

Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner



Sustaining Progress 5th Progress Report

Customer Service

September 2005

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	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
The role and membership of the <i>Customer Service Liaison Panel</i> will be reviewed.	30 June 2003	Achieved.	
Carry out a further review of membership of <i>Customer Service Liaison Panel</i> to ensure continued broad and effective representation of customer groups.	2nd Qtr. 2005	The membership of the Customer Service Liaison Panel was reviewed in March, 2005, in consultation with the Panel. The Panel has now been extended to include the following NGO groups: Refugee Information Service, Association of Refugee and Asylum Seekers in Ireland (ARASI), Galway Refugee Support Group, Tallaght Intercultural Action (TIA).	
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.	31 Dec. 2003	Achieved	

Customer Service *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issue
The new <i>Customer Complaints Procedure</i> will be implemented	1st Qtr 2004	Achieved	
An assessment of customer service delivery and needs will be carried out, in consultation with the <i>Customer Service Liaison Panel</i> .		<p>The findings of the Telephone Survey conducted in March 2005 are as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All callers were answered promptly and were put through to the right section. • 75% of callers were given the name of the person dealing with their enquiry and their relevant unit. • Callers were asked to rate calls on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being very dissatisfied, 5 being very satisfied) with regard to the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courtesy: 100% of callers gave a 3 or higher with 66% giving a 5 rating. • Information: 93% of callers gave a 3 or higher, with 63% giving a 5 rating • Quality: 100% of callers gave a 3 or higher, with 53% giving a 5 rating. • Overall telephone service: 100% gave a 3 or higher, with 55% giving a 5 rating. <p>A further survey will be carried out before the end of the year.</p>	

Customer Service *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
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 1st Qtr 2004	Achieved.	
Carry out review of Customer Charter and Customer Service Action Plan, in consultation with staff, Customer Liaison Panel and other relevant agencies.	End of 2006	.	
Fully implement actions set out in <i>Customer Service Action Plan 2005 - 2008</i>.	Ongoing	Business Plans for Units have been adjusted to include relevant actions. Actions already complete include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A 'Plain English ' explanation of the Dublin II Regulation has been drafted for the ORAC website. 	

Customer Service *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Fully implement actions set out in <i>Customer Service Action Plan 2005 - 2008. continued</i></p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Standard letters throughout the Organisation are being Plain English proofed to ensure that they are easily understood. It is planned to have these new letters in place by end of 2005. • Following a survey of customers, the following recommendations were made and delivered on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TVs installed in Reception area. • Water dispenser was installed in IWA. • Arrangements have been made for a TV to be installed in IWA in Q3. • Modifications were made to 2 hatches in Reception to facilitate families have been completed. • New revised Family Reunification leaflet was devised , Plain English proofed is now available. • A short Information leaflet, which has been redrafted in consultation with the Customer Liaison Panel, is to be Plain English proofed and will be finalised shortly. 	

Customer Service *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
Design and roll out new training programme based on commitments set out in <i>Customer Service Action Plan 2005 - 2008</i> and delivered with a high level of ORAC staff involvement as trainers and programme designers.	2nd Qtr 2005	Training on the Customer Service Action Plan has now been given as has training on new Correspondence Tracking system and will be included in Induction Training in the future.	
A mechanism will be developed to enable the <i>Customer Service Liaison Panel</i> to monitor and evaluate the <i>Customer Service Action Plan</i> which will contain performance indicators.	2nd Qtr 2004	Achieved.	
Progress on performance against these indicators will be outlined in each <i>Annual Report</i> commencing with the <i>Annual Report</i> for 2004 which will be published in 2005.	1st Qtr 2005 (and then annually)	Achieved.	
A review of the <i>Customer Complaints Procedure</i> will take place in consultation with the <i>Customer Service Liaison Panel</i> and staff of ORAC and amended as appropriate.	2nd Qtr 2005	The Review has been completed and a revised more user friendly complaints procedure and staff guidelines are available since April 2005.	

Customer Service *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Develop and implement new external communications strategy, based on recommendations of Partnership Committee.</p>	<p>4th Qtr 2005</p>	<p>The Partnership Committee established an External Communications Working Group whose objective was to devise a strategy of communication with external bodies.</p> <p>Work was divided into three phases. Two of these phases have been completed and one is outstanding.</p>	<p>Due to staff movement this Working Group lost a number of its members. New members have been appointed and the third phase of the strategy is due to be completed by the end of the year.</p>

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	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
FINANCIAL RESOURCES Specific Action(s)			
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	Achieved	
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.	1st Qtr 2004	A preliminary audit report from the IAU is expected shortly.	Pressure of work on the Internal Audit Unit of the DJELR has delayed the preparation of the report of the audit conducted in ORAC in January 2005.
Implement the recommendations arising from an audit of ORAC's financial control mechanisms by the Department's Internal Audit Unit.	2nd Qtr 2005	The audit was completed by the DLELR's Internal Audit Unit in January, 2005	Findings of the audit are awaited. (see previous paragraph)

Efficient Use of Resources *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
FINANCIAL RESOURCES (contd.)			
<p>Develop Financial Management Information Systems in accordance with the new ORACLE Financial Management System being introduced for the whole Department.</p> <p>ORAC carried out all necessary preparatory work to facilitate implementation of the new Financial Management System, which was implemented in July 2004. ORAC has agreed to its purchasing requirements being processed through the Department's Central Processing Unit to facilitate the most efficient use of the Department's staff resources.</p>	<p>Being implemented by Finance Division, D/Justice. Likely by June/July of 2004</p>	<p>Achieved.</p>	<p>It is too early to assess the new Financial reporting mechanisms. Therefore, ORAC will continue to keep its financial transactions on spreadsheets to ensure that up to date financial information is available for senior ORAC management.</p> <p>It is anticipated that the timeliness of payments for goods/services received may be affected (at least in the short-term) as a result of the changeover to the new system</p>

Efficient Use of Resources *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Implement all elements of the Financial Management System when advised by the Department's Financial Management.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>ORAC continues to review and adjust its internal financial procedures on an ongoing basis, in consultation with the DJELR's Financial Management Unit to ensure the effective implementation of the ORACLE System.</p>	

Efficient Use of Resources *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
STAFF RESOURCES Specific Action(s)	Ongoing		
Following an examination by ORAC of current procedures, practices and structures, resources will be aligned in order to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.		See earlier reports and similar action under ‘Modernisation and Flexibility’	
Carry out system-wide review of structures and resource allocation in light of the fact that the number of cases on hands is approaching a ‘current’ status, as well as developments flowing from conclusions of PA Consultants review of resource needs across the asylum and immigration field.		<p>A review of structures and resources is still ongoing as the PA report has not yet been finalised but is now due at the end of September.</p> <p>A Restructuring Committee has been established with cross organisation representation to oversee the restructuring of the organisation and is due to complete its work by the end of November, taking account of the recommendations from units in the Organisation as well as the PA consultants.</p> <p>Procedures have been introduced to facilitate prioritised cases being processed more efficiently, i.e. by a single individual caseworker.</p>	

Efficient Use of Resources *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
STAFF RESOURCES Specific Action(s)	Ongoing		
Carry out system-wide review of structures and resource allocation in light of the fact that the number of cases on hands is approaching a 'current' status, as well as developments flowing from conclusions of PA Consultants review of resource needs across the asylum and immigration field. <i>continued</i>	1st & 2nd Quarter 2005	Ongoing	

Efficient Use of Resources *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>STAFF RESOURCES Specific Action(s)</p>			
<p>Continue to ensure that resources are deployed in the most efficient and effective way possible, including redeployment of posts to other areas of the Dept.</p> <p>In the context of the above factors, the downturn in the number of applicants and the Government's decentralisation programme, issues of staff morale and knowledge retention will be monitored and addressed.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>As mentioned in the April 2005 Report, ORAC continues to divert posts to D/JELR when identified as surplus to requirement.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Procedures manuals have been created for each of the ORAC Units. These manuals are reviewed on an ongoing basis to take account of changes to procedures. • Training has been provided to staff to ensure that there will be optimum flexibility in regard to interchanging of roles to make account of the reduced level of staff and the decrease in applications. • Twenty one vacancies have not been filled and will be diverted to DJELR shortly. Further numbers of staff will also be diverted around year end as we reach current status in the light of reduced caseload. 	

Efficient Use of Resources *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Continue to ensure that resources are deployed in the most efficient and effective way possible, including redeployment of posts to other areas of the Dept. <i>continued</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To facilitate knowledge retention, a database has been established to hold most relevant COI material. Another database has been set up to hold and reference model section 13 reports. 	

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	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	Achieved	
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	<p>Achieved and ongoing</p> <p>As stated in previous reports, ORAC has capacity to deliver its own refugee status determination (RSD)/asylum issues training and to ensure that diversity/equality issues are addressed appropriately. One four day RSD course was delivered in September 2005. A half day 'Introduction to Asylum Issues' was delivered to those staff not directly involved in the examination of applications for asylum, in August 2005.</p> <p>Since the completion of the roll out of Interculturalism Awareness training across the organisation in March 2005, it has now been included in the programme of courses delivered at Induction.</p>	

Equal Opportunities continued

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/ Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding
<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>1st Qtr 2004</p> <p>2nd Qtr 2004 and ongoing</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>See above re Interculturalism Awareness training.</p>	
<p>ORAC will ensure that a local Disability Liaison Officer is in place to assist staff with special needs and to raise awareness of disability issues.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Achieved and ongoing.</p>	

Equal Opportunities *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/ Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Implement the <i>Equality Programme</i>.</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>Since the April 2005 Report and arising from the Equality Programme:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An Equality Committee was established. • The tabular form of PMDS forms were not suitable for JAWS screen reading software for the visually impaired. A draft Interim Review Form in a plain text format suitable for JAWS was developed with some success in July '05 and further work is being done on adapting the Annual Review and Role Profile Forms for use next December and January. • ORAC has rolled out Bullying & Harassment training to staff, with a specific module developed for managers. By end July, over 45% of the staff had received this training and the balance of staff have been scheduled for training in Q4. 	

Equal Opportunities *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/ Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
Implement the <i>Equality Programme</i>.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrangements are in process for October 2005 to promote European Week against Racism which takes place each November. • Copies of the monthly publication metro Eireann are made available to all staff, with copies placed in all staff canteens. • A further Lunch & Learn on raising awareness of disability issues was held in September 2005. • A Disability Audit of ORAC buildings was carried out in May 2005. Awaiting report from OPW 	

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	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
The first stage of PMDS is fully operational.	2003	Achieved.	
ORAC will continue to implement PMDS and fully embed it in the organisation.	Started Qtr 1 2003 and ongoing thereafter	<p>All 2005 Role Profile Forms and interim Reviews have been completed.</p> <p>A review of the PMDS forms was conducted in order to make them more user friendly.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Following consultation with all staff, revised Role Profile and Interim Review forms were circulated to staff in June 2005. • The guidelines for completing these forms were updated to take account of the changes to the forms and issued to staff at the same time. • Amended Annual Review forms will issue in Q4. 	

Performance Management Systems *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>ORAC will continue to implement PMDS and fully embed it in the organisation. <i>continued</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PMDS forms for 2006 will be amended in Q4 to take account of the introduction of Upward Feedback. • A proposal from HR Unit for the establishment of a PMDS Implementation Group to further embed PMDS within the organisation and to oversee the implementation of Upward Feedback was considered and approved by the Partnership Committee and the group will hold its first meeting in Q3. 	

Performance Management Systems *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties
<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>Qtr 1 2003, 2004, 2005</p>	<p>The 2005 Business Plans for each Unit were developed having regard to the Corporate Plan and the Strategy Statement. In turn, individual Role Profile Forms reflect the objectives and commitments as set out in the annual Business Plan. The integration of assessment and PMDS systems is a matter for the Dept. of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.</p> <p>General Council Agreed Report 1452, issued in June 2005, covers the integration of HR processes with PMDS.</p> <p>Training in the new assessments required under the above report will be provided to staff in conjunction with Upward Feedback training from Q4 onwards.</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>Ongoing</p>		

Performance Management Systems *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Upward Feedback will be introduced in accordance with General Council Report no 1398. -A staff attitudinal / climate survey will be conducted.</p> <p>A code of practice will be developed.</p> <p>Training will be given in advance of implementation</p> <p>In preparation for roll out in year two, we will incorporate into the PMDS individualised feedback based on the generic template which has been agreed centrally.</p>	<p>1st Qtr 2005</p>	<p>Organisational Climate Survey conducted and reported on in report of April 2005. Each Unit was circulated with the overall organisation results and their specific unit results and have considered them in consultation with staff. Each of the Units have developed Action Plans to take account of the climate survey results and these will feed into an overall action plan for the organisation which will be finalised in Q4.</p>	
	<p>2nd Qtr 2005</p>	<p>A draft code of practice was developed and submitted to MAC in QTR 2 and is to be considered by the PMDS Implementation Group and Partnership in Q 3.</p>	
	<p>3rd Qtr 2005</p>	<p>A tender document was prepared and agreed by MAC and is to be considered by the PMDS Implementation Group in Q 3. It is planned to commence training in Q4.</p>	
	<p>4th Qtr 2005</p>	<p>A generic template was drawn up in Q2 and will be considered by MAC and the newly established PMDS Implementation Group in Q 3. Partnership will consider the template in Q4.</p>	

Performance Management Systems *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Individualised feedback will be introduced in ORAC in 2006 and in this first year of operation the individualised feedback data will remain the property of the recipient without any requirement of onward disclosure.</p>	<p>2006</p>		

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	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>	1st Qtr 2004	Achieved.	
<p>A detailed implementation plan will be devised following consultation with staff and Partnership Committee.</p>	1st Qtr 2004	Achieved.	

Modernisation & Flexibility *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties /Outstanding Issues
<p>Following a review by ORAC of current procedures, practices and structures, resources will be aligned to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.</p>		<p>As part of an ongoing review a number of initiatives have been taken to allow us move to a more efficient approach when dealing with applications. These include:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New arrangements were introduced to facilitate more efficient processing of prioritised cases releasing HEO's to focus on a more hands on approach to managing caseload & staff.. This included the finalisation of cases on the basis of an examination by a single authorised officer. ▪ Report templates were revised to facilitate more streamlined processing of cases. ▪ Projects were initiated to expedite applications from specific countries. Extra interpreters from the UK were drafted in to facilitate completion of interviews within the projects' time frames. ▪ Reallocation of resources to ensure optimum processing in view of reduced caseload and current status. ▪ Procedures introduced to ensure efficient and regular communication with colleagues in other countries 	

Modernisation & Flexibility *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties /Outstanding Issues
<p>Following a review by ORAC of current procedures, practices and structures, resources will be aligned to maximise efficiency and effectiveness.<i>continued</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Language analysis pilot project implemented to support the investigation of applications in relation to specific countries.. ▪ Reorganisation of country allocation across processing units. ▪ Changing procedures to ensure optimum availability of caseworkers. ▪ Reviewing and revising procedures in relation to adjourned/subsequent interviews. <p>As a result of these new practices, the number of cases on hands was reduced by almost 49% from 2,350 to 1209 in the period January 2005 to 31st August 2005.</p>	
<p>Further streamline prioritised processing arrangements, in order to take advantage of progress made to date in reducing number of cases on hands.</p>	<p>Ist Qtr 2005</p>	<p>In January we further streamlined the processing of prioritised applications by introducing procedures which allowed us issue recommendations within an average of 15 working days from a previous time frame of 6 weeks. This time frame has continued to be adhered to in all prioritised cases.</p>	

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties /Outstanding Issues
<p>Further streamline prioritised processing arrangements, in order to take advantage of progress made to date in reducing number of cases on hands. <i>continued</i></p>	<p>Ist Qtr 2005</p>	<p>With effect from November we will be in a position to offer all applicants (with the exception of cases which cannot be interviewed immediately for medical or other reasons) an interview date on the date they apply. This coupled with some restructuring of the case processing units will further reduce our processing times.</p>	
<p>ORAC will respond flexibly to new work demands arising from amendments to legislation or other environmental changes.</p>	<p>An ongoing area of action - see across for recent developments</p>	<p>Work practices are being adapted to take account of the following:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ The large number of countries with small numbers of applicants. Only 8 countries currently have more than 10 cases each on hand. ◆ All current cases have a higher complexity than heretofore. 	
Specific Action(s)	Completion	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation

	Date		Difficulties /Outstanding Issues
Implement the commitments contained in the HR Strategy.	2005 - 2008	<p>In line with commitments on the HR Strategy the following has been achieved to date:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A formal HR Checklist was drawn up and circulated to managers in Q2. This checklist is considered by units when planning and implementing projects and during the business planning process over the period of the HR Strategy 2005-2008. • On-site access to the HRMS system was provided to ORAC by the Department of Justice, Equality and law Reform in Qtr 2 • A tender for a flexi-system was drawn up in Qtr3 which will allow for devolution of functions to line managers. • Work commenced on the development of policies and support programmes in relation to the development of HR functions to Line Managers. • A guide to Staff on HR Matters has been developed and was forwarded to Head Office for observations in QTR3. This will be finalised in Q4. 	
Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties

<p>Implement the commitments contained in the HR Strategy. <i>continued</i></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A PMDS Implementation Group was established and held its first meeting in Q3 • The training and Development Strategy was completed following extensive consultation with all staff and was printed and circulated in Q3. • Bullying & Harassment awareness training was developed and rolled out to all staff. ORAC's Bullying & Harassment policy will be updated in QTR4 to take account of changes in policy at central level. • An Internal mobility Policy was agreed in consultation with the Partnership Committee and an agreement for lateral mobility with the department of Justice was put in place. • An e-working committee was established and provided a report to management in QTR2 along with a draft e-Working Policy and scheme. • An information pack for those preparing for retirement has been developed and will be finalised in QTR 4. 	<p>/Outstanding Issues</p>
<p>Specific Action(s)</p>	<p>Completion Date</p>	<p>What has been Achieved/Implemented</p>	<p>Implementation Difficulties /Outstanding Issues</p>

The development of a system of <i>Quality Assurance</i> for the organisation will be initiated.	Dec 2003	Achieved.	
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Modernisation & Flexibility *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties /Outstanding Issues
<p>A system of <i>Quality Assurance</i> will be rolled out to ORAC.</p>	<p>Dec 2004</p>	<p>Practices and procedures manuals have been developed in all areas of ORAC and are kept under review and updated as required.</p> <p>Initiatives in relation to the roll out of QA include: The QA systems developed in all areas of ORAC, have been continued and reviewed where necessary. Quarterly unit meetings have been held in areas such as, Dublin Unit, Scheduling, Reception, Presenting and Case Processing Units.</p> <p>Initiatives in 2005 included:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Case Processing Quality Assurance Review Group (QARG) has met and reported quarterly. The group reviewed completed asylum applications and judicial reviews for issues affecting the quality of ORAC recommendations. As a result of their review, a comprehensive protocol relating to the receiving and translating of documentation submitted by applicants at or before their asylum interview has been developed and is being introduced. • A review of the QA systems in Case Processing will commence in Q4 2005. 	

Modernisation and Flexibility *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties /Outstanding Issues
A system of <i>Quality Assurance</i> will be rolled out to ORAC. <i>Continued</i>	Dec 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • QA procedures have been continued and further developed to ensure the quality service provision in respect of translation and interpretation provided. These include independent verification of translated documents, the compilation of feedback in relation to interpretation at interview, and the introduction of interpretative guidelines. • Regular operational meetings are held with service providers for interpretation and translation. • Guidelines for the production of medical reports to support asylum claims, are being developed in consultation with UNHCR and other agencies. 	

Modernisation & Flexibility *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties /Outstanding Issues
<p>A system of <i>Quality Assurance</i> will be rolled out to ORAC. <i>Continued</i></p>	<p>Dec 2004</p>	<p>Procedures manuals are updated on an ongoing basis to take account of changes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HR completed their first QA report in May. • A check is done on approximately 10% of all queries to the Helpdesk, to ensure accuracy and timeliness of reply. • A ‘Personnel Clinic’ of an hours duration was held on a trial basis, in each of the ORAC’s buildings in the month of September with a review carried out following completion of the trial. • An examination by HR Training of the results of the Training and development sub committee’s work on evaluation of training was carried out to ensure that ORAC’s evaluation of training is in line with best practice. • Courses are continually evaluated to ensure maximum benefit to staff. 	

Modernisation & Flexibility *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Organisation-wide Quality Assurance mechanisms will be bedded down and monitored in a structured fashion</p>		<p>A cross-organisational QA/Risk Assessment Group has been established to monitor procedures throughout the organisation during the year and to recommend revisions where necessary.</p> <p>This group, consisting of APs from each of the areas in ORAC, met in July 2005 and reviewed all the quality assurance mechanisms in place in ORAC.</p> <p>As a result:-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It was agreed that customer service should be central to ongoing quality assurance within ORAC. ▪ A system was identified to address QA issues across the Organisation. ▪ It was decided that objective recommendations to address any QA issues are raised with ORAC Management. 	

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 achieve	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
A <i>Partnership Committee</i> will be established	July 2003	Achieved	
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 2006	See under 'Modernisation and Flexibility'.	

New Technology & eGovernment

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 eGovernment as set out in *Sustaining Progress*.

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
Develop a website for the organisation.	Qtr 1 2004	Achieved.	
Undertake a review of the ORAC website.	2nd Qtr 2005	<p>Policy information on website continued to be updated and reviewed.</p> <p>An accessibility review of the website was conducted as detailed in the last report.</p> <p>An internal working group reviewed the layout and content of the existing website and a new website will be launched in Q4 2005.</p> <p>ORAC contributed to the development of INIS website.</p>	

New Technology & eGovernment *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>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</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Timberlay House & Grand Canal Street - Hanover Street 	<p>Qtr 3 2003 Qtr 4 2003</p>	<p>Achieved</p> <p>Since February 2005 all ORAC staff have access to the Refugee Documentation Centre COI database at their desktop.</p>	
<p>Introduce a scanning system to facilitate electronic archival of files and electronic file management.</p>	<p>Qtr 2 2004</p>	<p>Consultants reported in September 2004 and their report has been considered. See below.</p>	
<p>Evaluate outcome of pilot scanning project and determine whether to apply more extensively to records management.</p>	<p>3rd Qtr 2005</p>	<p>A pilot scanning project was commenced in early April, 2005 for an initial period of 3 months extended to October to allow for more detailed analysis and consideration of the issues involved. A detailed report will be prepared and the various conclusions and recommendations contained therein will inform the final decision on the extent to which file scanning will be utilised into the future in ORAC.</p>	

New Technology & eGovernment *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
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	Qtr 1 2004 Qtr 4 2004	Achieved.	
ORAC will develop a policy on e-working and in that context establish a working group.	1st Qtr 2005	A Working Group on e-Working was established and completed its work in QTR 2, 2005. .	
Report from e-working group prepared.	2nd Qtr 2005	Report from e-Working Group submitted to MAC in Q3..	
Policy on e-working developed. A policy and scheme will be implemented and include a pilot e-working programme.	4th Qtr 2005 1st Qtr 2006	Draft Policy & Programme being considered by MAC and will be finalised in Q4.	

New Technology & eGovernment *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding
<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>	<p>Sept 2003</p>	<p>Dublin Unit staff continue to operate DubliNET and to implement changes as necessary, in particular, in the context of EU enlargement.</p> <p>Since April 2005, ORAC has been contributing to an EU-wide Dublin II Regulation website to facilitate discussion on the operation of the Regulation.</p> <p>ORAC has participated in the development and implementation of new lightweight pdf forms for DubliNET. We have tested and reported to the Central Unit on suitability of these forms and are awaiting acceptance of these forms by all other member states.</p>	<p>Awaiting sanction of forms by all member states prior to use.</p>

New Technology & eGovernment *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p>Implement the key recommendations of the Accenture Report for the asylum area which are specifically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - development of an integrated case management system - development of a central knowledge management system - development of a file tracking system <p>These projects are to be implemented in a three stage process, co-ordinated by the Asylum Policy division of the DJELR</p> <p>Stage 1 - completion of a detailed specification of requirements</p> <p>Stage 2 - procurement of solutions</p> <p>Stage 3 - design, development and implementation of solutions</p> <p>*This updates on earlier action and relates to a project led by DJELR.</p>	<p>2nd Qtr 2005</p> <p>3rd Qtr 2005</p> <p>4th Qtr 2006</p>	<p>Consultants CapGemini have continued to meet representatives of ORAC, and all other asylum agencies to determine their detailed requirements for the case management, knowledge management and file tracking systems.</p> <p>The detailed RFT has been published and the tenders are to be evaluated in Dec 2005 & Jan 2006.</p> <p>ORAC is participating on the Evaluation Team.</p>	<p>Extension of the project to include Immigration delayed the publishing of the RFT.</p>

New Technology & eGovernment *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
Develop an IT Strategy for the Organisation.	1st Qtr 2005	The IT Strategy for 2005 to 2007 was completed in Quarter 3 and an Implementation Plan has been drawn up.	
Implement the recommendations contained in the IT Strategy on a phased basis over 2005 and 2006.	Ongoing 2005 & 2006	An implementation plan for the IT strategy was developed and work is ongoing to ensure the full and timely implementation of the various objectives and targets contained in it.	
Participate in the implementation of an automated fingerprint identification system integrated with the Eurodac system and an Garda Siochana.	4th Qtr 2006	ORAC is currently participating on the tender evaluation team.	

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	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.		No change since last report.	
Consultants will be engaged where it is established that consultancy is the most appropriate means of providing a product or service.	2003 2004 2005 2006	Consultants engaged as appropriate, e.g. training, ergonomics survey, evaluation of scanning, design work for corporate publications, organisational climate survey.	
ORAC will co-operate with the employment of temporary staff as the need arises.		There are currently 32 personnel recruited on a contract basis in ORAC. ORAC has identified the business need to replace the two Legal Researchers who have resigned and have made submissions to DJELR to hold a competition to recruit two Legal Researchers on a contract basis.	

Attendance Patterns

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	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 2006</p>	<p>Throughout the organisation arrangements are in place to respond to our customers' needs, e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presenting Officers schedule their availability and annual leave 5/6 weeks in advance in order to accommodate the Refugee Appeals Tribunal (RAT) in the scheduling of oral hearings, they also frequently restrict their leave to coincide with days where there are no oral hearings. • Presenting Officers facilitate the RAT by presenting adjourned hearings on Fridays, lunchtimes and after normal office working hours, in so far as possible. • Caseworkers programme their availability 5/6 weeks ahead to accommodate the scheduling of interviews of asylum applicants. 	
<p>Continued</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff in Reception Units have a daily rota which enables the Units to be open to the public from 8.45am through lunchtime until business is completed. • Staff in Customer Services Centre operate a rota system to ensure service throughout all opening hours. 	

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	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 2006</p>	<p>There is general flexibility in the deployment of staff in ORAC to ensure that the needs of the organisation continue to be met.</p>	

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	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
Training needs will continue to be identified through the personal development plans on RPFs.	Ongoing	A list of formal business courses for staff in ORAC was prepared at the end of Q1 and revised at end of Q3, having been updated to take account of needs identified at Role Profile and Interim Review stage. A further review will be completed in December 2005 in advance of the commencement of the PMDS process in 2006. The Annual training plan is adjusted accordingly after each review to take account of emerging training needs.	

Training *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved /Implemented	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>346 training units have been provided to staff in the period January-August 2005 and included the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Specific interagency unaccompanied minors training organised in 2005 for practitioners dealing with very young children • Customer Service Training • Completion of the roll out of Interculturalism Awareness Training • Supervisory Skills • Assertiveness • Communication Skills • Internet (research) training • IT Induction training • Train the Trainer course • Refugee Status Determination (RSD) training for staff determining applications of minors and separated children • Exclusion clause training • Court Skills • RSD - Introduction to Asylum Issues • Writing Skills • Bullying & Harassment Awareness Training- staff module • Bullying & Harassment Awareness Training- managers module • Psychological support training • An Executive Coaching Programme for Principal Officers. • Training also provided in relation to Specific Provisions of Refugee Act. 	

Training continued

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved /Implemented	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. <i>continued</i></p>		<p>In addition, Lunch & Learn talks have continued in 2005 with 8 held to end of August.</p> <p>Further training to be delivered to end of year includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Refugee Status Determination Training (4 day) • Caseworker specific induction training • Completion of roll-out of bullying & Harassment Awareness modules to managers and staff • Induction Training • Interculturalism Awareness Training • RSD Workshops • Time Management • Presentation Skills • RSD-Caselaw and precedents • IT Training in Lotus Products • Managing Performance and Outputs 	

Training *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved /Implemented	Implementation Difficulties/ Outstanding Issues
Guidance and research papers will be developed to assist staff in relation to refugee status determination.	End 2003 2004 2005	<p>In depth briefing material based on profiles of our caseload were developed to support concentrated processing of applications from Afghanistan and Somalia, and further briefing material is being developed in relation to the Sudan caseload.</p> <p>Further specific workshops are organised for Autumn 2005: Lectures on emerging jurisprudence in the Asylum process organised for end 2005.</p>	
A training needs analysis will be undertaken to ensure that training and development are better targeted at job related needs and staff development.	Qtr 1, 2 and 3 2003 Qtr 1 2004	Training needs analysis finalised and sent to MAC for final approval in Q3.	

Training *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/ Implemented	Implementation Difficulties/ Outstanding Issues
Annual Training Plans will be prepared and agreed which will take account of the formal business needs identified by Units.	1st Qtr 2005 1st Qtr 2006	A list of formal business courses for staff in ORAC was prepared at the end of Q4, 2004 and was circulated to staff. The list was reviewed at the end of Q1 and Q3 and updated to take account of needs identified at Role Profile and Interim Review stage. A final review will be completed in December 2005 in advance of the commencement of the PMDS process in 2006. The annual training plan is adjusted accordingly after each review.	
The pending <i>Framework for Civil Service Training and Development 2004-2008</i> will inform ORAC in relation to further training and development plans.		See earlier reports.	
Develop a Training and Development Strategy	1st Qtr 2005	The Training & Development Strategy was finalised in Q2 ,2005and is being printed for distribution to all staff in Q3. The strategy was developed following extensive consultation with Management, Partnership, in-house trainers and all staff and covers the period 2005-2008.	

Training *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved /Implemented	Implementation Difficulties/ Outstanding Issues
<p>Implement the commitments contained in the <i>Training & Development Strategy</i></p>	<p>2005 - 2008</p>	<p>Implementation of the Strategy is on target for 2005 and a number of the commitments have been completed by end QTR 3 including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organisational training priorities for 2005 have been agreed by senior management. • Training linked to business needs have been prioritised on PMDS forms. • Formal List of Courses in place for 2005 and implementation of the training plan is on target. • PMDS Implementation Group established. • Tender for Upward feedback training prepared. • Coaching Programme for Principal Officers in place. • Roll out of Interculturalism Awareness training completed. • Bullying and harassment Training rolled out. • Policy on Induction drafted . • Review of PMDS Forms conducted in consultation with staff. • Code of Practice & Generic template for Upward feedback developed. 	

Training *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved /Implemented	Implementation Difficulties/ Outstanding Issues
<p>Implement the commitments contained in the <i>Training & Development Strategy continued</i></p>	<p>2005 - 2008</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 346 units of training provided by end August. • Psychological support project for caseworkers reviewed in 2004 and after review results analysed <p>Other commitments are ongoing and work has commenced on the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sourcing material for learning centre, including material on retirement • Amendment of the PMDS forms to include deliverables re On-the-job training • Storage of original course materials in the Training Unit (videos, CDs, hard copy training materials) • Work is ongoing to ensure attendance at Training courses. • To facilitate staff, IT provided ‘drop-in’ sessions. 	

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	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
<p><i>A Partnership Committee</i> will be established.</p>	<p>2003</p>	<p>The second term of office of ORAC’s Partnership Committee ran for one year to the end of August 2005. Since the establishment of the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 working groups have been established (Internal Communications, Equality (Phase 1 and 2), Corporate Social Responsibility (Environmental), Corporate Social Responsibility (Local Community), External Communications. • All groups except the External Communications Group have submitted reports. The work of the Corporate Social Responsibility Group continues. <p>The External Communications Working Group is due to submit proposals to the Partnership Committee by 1st quarter 2006 on the development of an external communications strategy.</p>	<p>Due to Staff movement during the year this working group lost some of its members. New members are in the process of being co-opted to complete strategy.</p>

Partnership *continued*

Specific Action(s)	Completion Date	What has been Achieved/Implemented	Implementation Difficulties / Outstanding Issues
Develop and refine the Partnership process.	Ongoing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff have been invited to attend as observers (2 seats available) at each meeting. Guidelines for Partnership working groups agreed. • Lunch & Learns have been held to promote an awareness of Partnership. 	

Certification by Partnership Committee

*I certify that the above **Progress Report** has been considered by the Partnership Committee for the Office of the Refugee Applications Commissioner*

Signed by Partnership Chairperson:

Date: _____