

## **ITEM FOR ESTABLISHMENT SUBCOMMITTEE OF FINANCE COMMITTEE**

### **HEAD 163 – REGISTRATION AND ELECTORAL OFFICE Subhead 000 Operational expenses**

Members are invited to recommend to Finance Committee the creation of the following supernumerary post in the Registration and Electoral Office from 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2017 –

1 Principal Executive Officer  
(D1) (\$115,050 - \$125,800)

### **PROBLEM**

The Registration and Electoral Office (REO) needs additional support at the directorate level in assisting the Electoral Affairs Commission (EAC) and the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) in the preparation and conduct of the 2015 District Council (DC) election, the 2016 Legislative Council (LegCo) election, the 2016 Nominating Committee (NC) election<sup>Note</sup> and the 2017 Chief Executive (CE) election.

### **PROPOSAL**

2. We propose to create one supernumerary post of Principal Executive Officer (PEO) (D1) in the REO from 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2017 to assist the EAC and the CEO in the preparation and conduct of the four general elections specified in paragraph 1 above.

**/JUSTIFICATION .....**

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<sup>Note</sup> In accordance with Article 45 of the Basic Law, a NC will be formed to nominate candidates for the 2017 CE Election. For the purposes of this paper, it is assumed that the NC will be formed by an election.

## JUSTIFICATION

### **Manpower support to handle election-related activities in REO**

3. The REO is responsible for providing administrative support to the EAC in the efficient discharge of its statutory functions under the EAC Ordinance (Cap. 541). These include review and delineation of constituency boundaries, registration of electors, compilation of election guidelines and reports, conduct and supervision of elections and handling of complaints. At present, the REO is headed by the CEO ranked at the Senior Principal Executive Officer (D2) level, who is underpinned by two deputies pitched at Chief Executive Officer level and a Senior Systems Manager within its permanent establishment of 139 staff. Since the inception of the REO in 1994, the CEO post has been the only directorate post of the department despite the steady growth in both the volume of work and the complexity of electoral matters over the years. The CEO has been fully engaged in providing day-to-day executive support to the EAC, attending LegCo meetings, answering enquiries from the LegCo and the media, and performing his role as the Head of Department overseeing the administration and operation of the REO.

4. In the last two election cycles from 2005-06 to 2008-09 and from 2010-11 to 2012-13, the establishment of the REO was strengthened by the creation of time-limited civil service posts and engagement of non-civil service contract staff to cope with the increased workload arising from the preparation and conduct of elections and large-scale voter registration campaigns, as well as the related electoral and administrative duties. In 2008, in order to ensure the successful conduct of the 2008 LegCo election, a supernumerary PEO post was for the first time created to deputise the CEO in overseeing the electoral arrangements. For similar operational reasons, a supernumerary PEO post was again created in the last election cycle from 2010-11 to 2012-13 to deputise the CEO and head a dedicated Elections Division set up to undertake work relating to the planning, management and conduct of the elections in the cycle.

5. Starting from the last election cycle, the scale and complexity of the arrangements for holding major elections have grown substantially as a result of changes made to the electoral arrangements and the introduction of new and improvement initiatives. We envisage that the scale and complexity of the planning and preparatory work for the coming election cycle will be no less than the last one. The rising expectations of the public will also have an impact on many facets of REO's delivery of electoral services in the course of the elections. We therefore see a cogent need for the REO to ensure that a robust establishment with a sufficient complement of staff is put in place in a timely manner to undertake electoral planning and implementation work for the 2014-15 to 2017-18 election cycle.

**Election arrangements from 2014-15 to 2017-18**

6. In the coming election cycle, the Administration needs to hold four major territory-wide elections (i.e. the DC, LegCo, NC and CE elections) within a short span of 17 months from November 2015 to March 2017. Therefore, an early commencement of the required planning and preparatory work for the elections is imperative.

7. To ensure that the elections will be conducted in an open, honest and fair manner and in accordance with the prevailing electoral laws, the REO is required to undertake a full range of electoral tasks, which must be completed within a tight timeframe in accordance with the relevant statutory provisions. A full range of the work to be undertaken by the REO from 2014-2015 to 2017-18 is at Enclosure 1. Furthermore, in implementing universal suffrage in the CE election in 2017, the election will become a territory-wide one with a scale comparable to a LegCo general election for geographical constituencies. Thorough preparation and meticulous planning would be essential to forestall any mistakes in the electoral process as any irregularities or mistakes would likely undermine the credibility of the election system and affect the integrity of the elections. We therefore see the need to have an officer with rich administrative experience, the right calibre and appropriate seniority to oversee the overall planning and execution work of the entire electoral cycle for the four major elections against a tight timetable.

Encl. 1

**Need for a supernumerary PEO post**

8. Having regard to the above, we propose to create a supernumerary PEO post so as to put in place a dedicated directorate officer in REO to spearhead the formulation and execution of the detailed electoral arrangements, which include, inter alia –

- (a) developing detailed work plans which include setting milestone dates at various preparatory stages and conducting full testing of new features or improved measures to ensure feasibility before adoption;
- (b) steering the incorporation of the new electoral arrangements into the existing ones and taking them through implementation;
- (c) making suitable control arrangements to monitor progress and facilitate supervision of elections by the EAC;

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- (d) reviewing the entire electoral process and exploring options to further enhance the efficiency of the voting and counting procedures;
- (e) exploring and employing information technology options to assist the electoral process as far as practicable;
- (f) mapping out staff recruitment strategies and formulating new and enhanced staff training programmes to cope with increased workload and implementation of new electoral arrangements;
- (g) drawing up contingency plans for major tasks to cater for unforeseeable eventualities;
- (h) representing the REO in attending various inter-departmental working groups or meetings and seeing to it that the required liaison and co-ordination work can proceed smoothly to ensure timely provision of resources and support services to elections and finalisation of relevant electoral arrangements, given that many of the above tasks require cooperation, input and support of other government departments; and
- (i) representing the REO in many other senior level meetings with outside bodies including the venue vendors, pressure groups, political parties, etc. on matters relating to election preparation and execution.

9. The aforesaid tasks have to be carried out concurrently within the election cycle. Experience from the previous election cycles shows that a dedicated directorate officer, in addition to the CEO, was necessary for providing the required personal attention and direct oversight for the conduct of the major elections. Otherwise, the CEO, being the only directorate post under REO's current establishment, will be overloaded with too wide a spectrum of duties during the elections when he will have to attend personally to the overall planning, management and conduct of the elections. The level and complexity of the responsibilities mentioned above involve complex and sensitive issues cutting across policy and other areas which demand dedicated efforts and require coordination and input at a directorate level. We therefore propose that a supernumerary PEO post should be created, to be designated as Principal Electoral Officer, to deputise the CEO and underpin him in steering and overseeing the detailed work related to the planning, preparation and conduct of the elections from 2014-15 to 2017-18 as deliberated in paragraph 8 above.

10. Experience in the past two election cycles shows that the timely provision of the PEO post proved to be both necessary and effective for augmenting the executive capacity of the REO to a level required for ensuring that the whole electoral process was carried out in a smooth manner. The additional PEO post provided dedicated directorate input to spearhead the detailed planning and execution work and valuable support in assisting the CEO to coordinate different phases of the electoral process. The review exercise on the demarcation of constituency boundaries for the 2015 DC election is expected to be in full swing in the second quarter of 2014. At about the same time, the REO will need to kick-start its planning and preparatory work for the elections in 2015, 2016 and 2017. We therefore see a pressing need for an early creation of a supernumerary PEO post to ensure that the REO will have dedicated directorate input in the early stage to oversee the overall electoral arrangements relating to the planning, management and conduct of elections throughout the coming election cycle. Accordingly, we propose that the PEO post be created for 45 months from 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2017. The PEO post is required to be retained until December 2017 for overseeing the related electoral work after the conduct of the 2017 CE election in March 2017, conducting comprehensive reviews on the four elections from 2015 to 2017 and building a knowledge database so that the REO can draw on such experience when planning for the next round of elections. The proposed job description of the PEO post and the existing and proposed organisation charts of the REO are in Enclosures 2 to 4.

Encls.  
2 - 4

### **Additional Non-directorate Posts**

11. To cope with the extremely tight timetable and huge workload, a dedicated Elections Division will be established to handle the huge volume of publicity work, undertake detailed planning and execute the electoral arrangements for each of the elections in parallel. To this end, we propose to create 74 time-limited non-directorate posts in 2014-15 which will be adjusted as appropriate according to the workload requirement within the coming election cycle.

### **Alternatives Considered**

12. The CEO is the only directorate officer under the REO's establishment, and hence there is no room for redeployment at the directorate level in the REO. We also consider it impracticable for the CEO to manage all the above tasks without strengthening the directorate support of the REO because the CEO is already fully loaded in providing executive support to the EAC and administering the day-to-day operation of the REO. The lack of support from an additional officer at directorate level in the REO would pose an unbearable risk to the smooth conduct of elections. The alternative of engaging NCSC staff has been explored but is considered not viable due to the complexity and the sensitive nature of the duties involved and the difficulty for an outsider to be conversant with the government rules and regulations within a short span of time.

**/FINANCIAL .....**

## FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

13. The proposed creation of a supernumerary PEO post will bring about an additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point of \$1,465,200. The additional full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$1,954,000.

14. The additional notional annual salary cost at mid-point for the proposed 74 non-directorate posts is \$43,935,420 and the full annual average staff cost, including salaries and staff on-cost, is \$61,526,000. Subject to the Finance Committee's approval of the above directorate post, the REO will include sufficient provision in the draft Estimates of the relevant financial years to meet the cost of the proposal.

## PUBLIC CONSULTATION

15. We briefed the LegCo Panel on Constitutional Affairs on 21 October 2013 on the proposed creation of the PEO post. The Panel noted the proposal without objection.

## ESTABLISHMENT CHANGES

16. The establishment changes in the REO for the last two years are as follows –

Establishment (Note)	Number of posts			
	Existing (as at 1 November 2013)	As at 1 April 2013	As at 1 April 2012	As at 1 April 2011
A	1 <sup>#</sup>	1 <sup>^</sup>	2	2
B	8	8 <sup>^</sup>	27 <sup>@</sup>	20
C	129	123 <sup>^</sup>	148 <sup>@</sup>	131
<b>Total</b>	<b>138</b>	<b>132<sup>^</sup></b>	<b>177<sup>@</sup></b>	<b>153</b>

Note:

A – ranks in the directorate pay scale or equivalent

B – non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is above MPS Point 33 or equivalent

C – non-directorate ranks, the maximum pay point of which is at or below MPS Point 33 or equivalent

# – as at 1 November 2013, there was no unfilled directorate post in REO.

<sup>^</sup> – the reduction in establishment was mainly due to the lapse of time-limited posts upon the completion of the 2012 LegCo election.

<sup>@</sup> – the increase in establishment was mainly due to the creation of time-limited posts for the preparation and conduct of the 2012 LegCo election.

/CIVIL .....

**CIVIL SERVICE BUREAU COMMENTS**

17. The Civil Service Bureau supports the proposed creation of the supernumerary PEO post for 45 months from 1 April 2014 to 31 December 2017 to assist the EAC and the CEO in the preparation and conduct of the 2015 DC election, the 2016 LegCo election, the 2016 NC election and the 2017 CE election. The grading and ranking of the proposed post are appropriate having regard to the level and scope of responsibilities required.

**ADVICE OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON DIRECTORATE SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE**

18. As the post is proposed on a supernumerary basis, its creation, if approved, will be reported to the Standing Committee on Directorate Salaries and Conditions of Service in accordance with the agreed procedure.

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Constitutional and Mainland Affairs Bureau  
November 2013

**Major responsibilities to be undertaken by the  
Registration and Electoral Office  
For the four general elections from 2014-15 to 2017-18**

- (a) Making amendments to the existing subsidiary legislation governing voter registration and electoral arrangements of the respective elections;
- (b) reviewing and updating the boundaries of District Council constituency areas and Legislative Council geographical constituencies, conducting public consultation exercises and notifying the affected registered voters;
- (c) launching voter registration drives, conducting vetting exercises/updating particulars of registered electors to ensure accuracy and compiling voter registers;
- (d) planning and launching publicity programmes for the four elections;
- (e) reviewing and updating the Electoral Affairs Commission electoral guidelines for the four elections and conducting the concerned public consultation exercises;
- (f) planning and carrying out recruitment exercises for the appointment of polling and counting staff, and organising comprehensive training programmes for the staff to ensure that they can effectively discharge the polling and counting duties;
- (g) planning and making detailed logistical arrangements for the four elections, including the identification and booking of suitable venues for use as polling stations, counting stations and the central counting stations, acquisition of electoral equipment and services and the production of comprehensive logistical plans for delivery of electoral equipment to polling and counting stations;
- (h) printing and drawing up dispatch arrangements of election-related publicity materials and poll cards to electors, and designing and printing ballot papers;
- (i) appointing Returning Officers and Nomination Advisory Committees, and making publicity arrangements on candidate nominations for the four elections;

/(j) .....



- (j) organising briefings for candidates and preparing updated electoral documents for candidates and their agents;
  - (k) planning and setting up the Central Command Centre to coordinate the operation of all polling/counting stations and provide related support services on the polling day;
  - (l) planning and setting up the Statistical Information Centre and formulating plans and methodology on collection and compilation of electoral statistical reports and the release of such information to the public;
  - (m) handling election complaints and preparing election reports according to the statutory schedule; and
  - (n) devising comprehensive contingency plans for each election.
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**Proposed Job Description  
Principal Electoral Officer**

**Rank** : Principal Executive Officer (D1)

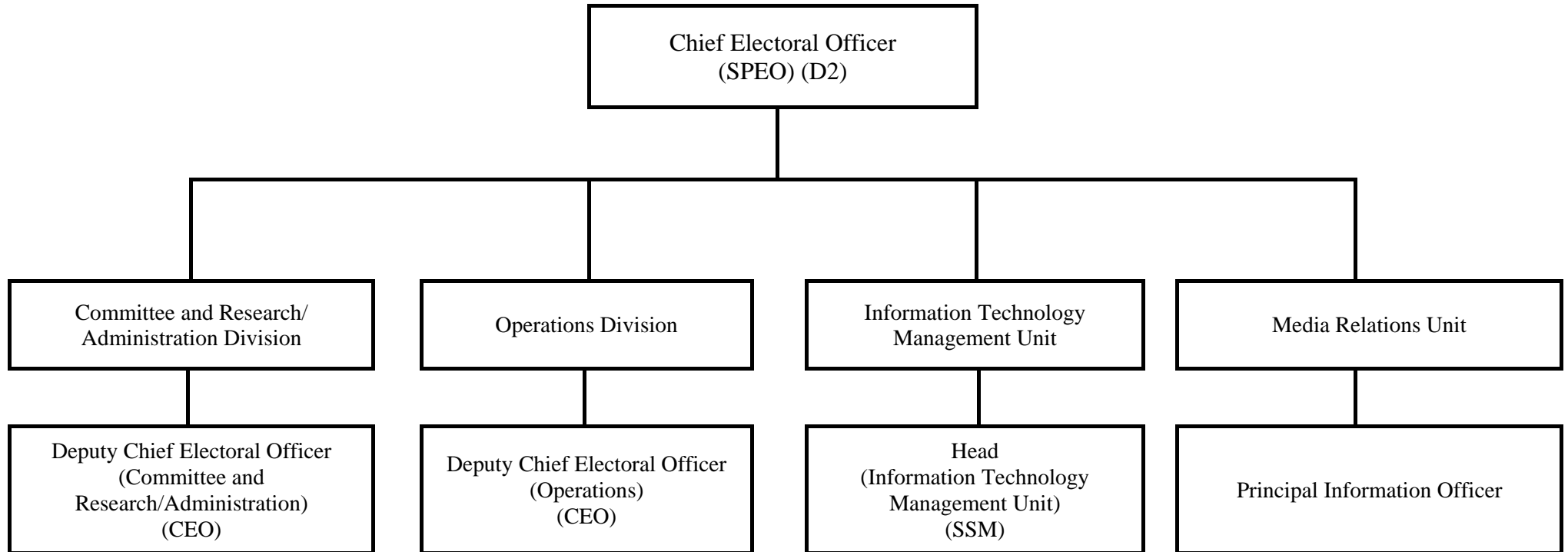
**Responsible to** : Chief Electoral Officer (Senior Principal Executive Officer (D2))

**Main Duties and Responsibilities –**

1. To oversee the Election Divisions for the preparation and conduct of the 2015 District Council (DC) election, the 2016 Legislative Council (LegCo) election, the 2016 Nominating Committee (NC) election and the 2017 Chief Executive (CE) election.
2. To supervise four Deputy Chief Electoral Officers at the Chief Executive Officer rank, being the heads of the four sub-divisions under the Elections Division, to ensure the overall coordination of work for efficient resource and operational management.
3. To evaluate legislative proposals and provide executive support in legislative amendment exercises.
4. To represent the Chief Electoral Officer (CEO) and the Registration and Electoral Office at inter-departmental meetings and negotiate with various bureaux and departments for the smooth planning and conduct of the 2015 DC election, the 2016 LegCo election, the 2016 NC election and the 2017 CE election.
5. To deputise the CEO in providing executive support to the Electoral Affairs Commission to implement a wide range of electoral activities.
6. To provide policy and strategic support to the CEO in the implementation of new electoral arrangements including those for the 2017 CE election in particular and to conduct related research and operational trials.
7. To consolidate, review and revise contingency plans for the major elections.

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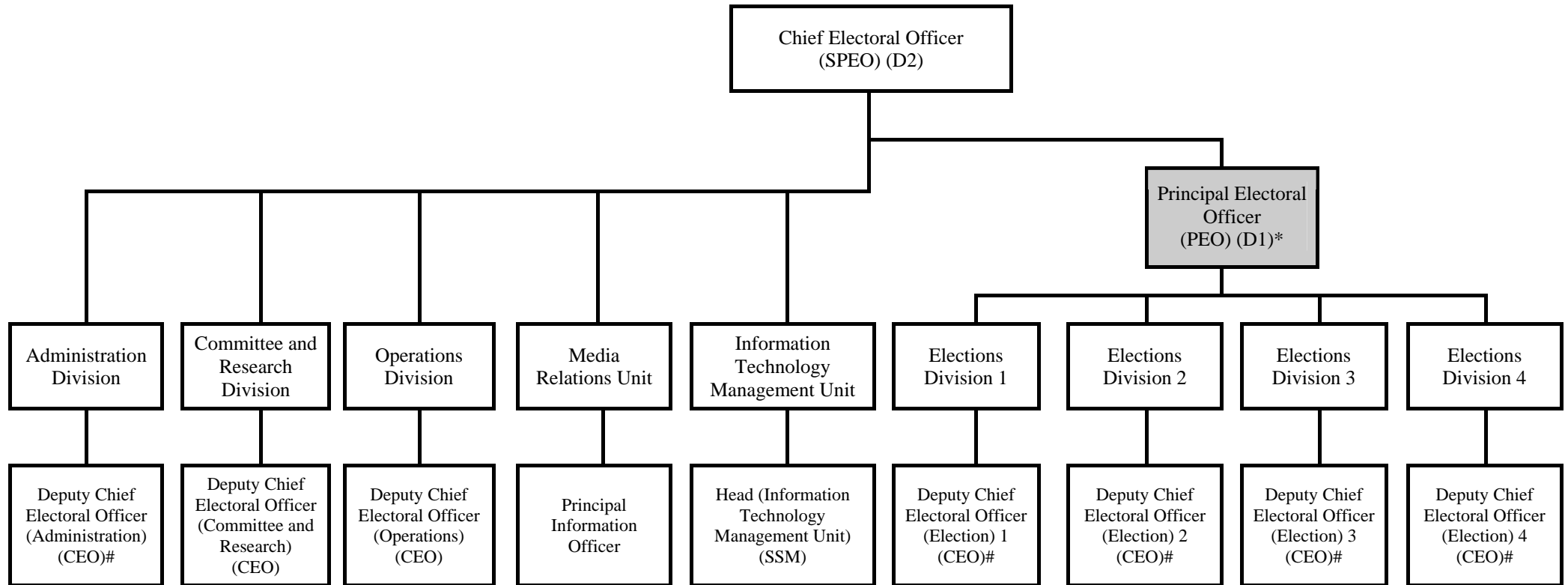
**Existing Organisation Chart of Registration and Electoral Office**



**Legend:**

- SPEO Senior Principal Executive Officer
- PEO Principal Executive Officer
- CEO Chief Executive Officer
- SSM Senior Systems Manager

**Proposed Organisation Chart of Registration and Electoral Office**



**Legend :**

SPEO Senior Principal Executive Officer  
 PEO Principal Executive Officer  
 CEO Chief Executive Officer  
 SSM Senior Systems Manager

\* Proposed supernumerary directorate post  
 # Time-limited posts proposed to be created