

## **C/210/2022**

### **Appointment of two (2) Geotechnical Specialists at the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development**

On 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022, this Office received a complaint from the Union of Civil Service Engineers (UCSE) regarding the appointment of two (2) Geotechnical Specialists currently posted at the Civil Engineering Section (CES) of the National Infrastructure Division. The following averment was made:

“The prevailing situation is such that the newly appointed Geotechnical Specialists, who were previously Engineers/Senior Engineers and if so maintained under the establishment of the Civil Section, would leapfrog their more experienced peers in hierarchy along with a salary scale similar to that of a Lead Engineer who is normally promoted to this grade after 18 years of working experience as Engineer/ Senior Engineers aspiring to be promoted to Lead Engineers, Deputy Director (CE) and eventually Director (CE) thereby leading to utter frustration and demotivation among senior colleagues.”

The comments of the Ministry of National Infrastructure and Community Development were sought and subsequently, on 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022, the Ministry informed this Office that in accordance with the Scheme of Service for Geotechnical Specialists, recruitment in the grade is made by selection from among Professional Engineers in the field of Civil Engineering who are registered with the Council of Registered Professional Engineers of Mauritius and who possess a Master’s Degree in the field of Geotechnical Engineering or Engineering Geology or Soil Mechanics as well as at least 5 years’ post registration experience in these fields.

Pending the recruitment of dedicated professional in the fields of Geotechnical Engineering to staff the Geotechnical Unit (GU), a team of Civil Engineers and Technical Officers had been entrusted with the responsibility to attend to urgent geotechnical matters.

After two unsuccessful recruitment exercises, including one exercise carried out by the Ministry to recruit officers on contract, two funded posts of Geotechnical Specialist have been filled with effect from 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022. Both new recruits come from the grade of Engineer/Senior Engineer (Civil) in the Ministry and rank 17<sup>th</sup> and 34<sup>th</sup> respectively in the grade. Moreover, a Geotechnical Specialist is not eligible for promotion in the Civil Engineering Cadre.

The Ministry further stated that the averment of the UCSE to the effect that the appointment of the two Engineers/Senior Engineers (Civil) as Geotechnical Specialist has created frustration among their colleagues who are senior to them in the grade of Engineer/Senior Engineer (Civil) was therefore not justified.

The Office of the Ombudsman therefore considers that there has not been any maladministration on the part of the authority concerned.