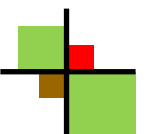


A decade of Service at the Authority



In this edition of the Knowledge Hub, we turn the spotlight on Mr. Eric Mwangi, who recently concluded a remarkable tenure of 10 years and 7 months at the Authority. Mr. Mwangi began his journey as Manager of Internal Audit and, through years of dedicated service and leadership, rose to the position of Director of Corporate Services — a role he held until his

departure. In this feature, Mr. Mwangi reflects on his time at the Authority, offering insights into his professional journey, the valuable lessons he learned, and the wealth of knowledge he gained over the past decade.



Eric Mwangi

Briefly tell us about your journey at the Authority. What motivated you to join CAK?

My journey in the Authority has been smooth, thanks to the very supportive management team and staff members. I recall my initial days at the Authority, when I was the only Auditor. Later, we brought in other team members, and we commenced the audit processes by auditing the technical departments for the first time. When I took up the position of Director of Corporate Services (DCS) in February, 2018, I was tasked with setting up systems and ensuring the transition from manual to automated processes. This became the main focus of my work at the Authority. I appreciate all staff members for supporting me throughout this journey, as their efforts made the entire automation process successful in areas like training, appraisal, imprest requisition, imprest surrender, recruitment, the Strategic Plan (SP), and Performance Contracting (PC). My motivation to join the Authority came from a news report about a penalty imposed on Ukwala Supermarket and Tuskys Supermarket in 2014. They had entered into an agreement prohibited by the Competition Act. That is how I first learned about the Authority and became interested in joining an organization that promotes healthy competition and consumer protection. When the position

of Internal Audit Manager was advertised, I applied and held the position for three years before transitioning to become the Director of Corporate Services.

Mr. Mwangi, you were part of the team that developed and implemented the 1st and 2nd Strategic Plans. Tell us about that briefly

When I joined the Authority, the first Strategic Plan had already been prepared, and my responsibility at that time was to consolidate resources to facilitate its implementation. My primary focus was on corporate services, ensuring that policies were in place. It mainly involved setting up facilities and acquiring necessary resources such as personnel and ICT equipment. In the second Strategic Plan, a consultant was brought on board to guide the process. The goal remained to secure additional resources and ensure sufficient capacity to fulfill the institution's mandate. Priority also included testing the law to confirm that all prioritized activities were acted upon. We also realized that the consultant would collect and compile our input during the drafting of the SP, and over time, we understood that since the Competition field is a unique area, finding a consultant who fully understood it would be challenging. With this experience, we began developing the Strategic Plan internally, guided by the Planning, Policy and Research department, progressing to

the third and fourth Plans.

Having joined the Authority from the public sector, I had experience with Performance Contracting from my previous employer. When I joined the Authority, I was able to guide the institution on PC matters, especially when I served as the Manager of Audit. I took the role of corruption prevention seriously, in line with the PC targets and reporting in the EACC reports. During my tenure, we never encountered any corruption incidents. We also integrated the PC into all our activities. The PC is a government tool that ensures agencies perform their core mandates and address cross-cutting issues affecting them. I am glad that the Authority has achieved good scores during my tenure as DCS

During your tenure as the Director of Corporate Services, you supervised the development and adoption of various administration-related policies and guidelines. Please name them and tell us more about them.

We developed several policies, including the Finance Policy, the HR Policy and Procedures Manual, and the ICT Policy. These were key focus areas that we addressed.

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During my tenure, we also developed the Mortgage Policy, which was driven by an identified need—staff required support in securing housing, in line with the government's agenda on affordable housing. This policy has helped retain staff at the Authority, with KES 230 million disbursed to employees through the mortgage facility.

The Finance Policy has introduced predictability in financial processes. It provides guidance on minor processes not explicitly covered in existing financial legislation. It also governs the investment of surplus resources, defines the mandates of account signatories, and outlines how the Authority recognizes its assets. The HR Policies and Procedures Manual serves as a baseline for staff-institution relations, ensuring clarity and consistency in human resource practices.

As the Authority automated its operations, certain ICT-related risks emerged. This highlighted the need for an ICT Policy to help identify and manage these risks, thereby promoting good cyber hygiene. The need for these policies arose from gaps observed in the Authority's operations. Their main objective is to provide practical solutions to those gaps. The first step in policy development was conducting a gap analysis to assess current practices. This was followed by a benchmarking exercise with other parastatals. Based on the findings, a draft policy was developed and presented to the Board. Stakeholders were actively involved throughout the policy development pro-

cess. Once approved by the Board, the policy was disseminated to staff for implementation.

Tell us about your experiences, roles, and challenges during the Authority's automation process-migration from the manual processes to automation (CMS/DMS). What opportunities should we follow up on?

I took up the role of Project Manager for the automation process immediately after my predecessor left. I was responsible for ensuring that project conceptualization was done properly. At the time I assumed the role, the departmental needs assessment had already been completed, and we needed to develop the Terms of Reference (ToRs) to commence the procurement process for a vendor. A benchmarking exercise was conducted by different teams in the Netherlands, South Africa, and Eswatini to pick the best practices and tailor them to our needs.

A vendor was identified and kicked-off the project by conducting end-to-end process mapping. Departmental champions were selected and participated in testing the process cycle on the developed system. Following successful testing, we proceeded with user training after the system rollout. During the process, we had anticipated some resistance to change. To mitigate this, staff were actively involved in the critical stages, which helped them appreciate and support the automation initiative. The development phase however,

took significantly longer than initially anticipated.

An opportunity the Authority could explore is to overhaul or upgrade the current system to incorporate Data Analytics. There is a need to make the system more intelligent by adopting a Business Intelligence model, ensuring continuous improvement and enhanced service to our stakeholders. It is also important to carry out another benchmarking exercise to identify a system that offers robust business intelligence or decision support capabilities, ultimately improving operational efficiency.

The Authority recently migrated to a new ERP platform. Kindly share with us the processes and any lessons learnt from the migration process

The process began with the conceptualization phase, aimed at identifying what was currently working and whether it met the present needs of both the staff and the Authority at large. The system that was in use had been purchased in 2018, but it was being phased out by Microsoft, which had discontinued support. This posed significant risks, particularly regarding security updates, potential downtime, and other vulnerabilities. As a result, we had to migrate to a new system—BCERP 365—which offers more advanced functionalities and enables integrated operations across corporate departments.



One of the key lessons learned from the migration project was the importance of ensuring quality management. It is crucial to put adequate measures in place to prevent data loss, particularly during system migration.

You did a great job leading the project that relocated the Authority's premises. Tell us about that. What lessons did you pick? What did the Authority learn from that process? What could we have done better?

The relocation was very unexpected having been served with an termination of lease notice by the landlord with only three months to find an alternative location for the operations of the Authority, and overseeing it was a significant undertaking. With the assistance of the Legal Department, the Authority was able to buy more time as the lease agreement gave each party a total of six months before termination.

The first step was to identify suitable office space. This was done through the engagement of the State department for Housing and other realtors with enough space that could be enough for the Authority. The second step involved sourcing funding from the National Treasury. With the able assistance of the Finance department, the relocation Committee was able to come up with a proposed budget which was shared with the National Treasury for consideration. The NT through the then Cabinet Secretary allocated the Authority funding through the use of Article 223

of the constitution which basically allows the National Government to spend money that has not been appropriated by Parliament if the expenditure is to cater for an emergency or when money was not foreseen or provided for in the budget.

The third step was to identify vendors through the able assistance of State department for Public Works. The exercise was quite strenuous, particularly due to the limited availability of space. However, the Authority successfully increased the overall floor space and, in the process, made provisions for additional facilities such as the Forensics Lab, meeting rooms, a resource center, and a media room.

One of the key lessons I learned from this exercise is the importance of involving people and delegating responsibilities. Assigning tasks to members from different departments to engage with external stakeholders, as well as forming committees or working groups, proved to be highly effective.

Share your experience overseeing the Authority's activities during the COVID period and the lessons learnt from the same.

The automation of the core and support processes really set the Authority on the right path in regards to remote working. It would be important to note that the file movement from one officer to another had been reduced from one day to three seconds, courtesy of automated processes. Therefore, at the onset of COVID-19, the Authority was

prepared to allow the staff to work remotely as all systems were accessible online.

However, the Authority faced a challenge of the shortage of laptops to cover all staff, Young Professionals, and interns. To address this, the Authority procured an initial batch of 50 laptops, which were distributed to employees.

Secondly, we developed Alternative Working Arrangements Guidelines to provide clear direction on how staff would operate, whether working remotely or when required to be physically present in the office. We also activated departmental call trees and requested heads of departments to reach out to their teams to check on their location and well-being. Additionally, we held regular online staff meetings to receive updates and maintain communication with all team members.

What, would you propose to enhance a good working relationship between the corporate services departments and the technical departments in the Authority?

Both the technical and corporate departments are interdependent, and it is essential to promote clear communication between the two teams to avoid working in silos. In terms of planning—particularly regarding resource allocation for activities and projects—this is typically done collaboratively between the technical and support departments. Therefore, there is a strong need for coordinated and inclusive planning

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There are instances where both technical and support departments require the same resources. To address this, I recommend that the technical departments regularly sensitize the support departments about their activities. This will foster a shared understanding and alignment of priorities, enabling support teams to better appreciate and contribute to the Authority's core mandate.

What advice do you have for the incoming successor?

The person should be agile and adaptable to new technologies, with strong people management skills to effectively address complaints or concerns raised by staff. They should be firm, analytical, and empathetic.

Which areas of training, both technical and professional, would you recommend for one to efficiently manage the role of DCS?

Recommended areas of training include Project Management and Change Management, as you may be tasked with introducing new systems or policies. Additional important areas include Leadership Training, Continuous Professional Development (CPD) courses, and Ethical Leadership.

Which information resources/ partnerships and collaborations would you recommend to enhance knowledge and skills for staff domiciled in corporate services?

Recommended partnerships and learning opportunities include, collaboration with Kenya School of Government (KSG) for courses in leadership, supervision, counseling, and guidance, cooperation with other competition agencies to share knowledge and best practices, enrollment in online courses, particularly in the ICT field, courses offered through LinkedIn Learning and utilization of the Authority's resource center for continuous learning and development.

In the years you have served at the Authority, what were your most memorable moments?

My most memorable moments were during the relocation process. While moving the servers, we needed to ensure minimal downtime, and we completed the move within five hours. Additionally, team-building activities fostered strong teamwork and bonding, creating great memories for everyone involved.

What ONE key leadership lesson are you taking with you from the Authority?

Leadership is all about empowering others to achieve their best.

And lastly, what's the ONE thing you had in mind on your first 100 days in the D/CS role, but have not managed to execute during your tour of duty at CAK?

Addressing the challenges of performance management, particularly the subjectivity often associated with evaluating personal attributes, there

were hopes of introducing a more objective approach to the assessment process. However, these efforts faced constraints, as the current scoring system is anchored in the Public Service Commission (PSC) model — leaving little room for significant adjustments or reforms in this area.

Additional Comments

I would like to sincerely thank the leadership, management, and all staff for their support during my time at the Authority. As a leader, you need the backing of your team, and without their support, I would not have been successful.

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