

Summary of views expressed by staff/staff associations on the proposal of opening up of D3/D2 posts in the four business branches

Views expressed by Staff/Staff Associations	Assessment of views expressed
<i>(a) Lack of professional knowledge and experience for effective performance</i>	
<p><u><i>D2/D1 officers' views :</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some officers, whilst raising no objection to the proposal, suggest that the departmental management should consider arranging cross-stream postings for the D2/D1 officers before implementing the proposal, with a view to assessing the feasibility of the opening-up proposal. For those who have reservations on the proposal, they consider that directorate staff of other disciplines without specific experience and knowledge of the jobs would have difficulties to make appropriate decision on issues which are totally outside their own professions. Moreover, generalists may have difficulties in providing advice/support to the senior management on professional and technical issues, which are outside their own professions. <p><u><i>Staff associations' views:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Directorate staff are required to make decision on many issues relating to their own disciplines. As such, it is important for D2/D3 officers to possess specific experience and 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> D3 and D2 officers of all disciplines, rising through ranks in the Department, need to be by and large general managers and all-round leaders. Given the wealth of their administrative experience and managerial skills in terms of leadership, strategic management and planning, and resource management, they should have the competencies to perform effectively respectively the duties of D3 and D2 posts holding different portfolios, particularly with the assistance and support of the chief or senior professionals under their charges, and the Heads of Profession in the relevant disciplines. In private sector, top positions are largely, if not all, filled up by multi-disciplined managers. Likewise, it is necessary for the Department to groom more managers with generic and strategic skills at certain directorate level to pave the way for their advancement to top management posts. However, we acknowledge the importance of training or attachment to other departments/bureaux/organisations in widening the experience and exposure of our officers and preparing them for

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<p>knowledge of the jobs. Also, they consider that D2/D3 posts should be filled up by professionals who will be able to put across the professional/technical issues to the public convincingly.</p>	<p>higher responsibilities of the opened directorate posts and will endeavour to devise a system for that purpose.</p>
<p><i>(b) Possible lowering of the professional standards of all disciplines</i></p>	
<p><u>D2/D1 officers' views:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some consider that specific experience and knowledge of the job cannot be acquired within a short duration and need to be built up gradually. The professional standard of all disciplines may thus be lowered if the directorate posts are opened. <p><u>Staff associations' views:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact on the professional standard is an area which attracts concern among staff associations, particularly those pertaining to the Works professional grades. They consider that professionalism is not equivalent to technical skills. Before qualifying as a professional, one has to go through several years' university studies and professional training before obtaining the professional qualification. Such professional knowledge cannot be easily acquired through training or attachment by an officer not of the same discipline. As most of the professionals have built up their professional experience over 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> At certain directorate level, the top management posts should be filled up by all-round leaders with competencies in terms of leadership, strategic management, crisis management, and resources management, rather than by specialists. The key competency dimensions of the D2 posts does not call for specialized skills or knowledge of a professional discipline which will be an advantage but not a pre-requisite. With the assistance and support of the chief or senior professionals under their charges and the Heads of Profession in the relevant disciplines, D2 officers of all disciplines should be able to perform effectively the duties of posts holding different portfolios without difficulties. There should be no question about their capabilities in making rational and sensible decision or any lowering of the professional standards.

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<p>years, they consider it necessary to proceed with the opening-up proposal carefully in order not to lower the professional standards.</p>	
<p><i>(c) Impact on promotion prospect and morale of existing staff</i></p>	
<p><u>D2/D1 officers' views:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some are concerned with the impact of the opening-up proposal on their promotion prospect. In particular, an officer of the HM grade raised the concern that assuming the track records of performance of officers of both disciplines are the same, as officers of the HM grades are junior than their counterparts in the Works professional grade at D1 level, they will lose out in terms of seniority for substantive promotion. <p><u>Staff associations' views:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff associations, particularly those pertaining to the HM grade, have expressed concern over the impact the proposal will have on promotion prospect of existing staff. Compared to officers of Works professional grades, it normally takes officers of the HM discipline a longer time to advance to the rank of D1. Thus, at D1 level, officers of Works professional grades will be senior to officers of HM discipline. Assuming the performance of two officers of both disciplines is the same, officer of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The selection of officers for promotion would be decided on a number of criteria such as characters, ability, experience etc, with seniority only being a major factor should two officers be considered of the same calibre. Moreover, it is noted that, at D2 level, officers of the HM grade are currently senior to their counterparts in the Works professional grades. In any event, the seniority position is not stagnant and may change over time. On the latter point, it is not exactly true that existing D3/D2 posts mostly fall under the HM discipline. For the four BD posts, the post of BD/AM and BD/D fall under the HM and Works Group disciplines respectively. As for the posts of BD/CS and BD/M, following the reorganization of the four former operational branches (New Development Branch, Maintenance and Construction Services Branch, Housing Administration Branch and Estate Management Branch) according to the Department's core business, the scopes of the duties have been revised with a mix of the duties of the former Works Group and HM Group. Of the 11 D2

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<p>the HM discipline will lose out in terms of seniority in the rank in accordance with CSB's guidelines on promotion matters. Moreover, as existing D2/D3 posts mostly fall under the HM discipline, the promotion opportunities for officers of HM discipline will be reduced as a result of opening up. This will in turn adversely affect the morale of officers of the HM discipline.</p>	<p>posts, 6 fall under the HM discipline and 5 under the Works Group.</p>
<p><i>(d) Potential staff management problem</i></p>	
<p><u><i>D2/D1 officers' views:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The proposal will lead to possible conflict among D2 and D1 officers of different disciplines. An officer of the Works professional grade raised the concern that as officers of other disciplines lack the professional experience/knowledge and hence do not speak the same language as the Works Group staff, they may encounter difficulties in commanding the subordinates' support. <p><u><i>Staff associations' views:</i></u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● It is difficult for non-professionals, without the necessary professional knowledge/technical know-how, to command the respect of the professional/technical staff. This will in turn adversely affect the morale of the staff. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● D2 and D1 officers of the same discipline may also have conflicts over issues on which they hold different views. There are currently many examples where the supervising officer comes from a different discipline from his subordinates. It is only a matter of time for the D2 and D1 officers of different disciplines to build up their working relationship.

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<i>(e) Inappropriate timing for the opening up proposal</i>	
<p><u>Staff associations' views:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Some staff associations, particularly those pertaining to the Works professional grades, hold the view that the opening-up proposal and the corporatisation proposal are related. As the corporatisation proposal is still in the pipeline, any discussion on the opening-up proposal should be deferred until details of the corporatisation proposal are known. Some staff associations also highlight the problems associated with the implementation of MEP initiatives and the merger of estate management and maintenance functions. They consider that there have already been too many changes in the Department. The Department should therefore plan and proceed carefully before introducing further changes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The current exercise on opening up the D3/D2 posts in the four business branches is in no way related to the corporatisation proposal. There is thus no need to defer considering the opening-up proposal. On the other hand, in the light of the many changes ahead, the need for the Department to have in place a dynamic and responsive directorate to manage these changes is even more important. The opening-up arrangement will help professionals of all disciplines to develop the skills and experience which best meet the Department's future role.