professional development supports to Tribunal Members

Strategic Objectives

1. Provide appropriate training and mentoring to Members of the Tribunal to equip them with the knowledge and skill to deliver high quality, fair, consistent and legally robust Decisions.
2. Provide appropriate training to the administrative staff of the Tribunal to support the Tribunal in delivering its objectives in the performance of its statutory functions
3. Enhance Members' knowledge of developments in law at national and European level.
4. Contribute to development of Members' expertise by Tribunal participation in activities of relevant bodies at European and International level.
5. Ensure and maintain high quality and consistency of Tribunal decisions.

Strategic Actions to achieve objectives

- Develop and implement a procedure for assessing the quality and consistency of Tribunal decisions.
- Develop and implement a dedicated Training Strategy to support quality decisions; including:
 - Providing, in co-operation with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the European Asylum Support Agency (EASO), the International Association of Refugee Law Judges (IARLJ), the European Judicial Training Network (EJTN), and other bodies, high quality training for Tribunal Members in International Protection Status Determination and related areas.
 - Providing training to Members in the use of Tribunal procedures including IT systems, data protection and quasi-judicial conduct.
 - Providing information to Tribunal Members, through appropriate systems, on relevant legal developments at European and international level.
 - Continually addressing the training needs of Members by reference to Tribunal Decision monitoring.

- Develop appropriate mechanisms for the sharing of information and experience between members.
- Provision of guidance and mentoring to individual Tribunal Members in accordance with needs identified through Tribunal Decision monitoring.

High Level Goal 4:

To efficiently and actively manage cases in the Superior Courts to which the Tribunal is a party and to provide instructions and/or observations where appropriate

Strategic Objectives

1. To work closely with Department of Justice and Equality, Chief State Solicitor's Office and Counsel in formulating a speedy response to all legal challenges as and when required.
2. To actively manage the Tribunal's input into any matters associated with the Department's judicial review caseload arising from Tribunal decisions, in so far as relevant and appropriate.
3. To assist minimising the costs to the State arising from legal challenges to Tribunal Decisions.

Strategic Action to achieve objectives

- Actively manage the Tribunal's response to legal challenges in close co-operation with the Department, the Chief State Solicitor's Office and Counsel.
- Process legal papers promptly and within established timeframes.
- Provide clear instructions to the Chief State Solicitors Office in a timely fashion, where relevant and appropriate.
- Establish appropriate systems to provide feedback to Members and staff on issues which gave rise to judicial review and take steps, including training measures, to prevent them reoccurring.
- Continually monitor case-load by reference to value for money considerations and in particular legal costs incurred.

High Level Goal 5:

Provide quality service to the highest professional standards with a particular focus on achieving value for money in the deployment of the Tribunal's physical and human resources

Strategic Objectives to support goal

1. Ensure that necessary resources are provided through the conclusion of a Performance delivery agreement with the Department of Justice and Equality.
2. Manage the work of the Tribunal by ensuring that business objectives are met in the most efficient and cost effective manner.
3. Manage the organisation and resources in line with best management practice and with particular regard to the skills development of Members and staff.
4. Provide a quality customer service, which affords courtesy and respect to all applicants and stakeholders.
5. Make our services and information accessible to people with disabilities in line with the requirements of national disability legislation.
6. Take reasonable measures to accommodate all participants so that they may participate effectively in a proceeding particularly for children and vulnerable persons.
7. Ensure there is an appropriate Risk Management Framework in operation for the Tribunal.

Strategic Action to Achieve objectives

- Monitor Tribunal performance to ensure value for money.
- Review the organisational structure of the Tribunal, ensuring optimum effectiveness of individual business units in achievement of efficient outcomes.
- Ensure compliance with the 'Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies' insofar as the requirements are applicable (given the Tribunal's statutory and legal framework; the environment in which it operates and its purpose and responsibilities.)
- Review policies and procedures regularly to ensure they are effective and relevant.

- Review Tribunal policy on public access to Tribunal documents, including the decisions database.
- Ensure 'Role Profile' and 'Goal Setting' of each staff member is monitored under the Performance Management and Development System.
- Continually develop staff by provision of appropriate training and support.
- Provide a high quality service to our customers and treat all customers with impartiality, respect, courtesy and confidentiality.
- Liaise on continuous basis with relevant stakeholders.