

# Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner

*Sustaining Progress*  
Action Plan  
1st Progress Report



October, 2003

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## Customer Service

**Commitment:**

ORAC will continue to focus on developing and deepening the concept of **customer service** throughout the organisation

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
The role and membership of the <i>Customer Service Liaison Panel</i> will be reviewed.	30th June 2003	Following a review, in consultation with the Panel which was completed earlier this year, it was agreed to extend the membership of the Panel to ensure the widest possible representation having regard to geographic location. First meeting of the extended Panel took place on 17 July, 2003 and the next meeting is to take place on 13 November.		
<p>The development of a new <i>Customer Complaints Procedure</i> will be initiated. Consultation will take place with the <i>Customer Service Liaison Panel</i> and staff of ORAC to agree procedures.</p> <p>The new <i>Customer Complaints Procedure</i> will be implemented</p>	<p>31 December 2003</p> <p>Q1 2004</p>	While ORACs existing Customer Service Action Plan includes arrangements for making complaints, an enhanced customer complaints procedure and staff guide have been prepared.	A Plan for the process of consultation, both internal and external, has been developed. It commenced with consideration of the document by the Partnership Committee and circulation to all staff and Unions in October, 2003. Information sessions for staff will take place in November and the Customer Service Liaison panel will discuss the proposed complaints <i>continued...</i>	

Customer Service  
(continued)

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
			procedure at its November meeting. ORAC is confident that the 1 January commencement date will be met.	
An assessment of customer service delivery and needs will be carried out, in consultation with the <i>Customer Service Liaison Panel</i> .	31 Dec. 2003	A Customer Service Centre has been established and acts as a central contact point for enquires to ORAC. Following consultation with the Customer Service Liaison Panel for NGOs at a meeting on 17 July, 2003 a draft questionnaire (for customer service survey purposes) was approved for issue. This questionnaire has now been translated into a range of languages to facilitate the widest possible customer participation.	It is planned to start issuing the questionnaire in the first week of November, 2003 and to collate and evaluate responses by mid December.	
ORAC will publish a <i>Customer Charter</i> and a new three year <i>Customer Service Action Plan 2004 to 2006</i> to replace the existing Plan which was published in 2002. This Action Plan and Charter will set out how ORAC proposes to address any customer/service delivery issues which become apparent from the above survey of customer opinion.	End of Q1 2004	Preparatory work on Action Plan and Charter completed. Results of Customer Survey now awaited.		



## Efficient Use of Resources

**Commitment:**

ORAC is committed to the **efficient use** of all its resources, including staff, to ensure the maximisation of value for money.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b>				
Develop procedures to be followed by all ORAC staff members when incurring expenditure on behalf of ORAC with these procedures, covering all areas of ORAC non-pay expenditure, to include: the levels of responsibility to be devolved to local unit management; the expenditure limits to apply to each grade of authorising officer; and the approval process for authorising officers.	Policy & Procedures document circulated to all staff Sept 2003	Following consultation with the Comptroller and Auditor General's Office, the Department's Internal Audit Unit and Finance Division, the ORAC Financial Policy & Procedures document was produced and circulated to all staff members.		
* Review in consultation with the Department's Internal Audit Unit, systems in place and, where deemed necessary, strengthen financial controls as recommended in the Mullarkey Report.	Q1 2004			

## Efficient Use of Resources

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<b>FINANCIAL RESOURCES</b> (continued)				
*Develop Financial Management Information Systems in accordance with the new ORACLE Financial Management System being introduced for the whole Department.	Being implemented by Finance Division, D/Justice. Likely by June/July of 2004	DJELR have provided details of the proposed system.		ORAC has no devolved function in relation to the ORACLE system at present. The system which has yet to be finalised will be rolled out by Finance Division, D/Justice on an area by area basis.
<b>STAFF RESOURCES</b>				
Following an examination by ORAC of current procedures, practices and structures, resources will be aligned in order to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.	Examination commenced in Jan. 2003. Report finalised in Sept.	At ORAC's request, a review of the organisation was facilitated by the Centre for Management & Organisational Development (CMOD). The Terms of Reference for the Review were to "provide assistance to ORAC to enable the Office to carry out an examination of current procedures, practices and structures in order to align resources to maximise efficiency and effectiveness". The review commenced in Jan. 2003, was completed in Sept. 2003 and involved widespread consultation with staff and included the following stages:  <i>continued...</i>		

## Efficient Use of Resources

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties/Outstanding Issues
<b>STAFF RESOURCES</b> (continued)	Qtr 4 2003	<p>(1) the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) was used as an evaluation tool. This is an EU-wide public sector performance comparison self-improvement tool. ORAC was the first Irish public sector organisation to carry out a CAF exercise. A work group of 22 staff at various grades was set up to undertake this exercise.</p> <p>(2) CMOD conducted one-to-one interviews with a further 25 staff members from across the organisation.</p> <p>(3) Four workshops involving over 40 staff were also held.</p> <p>(4) Individual meetings were held with over 20 staff at which a communications questionnaire was completed.</p> <p>The final Report was received from CMOD in Sept. It has been submitted to the Partnership Committee for consideration and circulated to all staff.</p> <p><i>continued..</i></p>	<p>Implementation Plan to be drawn up, in consultation with staff, as part of business planning process for 2004.</p> <p><i>continued..</i></p>	

## Efficient Use of Resources

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p><b>STAFF RESOURCES</b> (continued)</p>		<p>The results of the review will also be used to build on progress already made by ORAC in aligning resources with business needs and in revising structures and staff composition accordingly. In particular, prior to and during the review facilitated by CMOD, ORAC management identified a need to reorient the staff structure by reducing the number in the AP grade and increasing the HEO grade correspondingly. Associated changes to the organisation's structure were also required. CMOD agreed with this assessment and the changes were effected by Q3 2003 following discussion with DJE&amp;LR. Furthermore, development of supports for caseworkers (e.g. guidance papers, refresher training, improved research support, enhanced case conferencing) has facilitated improved productivity. In addition, a new report template has been introduced alongside report writing training, with a view to improving the quality of decision making while also making it easier to complete cases. <i>continued...</i></p>	<p>Particular attention will be paid to means of improving communications and liaison within ORAC, with a view to streamlining processes and improving effectiveness.</p>	

## Efficient Use of Resources

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p><b>STAFF RESOURCES</b> (continued)</p>		<p>Measurement of productivity in the area of refugee status determination is not straightforward, as the complexity of cases can vary considerably, even within national groups. Two key indicators of productivity are:</p> <p><u>Decisions reached</u> Although the number of caseworkers has fallen by 18% since the end Oct. 2002, productivity has risen so as to greatly offset the impact of this on decisions issued. A ‘fast track’ stream of prioritised applications has given rise to further gains. While ORAC’s general processing target for 2003 is 6 weeks, decisions under these procedures are issued in approximately one week of interview. 25% of all cases completed following interview in October were dealt with in this way.</p> <p><u>Interviews Completed</u> Due to proactive management of our interview scheduling policy, increased applicant attendance and improved interviewer productivity, there has been a 10% average increase in interviews conducted by caseworkers since Oct. 2002.</p>		

Efficient Use of Resources  
(continued)

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p><b>STAFF RESOURCES</b> (continued)</p>		<p>Other examples of increased productivity are:</p> <p><u>Scheduling Unit</u> Under the prioritised processing stream, Scheduling Unit has also achieved productivity gains. On the basis of applications in October 10% fewer interview letters were issued by post. Scheduling Unit also monitor the rate of interview attendance and apply a policy to make best use of resources which has resulted in ‘overscheduling’ capacity of up to 150% at some points during the year.</p> <p><u>Dublin Convention Unit</u> Dublin Convention Unit has already issued 17% more (outgoing) determinations in 2003 than 2002, arising from improved case selection and other processing enhancements. This has been achieved despite 25% fewer staff and the fact that the number of incoming requests (which the Unit is obliged to process within specified time limits) has doubled over the same period.</p>		

Efficient Use of Resources  
(continued)

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties/ Outstanding Issues
<p><b>STAFF RESOURCES</b> (continued)</p>		<p><u>Presenting Unit</u> Proactive management of the scheduling of appeal hearings combined with staff co-operation has enabled the number of hearings serviced by presenting officers to be maximised.</p> <p><u>Copying Unit</u> During 2003, Copying Unit, without additional resources, has reduced the time a file spends in the Unit from more than one month to 10 working days for a standard file and 1 working day for prioritised cases. This was achieved through improved work processes which were devised and introduced with staff input and has greatly reduced the section's reliance on overtime.</p>		

Efficient Use of Resources  
(continued)

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p><b>STAFF RESOURCES</b> (continued)</p>		<p><u>Corporate Office</u> Since the second quarter of this year the Corporate Office has taken on responsibility for a number of new projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Research and preparation for the introduction of the partnership process to the organisation which included the organisation of partnership briefing for all staff and a training module for the Partnership Committee, the in-house production of an information leaflet, guidance and administrative support for the Partnership Committee and ongoing briefing of all staff in relation to the partnership process;</li> <li>- Research and preparation of a 5 year Corporate Plan and an implementation programme, scheduled for publication in early 2004;</li> <li>- Organisation of the introduction of Risk Management into the ORAC Business Planning process.</li> </ul>		

Efficient Use of Resources  
(continued)

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties/ Outstanding Issues
		The above projects were undertaken and have either been successfully completed on time or are on target, without the assignment of additional staff to the team of 4.		

## Equal Opportunities

**Commitment:**

ORAC is committed to policies on **equality** and **diversity** and to developing an equality perspective throughout the organisation.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/ Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
ORAC will appoint an Equality Officer in accordance with <i>A Review of Equality Initiatives in the Justice and Equality Sector</i> .	Sept. 2003	Equality Officer appointed in Sept. 2003		
*ORAC will continue to ensure that refugee status determination and other induction training incorporate an awareness of equality/cultural diversity issues, having particular regard to the nature of our customer base.	Ongoing	ORAC now has capacity to deliver its own refugee status determination (RSD) /asylum issues training and to ensure that diversity/equality issues are addressed appropriately. First full RSD course delivered summer 2003. Training of trainers programme in place to enhance further ORAC's internal training capacity.	Further RSD courses scheduled for October & November, 2003	
ORAC has engaged consultants to carry out a <i>cultural diversity evaluation</i> of the organisation to identify the scope and range of cultural diversity issues facing the ORAC from an external customer perspective. Their report is expected shortly.  It is planned to incorporate the results of this evaluation into the continued development of training as referred to above, with a view to ensuring that cultural diversity is fully accommodated.	Q1 2004  Q2 2004 and Ongoing	A draft report has been received from consultants.	Observations have been made on the report and forwarded to the consultants (Sept. 2003).	Awaiting response from consultants.

## Equal Opportunities

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved / Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>ORAC will develop an <i>Equality Policy and Programme</i> with reference to the recommendations of <i>A Review of Equality Initiatives in the Justice and Equality Sector</i>. The Programme will set targets and embody review and reporting mechanisms.</p>	<p>Phase 1: Q1 2004</p> <p>Phase 2: Q3 2004</p>	<p>A Working Group, made up of 7 staff members, has been set up by the Partnership Committee to draft an Equality policy and programme.</p>	<p>The Working Group is due to submit a draft Equality policy and programme to the Partnership Committee by end Dec. 2003 covering a number of areas. The remainder will be addressed in the Partnership Committee Work Programme for 2004.</p>	

## Performance Management Systems

**Commitments:**

ORAC has introduced and will continue to implement the Performance Management System (PMDS).

ORAC is committed to the roll-out of the next stage of PMDS and to addressing the issues arising from the evaluation process.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
The first stage of PMDS is fully operational.	2003	<p>All non contract staff received in-house PMDS training (Modules 1,2 and 3). Five two-day training courses were delivered with the last course taking place in Q1 of 2003.</p> <p>PMDS is now included in Induction training for new staff.</p>		In October 2002 ORAC sought clarification from DJELR as to whether atypically recruited staff could be included in the PMDS process. It was confirmed that the issue had to be considered with regard to the EU Directive on Part-time Workers and the renewal of atypical contracts which requires Department of Finance sanction. This sanction is still awaited.
*ORAC will continue to implement PMDS and fully embed it in the organisation.	<p>Started Q1 2003 and ongoing thereafter</p> <p>From Q2 onwards</p>	<p>Progress on Implementation of PMDS within ORAC is monitored at the monthly AP/MAC meetings and is a separate agenda item at each meeting.</p> <p>Summary tables are circulated in advance of these meeting to all APs/POs showing progress by PO area of responsibility and also at Unit level. Detailed tables are also provided to POs and Commissioner.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>continued...</i></p>		

### Performance Management Systems

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
	2,003	<p>As at 23/10, 100% of 2002 Annual Reviews, 95% of 2003 Role Profiles and 97% of 2003 Interim Reviews have been completed (6 IRFs outstanding).</p> <p>All Annual Reviews and Role Profile Forms that can be done have been completed at this stage. Those Role Profile Forms outstanding relate to staff who have transferred within ORAC and newly assigned staff.</p>		As new staff arrive or move within ORAC, there will always be a number of Role Profile Forms to be completed.
<p>PMDS will be integrated with all ORAC Business Planning and HR policies and processes, including assessment systems to consolidate PMDS within the organisation.</p> <p>ORAC will also contribute to the formulation of policy in relation to upward feedback and will implement any outcome from the evaluation of PMDS centrally.</p>	<p>Q1 2003, 2004, 2005</p> <p>Q1, end Q2 and Q4.</p>	<p>Role Profile Forms reflect each individual's key ongoing objectives and deliverables relating to their Unit's commitments in the annual Business Plan.</p> <p>Commitments regarding the completion dates of Role Profile Forms (RPFs), Interim and Annual Reviews have been included in each Unit's Business Plan and in individual RPFs.</p> <p>Assessment forms completed under PMDS are forwarded to Personnel DJELR to be taken into consideration for promotional/ higher allowance purposes etc.</p>	Planning for 2004 has commenced.	ORAC is not directly involved in the evaluation of PMDS which will take place centrally in D/Finance or in policy formulation in relation to upward feedback which is being done in D/JELR

## Modernisation & Flexibility

**Commitment:**

ORAC is committed to increased flexibility to ensure that public services are delivered in a manner which closely reflects the needs of its customers.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>A <i>5 Year Corporate Plan</i> will be prepared for the functional and organisational development of the office, to enable ORAC to become a best practice asylum determination agency.</p> <p>The Plan will set out a number of key objectives for the period and the actions necessary to achieve them. Particular emphasis will be placed on the identification and provision of appropriate technical, legal, organisational and management skills.</p>	Q1 2004	First draft submitted to MAC in Aug. 2003. Following refinement, it was submitted to the partnership committee for consideration.	Report is to be finalised in consultation with all staff through the business planning process.	
A detailed implementation plan will be devised following consultation with staff and partnership committee.	Q1 2004	A draft implementation plan has been prepared for consultation with partnership committee and staff.		
Following a review by ORAC of current procedures, practices and structures, resources will be aligned to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.		At ORAC's request, a review of the organisation was facilitated by CMOD (Centre for Management & Organisational Development). <u>For timeframe and details see material under "Efficient Use of Resources"</u> .		

## Modernisation & Flexibility

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties /Outstanding Issues
*ORAC will respond flexibly to new work demands arising from amendments to legislation or other environmental changes.	An ongoing area of action - see across for recent developments	Significant elements within the case processing stream have been re-engineered to coincide with legislative changes which came into effect on 15/09/03. A new prioritised application track has been designed and implemented and has reduced processing time dramatically for the categories of applicant in question.	The impact of these legislative changes is being kept under continuous review and ORAC is also assessing other means of orienting its processing efforts to best respond to new caseload demands.	
The development of a system of <i>Quality Assurance</i> for the organisation will be initiated.	Dec 2003	Examination of approaches to assuring quality in refugee status determination underway - research taking place into general QA systems in Irish public service as well as refugee determination QA systems in use internationally. Draft QA audit completed in Research Section, September, 2003 with a view to its use as a model for other case processing sections.	The QA matrix used in Research section has been passed to the other units in case processing and a first draft of a matrix for the core case processing area has been prepared and will now be the subject of more detailed discussions within the section. Other case processing support areas are also working on QA matrices for their areas.	
A system of <i>Quality Assurance</i> will be rolled out to ORAC.	Dec. 2004	Model QA matrix designed and piloted (see above).		

### Team Working and Cross Functional Working

Commitment:  
 ORAC acknowledges that in order to achieve efficiency and quality of service, **flexibility in assignment of tasks and in reporting procedures** may be required.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<i>A Partnership Committee</i> will be established	July 2003	<i>See section on Partnership</i>		
Under the <i>5 year Corporate Plan</i> current procedures, practices and structures will be reviewed, and amended, if necessary, to ensure that resources are utilised to maximum effect.	2004 2005	<p>First draft of Corporate Plan submitted to MAC in Aug. 2003 - will be the subject of consultation with staff as part of the business planning process for 2004.</p> <p>Implementation of the Plan will build on the considerable flexibility shown by ORAC management and staff to date. Resources, tasks and structures have been consistently aligned with business needs. Further developments in this regard will continue to be the subject of consultation with staff.</p>		

## New Technology & government

**Commitment:**

ORAC recognises that the use of **new technology** may require significant change in work processes in order to maximise its use. ORAC is committed to the development of government as set out in *Sustaining Progress*.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
Develop a website for the organisation.	Q1 2004	A project board to determine ORAC's website requirements and advise on content and procedures was established in July 2003. The design is almost complete and is expected to be launched in Nov. 2003.	The programme is ahead of schedule and will be completed in Nov. 2003.	
Introduce desktop Internet browsing for all staff in the organisation to facilitate staff in conducting Internet research and in accessing DJELR integrated web based services, when they become available - Timberlay House & Grand Canal Street - Hanover Street	Q3 2003 Q4 2003	Desktop Internet now available for all staff.		
Introduce a scanning system to facilitate electronic archival of files and electronic file management	Q2 2004	The scanning equipment is in place and has been operated on a trial basis. A review of the most effective use of file scanning in the ORAC is underway.		
*Develop and implement tools to allow staff to securely work from home and any other web location to facilitate flexible working arrangements and secure access to data from other work locations. - initial investigation of available options - implementation of tools	Q1 2004 Q4 2004			

## New Technology &amp; government

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>*In co-operation with the EU Commission and other EU Member States, design and implement DubliNET. DubliNET is an electronic communications system used to send and receive Dublin Convention / Dublin II Regulation requests between States.</p>	Sept 2003	<p>DubliNET, operational since September 2003, will streamline DC/DII processing through the use of EU wide standard forms and will reduce processing times allowing States comply with Dublin II Regulation deadlines. The system integrates completion and transmission of DII Reg requests via a secure electronic network.</p>		
<p>Implement the key recommendations of the Accenture IT Strategy from the Asylum area, specifically:  The development of an integrated case management system.  - initiation of project and completion and selection of tender  - design and implementation of case management system  It was also recommended that a central <b>Knowledge Management System</b> should be developed to facilitate the storage, search and retrieval of Country of Origin and other relevant information. The ongoing maintenance of COI data should become the responsibility of the Refugee Documentation Centre (RDC), although the system should be remotely accessible by staff in all the asylum agencies</p>	<p>Q4 2004  2005  2003 2004</p>	<p>A project board to oversee and direct progress on the Accenture report as a whole, was established by Asylum Policy division, JELR, in June 2003, on which ORAC is represented.</p> <p>A RDC Steering Group which included representatives from ORAC and the other asylum agencies was set up to, <i>inter alia</i>, explore the potential for co-operation in the sharing of resources by agencies using the RDC and to examine the most effective means of developing a Knowledge Management System as part of the overall integrated case management system or otherwise.</p>	<p>Sharon Rusu, international expert on Knowledge Management systems, engaged to produce a report on the most suitable model before the end of the year. The review will be undertaken in three phases; Phase 1 - 13 to 17 October 2003, agree <i>continued...</i></p>	<p>DJELR proposal for generation of funds awaiting D/Finance sanction.</p>

New Technology & government  
(continued)

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
		The Working Group met on 29/4/03 5/6/03 and 24/9/03 and agreed to the terms of reference under which to engage an expert on Knowledge Management systems to produce a report on the most suitable model.	framework and questionnaire; Phase 2 - 27/10 to 7/11, interviews with relevant staff of RDC and client agencies together with e-mail and phone contacts with comparable agencies abroad; Phase 3 - 17/11 to 5/12, draft report and review of draft by steering group. Final report on 5 December 2003.	

## Atypical Working Arrangements

**Commitment:**

ORAC is committed to the continuation of flexible working patterns in response to the needs of staff.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
Applications for atypical working arrangements such as work sharing and term time working will continue to be considered on an individual basis.		<p>ORAC is fully committed to the implementation of family friendly work practices and makes every On-going reasonable effort to accommodate staff who wish to avail of them. All applications for atypical working arrangements in ORAC have been approved to date.</p> <p>A flexi-time system operates in the Office. The work sharing scheme is available also and allows for patterns of attendance such as mornings or afternoons only, split week, 9am-3pm, 3 or 4 day week and week on/week off. The scheme was also extended in Feb. 03 to cover the 3 weeks on/one week off option .</p>		
Consultants will be engaged where it is established that consultancy is the most appropriate means of providing a product or service.	2003 2004 2005	<p>There is an on-going need for interpretation and translation in ORAC which is provided by way of 2 external contracts.</p> <p><i>continued...</i></p>		

### Atypical Working Arrangements

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
		<p><i>continued</i></p> <p>External legal consultants have been contracted to produce legal position papers. External IT consultants were engaged for a period to run the IT Help desk to enable our IT staff to attend to other projects which they had been unable to do due to staff shortages.</p> <p>Training capacity is increased by engaging external consultants in relation to specialised training courses, eg UNHCR.</p>		

## Atypical Working Arrangements

**Commitment:**

ORAC recognises the need to employ temporary staff to respond to temporary pressures and currently has a team of atypical personnel.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
*ORAC will cooperate with the employment of temporary staff as the need arises.		<p>Dept. Finance decided that staff would be recruited on a contract basis in the asylum area to assist in tackling the backlog of asylum applications that had arisen. It is envisaged that when processing of asylum applications is up to date, these staff will be moved on to other areas in the asylum/ immigration process.</p> <p>There are 53 atypical personnel on contract in ORAC at present. They are in case worker and clerical positions and work along side EOs and COs who were recruited in the normal way.</p>		Please see covering letter regarding the function of ORAC in relation to Personnel matters.

## Attendance Patterns

ORAC is committed to having the **attendance patterns** necessary to provide a satisfactory level of customer service.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Attendance patterns will be kept under review with a view to ensuring the best attendance patterns to meet customer needs.</p> <p>Any proposed change to attendance patterns will be discussed and agreed in accordance with the terms of <i>Sustaining Progress</i>.</p>	<p>2003 2004 2005</p>	<p>Our hours of business have been adapted to accommodate our customers by agreeing and establishing a daily attendance rota with staff in the Reception Units -opening at 8.45am through lunch time until business is completed.</p>		

## Redeployment of Staff

**Commitment:**

ORAC confirms that the **redeployment** of staff within ORAC and new work initiatives may be necessary to respond to urgent work demands or new legislative provisions.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Redeployment of staff may take place in the future in order to implement the recommendations in the CMOD review to introduce new work initiatives, to respond to legislative provisions or to meet urgent work demands.</p> <p>Unions will be informed in advance of any plans to redeploy staff and discussions will be in accordance with the terms of <i>Sustaining Progress</i>.</p>	<p>2003 2004 2005</p>	<p><u>CMOD Review</u> The final Report was received from CMOD in Sept. It has been submitted to the Partnership Cttee for consideration and circulated to all staff.</p> <p><u>Legislative amendments</u> In July this year, significant amendments to the Refugee Act were included in the Immigration Act, 2003. These amendments were commenced on 15 Sept and necessitated a range of structural and procedural changes as well as redeployment of staff, especially within Case Processing. ORAC was involved in detailed consultation with the DJE&amp;LR during the drafting of the Immigration Act, 2003 and was, therefore, in a good position to set out the implications of the new legislation for all staff well in advance of its coming into effect. Timely notice of changes in procedures and staff deployment was provided to all, together with an opportunity for provision of feedback.</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><i>continued...</i></p>	<p>ORAC management have drafted an implementation plan for consideration by all staff in context of business planning.</p> <p>New procedures will be reviewed in consultation with staff at the end of October. This will enable us consult with staff, get their feedback on the operation of the procedures so far and take suggestions/ comments on board as necessary.</p>	

## Redeployment of Staff

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
		An organisation-wide briefing and training programme was put into effect between July and September in order to ensure that everyone was kept abreast of developments and had the necessary knowledge and skills to operate under the new legislation.		

## Training

**Commitment:**

ORAC is fully committed to **staff development and training** to enhance their knowledge, skills, competencies and career development and to achieve quality service delivery.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved /Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Training needs will continue to be identified through the personal development plans on RPFs.</p>	<p>Completed in respect of all forms received.</p>	<p>All training needs identified through Role Profile and Interim Review Forms have been collated on a database with a view to doing a training needs analysis, which together with Civil Service Training and Development Strategy will inform a training and development strategy for the organisation, which will be an integral part of HR strategy which is to be progressed under the Action Plan.</p> <p>Overall, 1020 Training Units <sup>(1)</sup> provided in 2003 as at 22/10 (includes approx. 345 units of training by Policies &amp; Procedures Unit &amp; 232 in relation to Partnership briefings).</p> <p>Training provided included general and organisational training relating to knowledge, skills, competencies or career development :</p> <p><u>General Training:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• HEO Management Training</li> <li>• Stress Management</li> <li>• Language Training</li> <li>• General Induction Training (in-house)</li> <li>• PMDS Training (in-house)</li> <li>• Safety (Fire Wardens &amp; Occupational First Aid) <i>continued...</i></li> </ul>		

## Training

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public procurement</li> <li>• Partnership briefings</li> <li>• Bullying &amp; harassment</li> <li>• Government accounting</li> <li>• Presentation skills</li> <li>• Legislative process</li> <li>• Projects management</li> <li>• Policy analysis</li> <li>• Train the trainer</li> </ul> <p>IT staff have been trained in new operating systems and applications including high quality specialist training e.g. Web design and Systems Analyst training.</p> <p><u>Organisational training in relation to knowledge, skills or competencies</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Casework specific training and training on legislative amendments (see following page for details).</li> </ul> <p>(1) A Unit refers to one staff member attending a training course or briefing session</p>		

## Training

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved /Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Induction training will be provided as will ongoing and periodic training. The latter will have particular regard to legislative developments and revised procedures and practices.</p>	<p>2003 2004 2005</p>	<p>General Induction course designed and completed and provided to all new staff.</p> <p>The ORAC also provides the following specific induction training: ½ day “Introduction to Asylum Issues” provided to Clerical Staff &amp; Service Officers. (Two courses delivered in Q3)</p> <p>Caseworker Induction: 3 day training on Refugee Status Determination, 1½ days training on casework related training and 2 days research/internet training. (1 course delivered Q3)</p> <p>3 days intensive refresher training on Refugee Status Determination (RSD) has been provided to managers by UNHCR and Policy and Procedures Unit. (Completed Q3)</p> <p>1.5 day refresher training provided to caseworkers on RSD by UNHCR/Policy and Procedures Unit. (Completed Q2)</p> <p>Policy and Procedures Unit provided extensive training to all Case Processing managers and Caseworkers in relation to the completion of a new case analysis template. (Completed Q1) <i>continued..</i></p>	<p>A further course to be delivered in Q4 if numbers of new staff are sufficient.</p> <p>A further course planned for Q4.</p>	

## Training

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved /Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties/ Outstanding Issues
		<p>The Unit, in association with the Training Unit, also facilitated a training of trainers programme to develop in-house capacity to provide RSD related training. (Completed Q2).</p> <p>The Unit also provided assistance to the Training Unit in developing a new Induction module for new entrants which was included in the general induction training. (Designed and delivered Q3).</p> <p>Policy and Procedures has designed and delivered the following training in relation to legislative amendments:  1 day training on changed processing procedures arising from legislative amendments to the 3 new accelerated units in Case Processing and a further ½ day training to those units individually. (Q3)</p> <p>Training was provided to main Case Processing Units and Reception Unit staff over three days on the changed processing procedures required arising from the amendments specifically affecting these units. (Completed Q3 &amp; Q4).</p>		

## Training

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved /Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties/ Outstanding Issues
		<p>½ day briefing sessions on the legislative amendments have also been provided to Customer Service Centre, Dublin Convention, Organisation and Finance, Personnel and Training, Registry, Copying, Scheduling, Research, Judicial Review, Presenting Unit and Service Officer Staff.</p> <p>ORAC has also provided four half day briefing sessions to Immigration Division in relation to the legislative amendments.</p> <p><u>Psychological support training for front-line staff:</u> A course was designed and developed in conjunction with the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre and -</p> <p>as at 17/10, 5 courses provided to Caseworkers.</p> <p>Specific training was also provided to Case Processing HEOs in recognition of their role as the first point of support for caseworkers (1 course).</p> <p>The course was also modified and provided to Presenting Officers (2 courses).</p> <p>Total number of staff who attended this training = 94</p>		



## Partnership

## Commitment:

ORAC is committed to developing the organisation through **partnership** between management, staff and trade unions.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Progress made on Actions to be Completed by year end	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>A <i>Partnership Committee</i> will be established.</p>	<p>2003</p>	<p>Due to uncertainty as to our autonomy in establishing a discrete partnership process for ORAC, discussions were initiated last year with the Dept. Justice, Equality and Law Reform. In April 2003, ORAC commenced the establishment of a separate Partnership Committee.</p> <p>Since then:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-a Partnership Cttee of 12, (4 mgt., union and staff representatives) has been set up;</li> <li>-the Cttee, which has a rotating Chairperson, has met 4 times and will meet monthly (the first 5 meetings facilitated by partnership expert;</li> <li>-partnership briefing sessions have been provided for all staff by national partnership expert;</li> <li>- formal launch of Partnership in ORAC took place on 3 October.</li> </ul> <p><i>continued...</i></p>	<p>2 days formal training for the Cttee. to be provided in November.</p> <p>Work Programme for Partnership Cttee. to be considered in consultation with staff.</p> <p>All ORAC induction training courses will include an overview of partnership within the organisation.</p>	

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A <i>Partnership Committee</i> will be established.	2003	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- two Working Groups have been established to submit (i) a draft Equality Policy &amp; Programme, and (ii) proposals for developing an internal communications strategy;</li> <li>- the Equality Working Group comprises 1 member of the Partnership Cttee and 7 other staff volunteers.</li> <li>- the Communications Working Group comprises 2 Partnership Cttee. members and 6 other staff volunteers;</li> <li>- training by national expert has been provided for Working Group members.</li> <li>- training by national expert has been provided for Working Group members.</li> </ul> <p>In Oct. 2003 a meeting was organised for the HEO/AP/MAC to inform HEOs about the impact of <i>Sustaining Progress</i> on them as managers, and on staff in general and its benefits to the organisation and the quality of the work environment. The role of middle management in consolidating partnership in the organisation was also addressed by a representative of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance.</p>	Monthly progress reports to be submitted to Partnership Committee.	

Note: \* denotes a new action agreed by the Partnership Committee