

# chief directorate

**The Chief Directorate: Corporate Services is responsible for providing a support service to the entire GCIS. The GCIS has emerged from a restructuring process that resulted in Corporate Services and the CSA being separated into two chief directorates. Human Resources Management, Training and Development and Internal Communications fall under the Directorate: Human Resources, while Finance and Logistics are located in the Directorate: Financial Management. The Directorate: Information Technology is a new one reporting to the Chief Directorate: Corporate Services.**

The greatest challenge facing Corporate Services is to excel in the support service provided to the GCIS. Through a Corporate Services Improvement Project, the chief directorate aims to improve its performance. It is operating in an era of the new Public Service Regulations, and this will be reflected by a creative, innovative approach to the Public Service.

## A. Directorate: Financial Management

The directorate provides effective financial management support through continuous improvement of systems and processes and through the effective use of financial management technologies.

During its restructuring process, the GCIS upgraded the financial management division to be headed by a director. This section is staffed by 15 people who are responsible for the budget process, management of salaries, financial books and payment of all GCIS debts. Through this team, the GCIS has managed to introduce a number of improvements in the managing of its finances.

### Key successes

- Creation of a fully functional Finance Directorate with adequately trained personnel.
- Obtaining an increase in the GCIS's Medium-term Expenditure Framework (MTEF) baseline from

R48 million to R60 million for 2000/2001.

- Setting up an effective system which provides support to management in the coordination and controlling of its budget.
- Strengthening the Internal Audit Unit has presented challenges for the Finance Directorate in ensuring the proper management of financial records.
- The combination of the Finance Unit and Logistics section, which will further improve the financial and provisioning functions of the GCIS.

### Challenges

- Staff require continuous training to keep up with the changes introduced by the Department of State Expenditure. System Controllers and Provisioning Clerks have attended training courses organised by State Expenditure.
- In February 2000, the GCIS will be one of the departments where the new Logis system will be introduced in government. Logis is a system that enables the interfacing of the Financial Management System (FMS) and Persal system. Through this function we will be able to obtain expenditure reports that incorporate the personnel and operational figures, and will also assist us to keep accurate control of our stores and inventory.
- Through the Corporate Services Improvement Project, the Logistics and Auxiliary Services will embark on a major re-engineering of its work processes.

## B. Internal Audit Section

This section independently appraises corporate business risks, the adequacy and effectiveness of the system of internal controls and the quality of performance of the GCIS and its regional offices. Through the audit committee, the section provides information on these functions to the Secretariat.

In 1998, the Internal Audit Section was moved out of the Finance Subdirectorate to be an independent unit, reporting to the Chief Director: Corporate Services and having

direct access to the Chief Executive Officer.

The staff complement was increased from one officer to four during 1999 with the appointment of two senior internal auditors (both appropriately qualified with relevant experience in the auditing field) and one official from the Finance Section.

The first summary report of work done by the section was submitted to the Audit Committee, which is chaired by the Chief Executive Officer. The internal audit reports highlighted various shortcomings, most of which management has already started to address.

The section is building awareness of its role to all regional offices as well as at Head Office, promoting the importance of internal controls within the GCIS. Workshops will be held in other regions not yet covered as well as at Head Office during 2000.

The Head of Internal Audit serves on various committees within the GCIS, including the Departmental Tender Committee, *Indibano* (top management meetings), and the Information Technology Committee.

## C. Information Technology Section

The section oversaw the Year 2000 Project across the GCIS. This project entailed the inventory, assessment, rectification and verification of all computer-based equipment to ensure Year 2000 compliance before the turn of the millennium.

This project was initiated to prevent failure of software and hardware owing to the incorrect interpretation of two-digit year fields. The GCIS participated in the national Year 2000 programme coordinated by the National Year 2000 Decision Support Centre. Through the State Tender Board contract RTG 9962, the GCIS managed the possible impact of the century date change. No system failures were experienced during the turn of the century.

The outdated Compaq workstations, however, reverted to a date of January 1980. This was not critical since these workstations could be manually set to the correct date via the operating system. These workstations will be replaced before April 2000 with fully compliant workstations. No other failures have been recorded to date.

### Other major projects included:

- Macintosh systems: Macintosh computers have been purchased for specialised applications. These have been installed with full connectivity to the Local Area Network (LAN). Training has been provided for support.
- Local Area Networks: Cabling, server network points and patch panel installation were carried out at Johannesburg, Pietersburg, Nelspruit, Bloemfontein, Kimberley, Durban and Port Elizabeth. All these networks were completed in the first half of 1999. Mmabatho and Cape Town will follow depending on decisions taken by management concerning the location of these regional offices.
- Wide Area Network: Diginet lines, STU units and routers were installed at the seven offices mentioned above. The seven offices are inter-linked along with the head office through the OpenNet Network as of September 1999. This connection allows full e-mail and Internet access to all users as well as sharing of IT resources.
- Video-conferencing systems: Tender RT 795 GE for the installation of video-conferencing equipment was awarded to CANON SA. Subsequently, systems have been installed at the Union Buildings, GCIS Head Office, Tuynhuis, Goodhope R102 and Tuynhuis Auditorium. All systems have been tested and used for several meetings.

## D. Directorate: Human Resources

The directorate provides support in the development of good human resources management practices, good human resources development and good internal communication.

In the field of human resource development, the following successes were achieved:

- Sensitising GCIS staff to the new Public Service Regulations through the organisation of workshops for head office and GICs.
- Providing training to other government departments and provinces in fields such as diversity management.
- Introducing HIV/AIDS programmes to GCIS staff by educating staff about HIV/AIDS; inviting speakers from MEDUNSA, the Department of Welfare and People Living with AIDS to share experiences.

The Directorate is attempting to secure a proper training venue, and will be marketing its services throughout the GCIS.

Accreditation will be sought for courses run by the GCIS, which will also be expanded to include the regional offices of the GCIS. A systematic adult basic education programme is being introduced to enable previously disadvantaged employees to upgrade their qualifications.

In the field of human resources management, major successes include:

- Finalisation of various policies required in terms of the new Public Service Regulations.
- Recruitment and induction of 50 new staff members into the GCIS during 1999.
- Improving labour relations by forging a working relationship with recognized trade unions in the Departmental Bargaining Council of the GCIS.

A lack of trained investigating and presiding officers hampered the speedy finalisation of cases of misconduct, but the training programme will commence in March 2000 at the Justice College.

## E. Internal Communication

### Successes

- Changing perceptions by communicating with managers and staff through an internal monthly newsletter

(*Let's Talk*), and an occasional publication (*HotNews*), which is published when there is urgent information to be communicated to staff. One lesson learnt is that staff read the internal newsletter rather than official circulars.

- Conducting a climate study to determine the mood in the organisation and to serve as a basis for internal communication strategies. The findings are being communicated to all GCIS staff.

### Challenges

- Better communication between management and staff.
- Facilitating an open-door policy among management.
- Encouraging communication within and between sections, including GICs.
- Communicating the vision and mission of the organisation.
- Communicating the new GCIS corporate strategy to staff.
- Ensuring full involvement of all staff members in social events and briefing sessions.
- Building unity in the organisation.
- Managing information that goes onto the Intranet.