



JOB AND TASK DESCRIPTION

Job Title: Director of Governance, Strategy and Learning
Division: Secretary-General's Office
Grade: C

Reports To: Secretary-General
Matrix Reporting also to:
Deputy Secretary-General (Corporate)
Deputy Secretary-General (Programmes)
Chief of Staff

General Information

The Commonwealth is a voluntary association of 56 independent and equal sovereign states. Its unique strength lies in the combination of its diversity and shared inheritance. Spanning five regions globally, it includes some of the world's largest, smallest, richest, and poorest countries; 33 of its members are small states, many of them island nations. The Commonwealth is home to 2.7 billion citizens, of which 60% are under the age of 30.

The Commonwealth Secretariat in London is the principal intergovernmental agency of the Commonwealth and its backbone, promoting democracy, rule of law, human rights, good governance, and social and economic development. Reflective of its membership, it is a voice for small states and a champion for youth employment. The Secretariat convenes summits and high-level meetings; executes plans agreed by the Commonwealth Heads of Government; promotes Commonwealth values and principles; and facilitates the work of the Commonwealth family of organisations.

Job Summary

The Director, Governance, Strategy and Learning provides strategic leadership to strengthen organisational strategy, results-based management, and institutional learning across the Commonwealth Secretariat. The post-holder will operate at the centre of the Secretariat's governance architecture, ensuring that strategic priorities set by Member States and Senior Management are translated into measurable results, evidence-based decision-making, and adaptive learning across portfolios. The role supports the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary-General's in driving organisational performance, accountability, and impact at Secretariat-wide level.

The post also serves as the Secretary to the Board, the interface with the Commonwealth Board of Governors and its Policy-Making Organs (PMOs), ensuring robust governance alignment, effective communication, and strategic coherence in support of the institutional reform agenda.

The postholder works closely with the Secretary-General and Deputy Secretary General's, and



in that capacity, manages the Secretariat's relationship with member states and functions and supports high level governance mechanisms such as Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) and ministerial meetings.

Task Description

- Develop and implement a structured engagement framework for consistent and transparent dialogue between the Secretariat and all PMOs.
- Facilitate regular strategic consultations and feedback loops with the Board to refine mandates, priorities, and reforms.
- Support the design and rollout of governance KPIs linked to the new Program of Work and CHOGM mandates.
- Provide executive briefings and governance intelligence to senior Secretariat leadership.
- Support capacity-building for Board Members and Secretariat leadership in governance standards, RBM, and fiduciary oversight.
- Lead the development of key reports and briefing packs for the annual and mid-year Board reviews.
- Lead the development, coordination and review of the Commonwealth Secretariat Strategic Plan, ensuring alignment with mandates from Heads of Government, the Board of Governors and Senior Management Committees.
- Provide Secretariat-wide leadership on Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning, including ownership of the Strategic Results Framework, Theory of Change, and corporate performance indicators.
- Oversee the design and implementation of an integrated MEL system that generates high-quality evidence to inform strategic decisions, programme adaptation, resource allocation and reporting.
- Ensure effective corporate performance monitoring, including annual results reporting, mid-term reviews, and contribution to audit and assurance processes.
- Strengthen a culture of accountability, learning and continuous improvement by embedding MEL practices across directorates and programmes.
- Advise the Secretary-General, Deputy Secretary-General, Senior Management Committee and Board on strategic risks, performance trends, and impact evidence.
- Lead Secretariat-wide strategic analyses, horizon scanning and scenario planning to inform long-term positioning and organisational resilience.
- Collaborate closely with Finance, HR, Governance, and Directorates to ensure strategic alignment between planning, budgeting, delivery and people capabilities.
- Represent the Secretariat in external strategic, evaluation and learning forums, including engagement with Member States, donors, and multilateral partners.
- Lead and manage the Secretariat's relationship with member states and functions by ensuring the provision of an effective Secretariat to the Governing Bodies of the Commonwealth (including Board of Governors, Executive Committee, Ministerial Meetings, CHOGM, Accreditation Committee).



The Commonwealth

- Supporting the Secretary-General and Chairs in developing and drafting agenda for meetings, papers, briefing notes, summary decisions, smooth running of meetings, as well as follow-up and reporting on governance matters.
- Perform any other duties that may be required from time to time.

Person Specification

Education

- A post-graduate degree in International Relations, Political Science, Policy Studies or similar.

Experience and Skills

- At least 15 years' experience in governance, institutional relations, or intergovernmental affairs within multilateral environments.
- Demonstrated understanding of Commonwealth values and operational priorities.
- Proven experience in strategy development, senior-level engagement, and high-level reporting.
- Strong written and verbal communication skills with a track record of diplomacy and discretion.
- Experience in management and leadership roles and evidence of being accustomed to working and succeeding in complex political and governmental settings.
- Substantial people management skills and experience including experience in recruiting and developing high performing and diverse teams, and in managing and supporting change.
- Ability to think strategically, including experience in planning and offering sound operational and tactical advice where required to achieve strategic goals.
- Financial management skills and experience including planning and oversight of budgets.
- Excellent communication skills including public speaking skills that are persuasive and confident in style.
- Good negotiating skills, with demonstrable experience in navigating successfully between differing demands and stakeholders
- Experience in working within different jurisdictions in the Commonwealth.
- Experience with working with a diverse workforce.
- Ability to demonstrate the core corporate values and competencies of the



organisation, including being able to operate in the pan-Commonwealth multi-cultural setting of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

Competencies:

Respect for Diversity

Works effectively with people from all backgrounds.

Treats all people with dignity and respect. Treats men and women equally.

Shows respect & understanding of diverse points of view and demonstrates understanding in daily work and decision making.

Examine own biases and behaviours to avoid stereotypical responses and does not discriminate against any individual or group.

Creates an environment where respect for diversity is embedded in behaviours, systems & processes.

Communication

Establishes a culture of constant, consistent, clear and open communication

Ensures information is communicated to and from the top level and filtered through the appropriate channels

Communicates effectively with and gains understanding of top level stakeholders e.g. Heads of member states

Planning & Analysis

Organises work programme with full cognizance of Board of Governance requirements

Effectively assesses and advises on major programmes/activities at a divisional level

Balances focus in order to deliver both Commonwealth Secretariat and member states' goals

Ability to interpret incomplete and/or ambiguous information

Effectively analyses and assesses new or uncertain critical situations

Decision Making

Makes informed decisions that are instrumental to the direction and profile of the Commonwealth Secretariat in general

Is confident of making strategic/critical decisions with limited information in time pressured situations



The Commonwealth

Applies advanced judgement in the approval of corrective action for the resolution of organisation wide issues

Creates a culture that values ownership of decisions and leads by example

Adhering to Principles & Values

Defines Commonwealth Secretariat values

Sets example and embodies Commonwealth Secretariat principles and values

Demonstrably protects the reputation of the Commonwealth Secretariat

Interprets and implements Commonwealth Secretariat principles and values

Leadership & Development (strategic)

Provide vision and overall strategy for the Commonwealth Secretariat

Creates a vision where the reputation of the Commonwealth Secretariat is upheld and consistently evolving

Communicates the Commonwealth Secretariat's vision, achievements and impact in a manner that inspires enthusiasm amongst employees, member states, and external parties

Establishes a culture where the creation and capitalisation of opportunities for staff development and fulfilment is promoted and valued

Provide top level professional advice in strategic issues at senior management committee, board of governor & EXCO level. Lead on strategic issues.

May 2019