PACIFIC ISLANDS FORUM SECRETARIAT

Applicant Information Package

FINANCIAL ACCOUNTANT

April 2022
CONTENTS

About the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

About the Programme

About the Position

General Capabilities
- Core Capabilities
- Supplementary Capabilities

Position Accountabilities

Position complexities

Qualifications and experience required for the role

Functional Relationships & Relationship skills
- External
- Internal

Direct Reports

Level of Delegation

Additional Information

Change of Position Description

Summary of Conditions, Benefits & Entitlements
- Contract Term
- Working hours
- Salary
- Superannuation
- Housing
- Education
- Recruitment & Repatriation Entitlement
- Establishment Grant
- Health/Life Insurance
- Annual Leave
- Sick Leave
- School Holiday Travel
- Home Leave Travel
- Repatriation Grant
- Tax Status
- Other Benefits

Administrative Information
- Application closing date & requirements.
- Mailing & online Addressee
- PIFS’s Website
About the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat

Founded in 1971, the Pacific Islands Forum is the region’s political and economic policy organisation.

The work of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) is guided by the Framework for Pacific Regionalism (FPR), endorsed by Forum Leaders in 2014, which embraces, their Vision for:

A region of peace, harmony, security, social inclusion and prosperity, so that all Pacific people can lead free, healthy, and productive lives: and calls for;

The expression of a common sense of identity and purpose, leading progressively to the sharing of institutions, resources, and markets, with the purpose of complimenting national efforts, overcoming common constraints, and embracing sustainable and inclusive development within Pacific countries and territories and for the Pacific region as-a-whole.

The FPR is underpinned by the Blue Pacific narrative, endorsed by Forum Leaders in Samoa in 2017, which calls for a long-term regional commitment to act as one “Blue Continent” as the means to achieve its development aspirations. The Leaders ambition is for the Blue Pacific to serve as the platform to reinforce and inspire the region in its shared stewardship of the Pacific Ocean, and to reaffirm the connections of Pacific peoples across the vast oceanic continent, with its natural resources and environment, biodiverse ecosystems, cultures and, livelihoods and prospects.

For more information about PIFS visit www.forumsec.org.

About the Operations Services

The Operations Services division provides key services and infrastructure so that the technically oriented divisions may concentrate on the policy work, for which the Secretariat was founded. The key support services provided to the organization from Corporate Services division are in HR & Admin, Financial Services, Information Technology, Information Services, and Property Services.

About the Position

The role of the Financial Accountant is to ensure the integrity and accuracy of the financial system, reporting and preparing annual accounts (including managing External Audit outcomes and processes), focal point of contact for Internal Audit in areas under his/her responsibility, monthly financial reporting, management of the Fixed Asset Register, overall responsible for Accounts Receivable, reconciliation of the balance sheet and assisting with policy reviews and staff supervision.

The role is administratively accountable to the Team Leader – Finance and supervised by the Management Accountant. The person will work closely with all teams across the Secretariat to achieve corporate responsibilities for the organisation.
The Forum Secretariat has undergone an organisational restructure, with a view to achieve greater consistency across the organisation in the way workforce capability is developed, and capability gaps are identified and addressed. As such, PIFS has produced a Capability Framework (CF) that provides a common platform to clarify performance expectations and job behaviours required for roles at various levels. Details of each CF Competency may be different for the position’s Band Level.

**CORE CAPABILITIES:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Planning &amp; Prioritising</th>
<th>“Developing and committing to personal, team, KRA and organization wide plans”</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicating with Purpose and Effect</td>
<td>“Clear communication while knowing your target audience and the outcomes you are seeking”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Leading and Collaborating</td>
<td>“Actively leads self, others and organization to establish a positive and productive organization culture”</td>
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<td>Applying Critical Thinking</td>
<td>“Gathering, organizing and analyzing information for effective decision making”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Developing and Strengthening Relationships</td>
<td>“Working cooperatively and establishing, developing and maintaining business relationships”</td>
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<tr>
<td>Delivering Value</td>
<td>“Deliver Outcomes that meet agreed quality and timeliness measures”</td>
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**SUPPLEMENTARY CAPABILITIES:**

Supplementary Capabilities required include: building for the future, promoting effective workplace practices, managing and coordinating projects as well as using systems, tools and technology.

**Position Accountabilities**

The position is administratively accountable to the Team Leader – Finance through the Management Accountant and will work closely with the Finance team to advance the responsibilities of the unit. The position’s accountabilities will be aligned to the key responsibilities outlined below, but not limited to:

1. **Integrity and accuracy of the Finance System**
   - Review all journals prepared by Finance Staff to confirm correct accounting treatment and sign off prior to posting into the finance system
     - Ensure correct branch coding is being put into respective transaction lines
     - Entries are posted to the correct project and GL accounts
   - Prepare and post internal cost reallocation journals each month by 2nd workday of following month, including (but not limited to)
     - Office cost allocations
     - Telephone cost allocations
     - Annual allocation of in-house insurance cover for maternity, optical and outpatient
- Review and clear all travel acquittals prepared by Finance Assistant – Travel on a weekly basis for accuracy and correct accounting treatment prior to posting
- Check and verify all invoice entries before posted to general ledger
- Review of monthly stock take of inventory items and corresponding journals to ensure correct accounting treatment and compliance with related Policy and Procedures prior to posting by 2nd workday of following month.
- Oversee input of data and task allocated to respective finance team members:
  - Coordination of daily transaction entries with respective finance team members to ensure month end reports reflect all monthly expenses and reports are sent on time as per the monthly deadlines
  - Perform month-end and year-end GL closure processes
  - Provide oversight of payables workflow processing
  - Direct Supervision of Payroll, Travel and Finance Clerks

2. Reporting and Preparing Annual Accounts and Managing External/Internal Audit Outcomes and Processes
- Provide support to all scheduled internal and external audit of PIFS
- Ensure the accounting system, listings and accompanying documents and schedules are in audit-ready status
- Timely preparation of the Annual Financial Statement under IPSAS requirements

- Complete related journal entries by 2nd working day and Preparation of reconciliations by 5th working day of following month of the following balance sheet accounts:
  - All operating Primary Budget (PB) bank accounts
  - All term deposit accounts
  - Calculation of monthly interest and revaluation of all foreign currency operating bank and term deposit accounts (local and offshore)
  - Miscellaneous deposits
  - Accrued Others
  - Accounts Receivable
  - Interest Receivable
  - Accrued Audit fees
  - Funds Invoiced
  - Rental Bond
  - Provision for Bad & Doubtful Debts.
- Check balance sheet reconciliations prepared by Finance staff and ensure completion by 5th working day of next month
- Reconciliation of individual customer accounts and overall customer subsidiary ledger by 5th working day of following month, including
  - Distribution of monthly customer statements
  - Clearance of all outstanding entries into general “Cash” customer and allocation to correct customer or General Ledger code
  - Submission of overall aging summary to Team Leader, Finance and Director, Operations
  - Follow up of outstanding debts and recovery action for all outstanding amounts.
- Preparation of a complete set of monthly management accounts for distribution to Senior Management by the 5th day of the subsequent month.

4. Management of Fixed Asset Register
- Maintenance of fixed asset register
- Monthly review of fixed asset entries and repair & maintenance entries in GL to ensure correct capitalisation of regular assets and correct accounting treatment of attractive items and donor funded assets
- Entry of asset additions in GL into Asset Module of Financial System before 2nd working day of following month
- Ensure correct labelling of all fixed asset additions by 3rd working day of next month
- Retention of copies of all fixed asset invoices in specific fixed asset file
- Calculation of monthly depreciation and posting into GL by 3rd working day of next month
- Monthly reconciliation of Fixed Asset module to GL to be completed by 10th working day of next month
- Liaise with Property and IT services to ensure that FA additions and disposals are supported by required documentation and approvals, and trigger immediate update of FAR & GL
- Ensure physical verification is carried out for at least 33% of assets appearing on FAR by 30th January of subsequent year
- Prepare entries in FAR module and GL to clear any discrepancies as per physical verification above.

5. Other duties
- Liaising with financial system supplier regarding financial system maintenance issues and financial system improvements
- Prepare Membership and Acknowledgement letters for member countries to be signed by the Secretary General
- Assist in identifying risks within the operational team and implement internal controls for risk management
- Assist with review in formulating and updating of the internal polices to align with changing regulations (Fiji law & International Accounting Standards)
- Liaison with Bankers in relation to bank account structure
- Amending internal bank account signatory records when required
- Monitor funds credited into respective bank accounts and seek details of funds for receipting
- Liaise/arrange transfers within bank accounts whenever required
- Seek approval to write off bad debts or provide doubtful debts
- Backup for staff away on leave/sick leave.
- Maintaining petty cash register with float of $1,000
- Payroll processing in absence of FA – Payroll
- Reviewing payroll (and upload), payments, invoicing and general journals prepared by Finance Staff
- Ensure payroll is in line with the country law and effect changes in tax or superannuation
- Assist with Finance policy and procedure reviews
- Other duties as and when requested by Team Leader, Finance and Administration.

Note: The above performance requirements are provided as a guide only. The precise performance measures for this job will need further discussion between the jobholder and supervisor as part of the performance development process.

Position complexities

Most challenging duties typically undertaken:
- Ensuring accuracy of entries posted into the financial system
- Managing output from all finance staff to ensure monthly close off timeframes are met
• Follow up of outstanding debts
• Oversee proper recording of Fixed Assets, and
• Analysis of Balance Sheet Accounts.

Qualifications and experience required for the role
This section is designed to capture the expertise required for the role at the 100% fully effective level. This may be a combination of knowledge/experience, qualifications or equivalent level of learning through experience or key skills, attributes or job specific competencies:
• A university degree in Accounting, Financial Management or a related field
• A Chartered Accountant (CA/CPA) from a recognised institution
• At least five years’ work experience in a similar role; preferably in similar organization
• Good staff supervision skills, creating or developing a dynamic team
• Experience in computerized accounting system
• Excellent PC based computer skills
• Strong interpersonal and communication skills
• Strong analytical and problem-solving skills
• Excellent written and verbal communication skills
• Customer focus
• Ability to organise, coordinate and prioritize conflicting demands
• A good team player
• Possesses training skills.

Other Desirable Knowledge/Experience:
• Ability to work with minimal supervision
• Excellent staff supervision skills
• Excellent written and verbal communication skills
• Conflict management skills.

Functional relationships & Relationship skills
The role will need to liaise with many stakeholders, key contacts and typical nature of their relations are:

External:
• PIFS Creditors and Auditors
  • Preparing reports and official meeting papers, emails sharing advisory material or information on Secretariat processes
• Banks and other institutions
  • Advice and assistance in payments
• Training Providers
• Financial System supplier
  • Accounting and Reporting Systems management

Internal:
• Secretary General and other members of Senior Management team
  • Provision of written and verbal briefings on subject areas
  • Official internal communication seeking management approval/endorsement of papers, presentations, and resource requests
• Team Leaders
• KRA Advisers  
• All Staff  
• Staff Association

- Discussions on strategic programme directions
- Regular group meetings to share information
- Informal one-on-one conversations
- Emails and written briefings and/or seek inputs for work
- Collaborative Inputs to papers and presentations

**Direct Reports**

The role has up to three direct reports.

**Level of Delegation**

The position cannot authorize any cost or sign standard letters on Secretariat letterhead or approve any contractual matters.

**Additional Information**

- PIFS advocates for equal opportunities, promotes environmentally sustainable practices and champions health & well-being for its staff
- Incumbent is physically fit and able to travel frequently
- A current passport valid for at least 6 months.

**Change of Position description**

This position description may be subject to change from time to time in response to the changing nature of our work environment – including technological requirements or statutory changes. Such change may be initiated as required.

This position description may also be reviewed as part of the preparation for performance planning for the annual performance cycle.

**Summary of Conditions, Benefits & Entitlements**

The Forum Secretariat is part of the participating agencies of the Council of Regional Organisations of the Pacific (CROP) that have agreed through their governing councils to standardise employment conditions. Outlined in this section are the conditions, benefits & entitlements that accrue to the position of Financial Accountant.

**Contract Term**

- *Principle:* To ensure recruitment and retention of the best person for the position.
- *Practice:* The successful candidate will be entitled to a contract term subject to satisfactory medical examination and performance during a *six-month* probation period.
Working hours
- **Principle**: To ensure that the minimum legal standard is met.
- **Practice**: Normal working hours are 37 hours per week with the official office hours being:
  
  Monday – Thursday:  8:30am – 5:00pm
  Friday:  8:30am – 4:30pm.

Salary
- **Principle**: To ensure relative worth of similar positions across CROP agencies is maintained and consistent with the market, a sample of positions across participating CROP agencies are validated and sized to ensure equivalent salaries are paid for equivalent jobs. Salaries for all Secretariat positions that are advertised internationally, are assessed annually compared to the reference markets which are the median of the Australian and New Zealand Public Service Sectors and the Fiji All Organisations market.
- **Practice**: This position is placed at Band 8, is denominated in Special Drawing Rights (SDR) and paid in Fiji Dollars according to the average SDR/Fiji exchange rate for the preceding month. The starting salary will be in the range of **SDR 24,587 to SDR 27,660** per annum. At the 1 April 2022 exchange rate this salary range was equivalent to **FJD73,680 to FJD82,078**. For non-Fijian nationals, this salary may be tax-free.

Superannuation
- **Principle**: To provide the minimum legal requirement of the host country.
- **Practice**: This entitlement amounts to the minimum Employer Contribution rate as provided in the Fiji National Provident Fund Act (currently 10%), which will be paid as a cash supplement to salary or to a nominated superannuation fund. For Fiji citizens this will be paid to the Fiji National Provident Fund.

Housing
- **Principle**: To ensure that staff have access to a reasonable standard of housing appropriate to their position.
- **Practice**: Rental assistance equating to 75% of suitable standard accommodation is paid to incumbents of positions that have been advertised internationally. Maximum rates are reviewed annually. The maximum rental assistance payable is FJD3,000 per month or FJD36,000 per annum in Suva. The assistance for overseas locations will be set following a review of the rental housing market.

Education
- **Principle**: To enable staff to have their dependent children educated to a recognised and acceptable standard.
- **Practice**: 75% of actual costs of fees for tuition, board and sanctioned tutorials are reimbursed up to a maximum of FJD21,855 per child per annum (in Suva) and up to a maximum of FJD65,565 per family per annum.

Recruitment & Repatriation Entitlements
- **Principle**: To meet costs of travel, accommodation and for moving personal effects of staff and dependents to enable a move to the base station on recruitment and back to recognised home on repatriation.
- **Practice**: Airfares, packing and removal costs for staff, spouse and dependent children between point of recruitment and Suva will be facilitated and paid by the Secretariat.
Hotel accommodation for 6 working days is provided for staff on arrival and on repatriation. Reasonable removal expenses (packing, insuring, shipping and unpacking) from place of recruitment and on end of contract. A 20-foot container is the family entitlement for this purpose.

**Establishment Grant**
- **Principle:** To assist with settling in expenses.
- **Practice:** A grant equivalent to SDR 2,500 will be given to staff recruited from outside the greater Suva area.

**Health/Life Insurance**
- **Principle:** To provide standard health insurance.
- **Practice:** Health insurance covering local medical consultation, pharmaceutical benefits and overseas medical treatment (subject to certain conditions) and term life insurance equivalent to three times the base salary is provided for staff.

**Annual Leave**
- **Principle:** To provide for recuperation and recreation.
- **Practice:** The entitlement for annual leave is 25 working days per annum.

**Sick Leave**
- **Principle:** To provide for leave for illness or accident.
- **Practice:** The allocation for sick leave is 21 days per annum.

**School Holiday Travel**
- **Principle:** To enable parent-child reunion.
- **Practice:** One economy class return airfare per annum for a dependent child to visit their parent at the base station or one economy class return airfare for a staff member or spouse to visit their dependent child studying overseas.

**Home Leave Travel**
- **Principle:** To enable staff to maintain contact with their home environment.
- **Practice:** After having completed 18 months of service, expatriate staff members are entitled to home leave airfares provided they return for the remaining time of their contracts. The entitlement is for reimbursement of one economy class return flight between Suva and the place of normal residence for the staff member, spouse and dependent children.

**Repatriation Grant**
- **Principle:** To assist staff from outside the base station settle back in their home location.
- **Practice:** A grant equivalent to SDR 2,500 will be given on repatriation.

**Tax Status**
- **Practice:** Remuneration is taxable for Fiji nationals and may be tax-free in Fiji for non-Fiji nationals. It is the responsibility of the applicant to check the tax status of Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat salary in their relevant country.
- **Principle:** To meet the minimum legal requirements as agreed through the Establishment Agreement between the organisation and the host government.
Other Benefits

- Other benefits include family leave, maternity leave and special leave at the Secretary General’s discretion.

Administrative Information

The closing date for applications is **24 June 2022**. Applications should contain full information on education and career background. Applicants must also provide the names, addresses (postal & e-mail), fax and telephone numbers of three employment referees.

Interested applicants are encouraged to apply through our website: [www.forumsec.org](http://www.forumsec.org) where an information package containing the job description and remuneration details is also available.

General Information on the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat is available on the website.