

JOB DESCRIPTION – ASSISTANT CONSUMER OFFICER

Position	Assistant Consumer Officer
Organization	Consumer Council of Fiji
Tenure	Three Years (Contract)
Duty Station	Lautoka
Reporting to	Regional Coordinator - Lautoka

1.0 Primary Purpose

To assist the Regional Office to function professionally, efficiently and effectively, and at all times meeting and contributing to the Council's overall objectives. Responsible for the efficient implementation of the Council's ADR & Consumer Advisory programme and the Council's CIM and RPA programme in the Western Division.

2.0 Organizational Context of Position

The Consumer Council of Fiji (CCF) is a statutory body established under the Consumer Council of Fiji Act 1976 (Cap 235). The Council is expected to play a positive role in achieving a market place where consumers are well informed, confident and protected from unlawful, deceptive, misleading or otherwise, objectionable practices. The prime function of the Council is to drive real change for consumers based on these five themes-

- Delivering consumer knowledge, skills and information to all
- Championing and protecting the interests of all consumers
- Assist consumers in resolving complaints with traders and service providers
- Driving change (policy/procedures/practices) to benefit consumers
- Enabling consumers to make responsible choices

3.0 Council's Role

The Council's roles are to:

- Improve consumers' ability to make informed decisions;
- Solve consumer complaints through Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR), Advisory services and legal representation;
- Advise the Minister on such matters affecting the interests of the consumers;
- Collect, collate and disseminate information in respect of matters affecting the interests of consumers;
- Support or maintain legal proceedings initiated by consumers, where such support is deemed necessary;
- Make representations to the government or to any other persons or organisations on any issues affecting the interests of consumers;
- Conduct research and investigations into matters affecting consumers;
- Provide debt management and consumer credit advisory services to financially illiterate consumers;

- Conduct market surveillance to establish product prices and compliance with product labelling and safety requirements including misrepresentation
- Work in partnership with local, regional and international organizations to identify and understand emerging consumer issues, conduct research and campaign on issues in solidarity to change local and global practices.

4.0 Responsibilities of the Position

The key accountabilities of the Assistant Consumer Officer:

4.1 Complaints Management

- Oversee the receipt, logging, categorization, and resolution of consumer complaints to ensure timely and efficient redress.
- Assist in handling escalated or complex complaints, ensuring fair and transparent resolution processes.
- Provide consumers with accurate information and advice regarding their rights, available remedies, and applicable regulatory frameworks.
- Coordinate with traders, service providers, and relevant stakeholders to negotiate resolutions for consumer grievances.
- Monitor and evaluate the status of open complaints, ensuring cases are resolved within the set timelines.
- Draft Press Releases and Consumer Alerts on consumer complaints/issues.

4.2 Consumer Advisory Services

- Deliver high-quality advisory services to consumers, empowering them with knowledge of their rights and options for redress.
- Provide tailored guidance to consumers facing specific challenges, ensuring they are equipped with the necessary information to resolve disputes effectively.
- Conduct awareness sessions for consumers on their rights and responsibilities, as well as on emerging consumer issues.

4.3 Mediation Support

- Assist and facilitate mediation sessions to resolve disputes between consumers and traders/service providers.
- Prepare case summaries and mediation records, ensuring all processes and outcomes are documented accurately.
- Actively participate in mediation sessions, providing expert advice and support to ensure fair resolutions.
- Liaise with stakeholders to build cooperation and trust, improving the effectiveness of mediation processes.

4.4 Data Management and Analysis

- Maintain accurate and updated records of all complaints, advisory services, and mediation cases within the Complaints Management System (CMS).
- Analyze complaint trends and systemic issues, providing insights to support advocacy and service improvement strategies.

- Generate periodic reports on complaints and mediation outcomes for submission to the Regional Coordinator and Manager ADR.
- Utilize data to identify emerging consumer protection issues and recommend proactive solutions.

4.5 Stakeholder Engagement

- Build and maintain strong relationships with traders, service providers, and regulatory agencies to facilitate efficient complaint resolution and collaboration.
- Represent the Council in meetings, workshops, and consultations related to consumer protection and advocacy.
- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to address systemic consumer issues and promote fair trade practices.

4.6 Capacity Building and Team Support

- Participate in training programs and workshops to enhance knowledge and skills in complaints handling, mediation, and consumer advocacy.
- Support the Regional Coordinator and Manager ADR in identifying opportunities for process improvement within the Division.

4.7 National Consumer Helpline (NCH) Support

- Monitor complaints received through the NCH, ensuring accurate logging and resolution.
- Provide advisory and follow-up support for consumers using the Helpline.
- Collaborate with Helpline staff to identify recurring consumer issues and suggest improvements to service delivery.

4.8 Research and Policy Analysis Support

- Conduct market research, surveillance and consumer surveys.
- As directed by the Regional Coordinator, carry out relevant field research, process data, and conduct data analysis for projects undertaken by the Council.
- Assist in preparing and producing information papers upon the request of the Council, general consumers and other organizations.
- Develop RPA related press release or articles on pressing issues.

4.9 Campaigns, Information and Media Support

- Assist in delivering education, information and awareness work through mobile units, community and school visits.
- Carry out all education, information and awareness work for the Council in the Western Division.
- Initiate and organize all information production and dissemination, education and awareness program effectively and efficiently.
- Organize and execute campaign activities.
- Write press releases and other related activities as requested by the Regional Coordinator.
- Contribute towards the production of the Newsletter & Annual Reports as directed by the Regional Coordinator/Manager CIM.

- Prepare and assist in the dissemination of information to consumers to reduce consumer complaints.
- Deliver oral presentations to consumers and stakeholders as directed by the Regional Coordinator.
- Assist in developing and mounting awareness-raising on key consumer issues.
- Represent the Council at key engagements such as stakeholder consultation and meetings on behalf of the Regional Coordinator.

4.10 Work Programme, management support and Reporting

- Assist Regional Coordinator -Lautoka in reviewing and developing Work Plan and Business Plan for the Western Division.
- Produce weekly, monthly and quarterly activity reports.
- Attend to reception duties, dispatch or collection of mails, refreshments for meetings, telephone calls and register.
- Obtain quotations for office equipment's.
- Maintain file and update Councils documents. Vehicle management and driving duties.
- Carry out any other duty as assigned by the Regional Coordinator or the CEO.

5.0 Key Selection Criteria

5.1 Qualifications

- A Degree in Law, Communication, Journalism, Social Science, Economics, Office Administration or Customer Services is required.

5.2 Technical Expertise

- Degree with 1 year experience in relevant field or Diploma with 8 years' experience in relevant field is required.
- A commitment to consumer issues and good knowledge of relevant consumer legislations nationally and internationally.
- Must possess excellent IT skills.
- Knowledge of investigation techniques and the process of ADR/mediation.
- Good understanding of the Consumer Council Act and its statutory functions.
- Fluency in at least one of the vernacular languages.

5.3 Key Skills and Competencies

- Demonstrated ability to organise work, manage time, determine priorities and meet deadlines.
- Commitment to social justice and the mission and vision of CCoF.
- Experience in planning and managing research work;
- Excellent communication skills (oral and written).
- Ability to multi – task.
- Good problem solving attributes.
- Self - Starter, self - organized and motivated.
- Understanding of Council's obligations to statutory agencies.
- Strategic thinker, innovative, performance driven and an effective decision maker.
- Must be professional and ethical.

- Demonstrated ability to work under minimum supervision and heed directives.
- Adheres to the CCoF communication standards, formats, procedures and style.
- Establishes and maintains positive communications with key internal and external partners by seeking input and feedback.
- Shows respect for different attitudes, knowledge and approaches.
- Coordinates own work with that of the team to meet agreed priorities and deadlines.
- Treats sensitive or confidential information appropriately.
- Must have integrity and insight suitable for an Assistant Consumer Officer (NCH).

6.0 Contacts

This position has regular contacts with the following organizations:

- Government Ministries/Departments
- Relevant Statutory Organizations
- Consumer Network
- NGO's
- Fijian Competition & Consumer Commission
- Commercial Organizations
- Judiciary
- Industry Groups and Professional Organizations
- Fiji Revenue & Customs Services
- Various Traders and Respondents to complaints.
- Other Consumer Protection Agencies.

7.0 Challenges and Impact on Organization Results

The challenges facing the position holder include the development of effective communication with the consumers and traders. It also requires building relationships with other organization including media, schools, NGOs, community groups, traders and service providers for advocacy work. The incumbent has to develop and maintain knowledge of monopolies and multinational companies to understand the strategies used which may not be fair to the consumers. Other challenges arise from the very tight decision-making deadlines imposed by consumers, media and other stakeholders, and managing Council's involvement in a range of programs which lands on the Council's lap unexpectedly. The incumbent is expected to take a positive approach to these challenges and develop creative/innovative approaches to handle them. Lateral and strategic thinking is often required to come up with effective and achievable approaches. The incumbent needs to be strongly consumer-focused and, frequently needs to prioritize and manage multiple tasks/demands set by circumstances.

8.0 Organisation Structure

Immediate Supervisor: Regional Coordinator (Lautoka)

Positions Reporting To You	No Of Staff Reporting To Them
None	None