
3.2 PROGRAMME PERFORMANCE

PROGRAMME 1: ADMINISTRATION

PURPOSE

Administration is responsible for management and provides a support service to the entire department. Its functions are human resource (HR) management, internal audit, information technology, financial management, procurement, and auxiliary services. The Project Desk coordinates projects driven by GCIS and those done on behalf of other departments.

DIRECTORATE: HUMAN RESOURCES

This Directorate is responsible for:

- managing HR issues
- providing management in the maintenance of sound labour relations
- providing leadership in internal communication
- providing leadership in the Information Centre.

Management of HR issues and promoting effective practices

Recruitment and selection

The recruitment and selection process met or exceeded targets during the reporting period. GCIS was able to meet its employment equity targets, including with respect to the employment of staff with disabilities. The Public Service target is 2% and GCIS recently reached 2,5%.

Leave statistics

Leave statistics are produced on a monthly basis and presented to management for review and follow up. This ensures that all leave taken by staff members is properly recorded and accounted for. A reminder is also sent to staff members to ensure that they take their leave during the required period. A policy for taking leave during the festive period has been developed.

Performance evaluation of staff

GCIS has implemented the Performance Management and Development System. All staff members are evaluated bi-annually or quarterly, depending on their employment status in the organisation. Staff members who perform above expectation receive merit awards while those who perform below expectation are provided with the necessary training and mentoring. Road shows are conducted to ensure that all staff members are well informed of the organisation's policies.

Overtime policy

The overtime policy was implemented during this period. All overtime worked was closely monitored to ensure compliance.

Restructuring of the organisation

The organisation is undergoing a restructuring process during which the staffing needs of all units are assessed and where possible additional staff members recruited. The process will continue in 2005/06.

Maintenance of sound labour relations

All disciplinary matters in the organisation are dealt with in terms of the prescripts. A grievance policy is in place, enabling staff to raise their grievances without fear of victimisation.

The organisation has sufficient and relevant policies which have been adequately communicated to all staff members. These policies have played an important role in promoting and developing morale, a sound organisational climate and productivity and reducing dissatisfaction.

Over the reporting period, HR dealt with six misconduct cases.

Internal Communication

The Subdirectorates are responsible for:

- distributing reports in less than 12 hours of staff meetings, conducting initial staff orientation for new members and posting their profiles on the Intranet
- conducting exit interviews and distributing them to managers for action and follow up

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- managing and updating the Intranet site on a daily basis
 - arranging for national days to be celebrated by the organisation.

Information-sharing sessions promote the flow of information that helps improve management and work practices.

Information Centre

The Information Centre consists of the Information Resource Centre (IRC), the directories and the library.

Information Resource Centre

More and more people are using the IRC, especially students. It distributes information material both from the GCIS and other departments. The Centre is managed by one staff member with an intern. It works closely with the IRCs based in the regions.

Directories

Online directories are updated daily. A new section contains contact details of Information Officers of departments and state-owned enterprises, appointed in terms of the Promotion of Access to Information Act, 2000 (Act 2 of 2000). Printing of the directories has been put out on tender to enhance efficiency.

Library

Automation has greatly facilitated use of the library as staff can now access information from their workstations. Monthly updates of journals received by the organisation are circulated to staff members and the library manages newspaper distribution to management via a two-year tender.

All library books have been linked to a new security system to prevent unauthorised removal.

The celebration of national days with exhibitions in the library has proven very popular.

Information Service

Queries receive rapid response. Daily updates of FAQs are provided and monthly statistics help GCIS monitor the communication environment. The automation of services is well underway.

DIRECTORATE: TRAINING SERVICES

Training Services is responsible for the skills development and capacity-building of staff, including their psychological well-being. Its functions are twofold:

- It develops the skills profile of GCIS staff by organising in-house and external training. It organises communication-related training for government communication officers based at national and provincial level.
- It manages the well-being of staff through the Employee Assistance Programme (EAP). The Programme is also responsible for the management of HIV and AIDS within the organisation.

Training and capacity-building of GCIS personnel

Short courses

During 2004/05, more than 200 staff members underwent short course training in different fields such as performance management, financial management, information technology, protocol, mentorship, stress management and others. Altogether 127 staff members attended the in-house training and 76 training organised by service-providers.

Bursaries were awarded to 49 staff members in different fields, mostly communication and management-related. The duration of the courses is between one and three years with very few lasting more than three years. This cost the organisation over R197 734. Three people completed the courses they pursued in 2004. The remainder will finish between 2005 and 2007. Twenty-one new applicants joined this group.

Each year, more staff members apply for bursaries. More than 90% of those who undergo training pass at the end of their courses.

Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET)

Those who were on the ABET programme in 2004 continued with Level 4 at the Pretoria Institute of

Learning in 2005. Training Services assists ABET students as well as those who wish to acquire life skills in fields they are interested in. Their training amounted to R70 560.

Internship and experiential training

Internships and experiential training continue. Students from institutions of learning join GCIS to gain practical or on-the-job training. Others come to the organisation to be exposed to and to gain experience in the working environment. During the reporting year, 44 interns, including experiential trainee students, were accommodated at a cost of R137 170. Twenty-seven completed their internship at different periods during the course of the year. GCIS accommodates between 17 and 24 interns at any given time in a year.

From April 2005 – March 2006, Training Services will host 10 learners doing a learnership in Marketing Communication at Level 4. The AAA School of Advertising will be the training service-provider to facilitate the academic side of the training. The programme will cost the organisation nearly one million Rand.

Induction of new staff members

New staff members, including those employed in GCIS' regional offices, are inducted on a monthly basis. During 2004/05, 41 new members were inducted at a cost of R51 409.

Training and capacity-building of government communication officers

The Professional Certificate in Government Communication and Marketing for communication officers (funded by GCIS, Unilever and the Mandela-Rhodes Foundation) that started in 2004 is on course. Forty-four communication officers from national, provincial, local government and from state-owned enterprises attended the course in 2004. The course is being repeated in 2005, and 39 officers have been accepted. The University of the Witwatersrand continues to be the training-provider.

Employee Assistance Programme

The EAP assists staff members to cope with the psychological challenges they face. Six staff members, and two with their families, who required professional assistance in this regard, were referred to specialists. Some with disabilities were, for the first time, assisted in acquiring wheelchairs at a reasonable price. For these services, the organisation paid R86 493,76.

During the reporting period, qualified consultants briefed staff members on topics to enhance their quality of life such as how to cope with bereavement, dealing with stress, etc. The issues of HIV and AIDS in the workplace were also addressed. Forty-one new staff members at Midtown gained some basic knowledge on the topic while specialists in the subject addressed staff in the provincial offices.

Policies and guidelines on all issues that affect staff members such as the bursary policy; the EAP; the acceptance of interns, volunteers and learners; death and/or hospitalisation of GCIS personnel; and others, have been updated and/or developed. All are operational and guide the organisation as it continues to implement its mandate.

The organisation doesn't confine itself to skills and academic development of staff, but also believes in mentally and psychologically healthy personnel.

DIRECTORATE: FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, PROCUREMENT AND AUXILIARY SERVICES

This Directorate is responsible for financial, provisioning and auxiliary support to the department. A key function is to ensure the department's implementation of and adherence to the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and Supply Chain Management and compliance with Broad-Based Black Economic Empowerment (BBBEE).

The Directorate has continued to build on progress in previous years, particularly with regard to the continued monitoring of compliance with the PFMA requirements within all the financial and procurement processes of the department. Monthly monitoring of expenditure against the approved business plans has been done consistently, providing management with appropriate information to intervene as soon as deviations are identified.

Special focus was placed on aligning the procurement processes to the requirements of Supply Chain Management and the BBBEE Act. Training was arranged for members of the Departmental Bid Committee, management of the department and the Directorate's staff.

The monitoring of compliance to BEE and BBBEE is an important emphasis of the Directorate's work. Companies have been invited, through advertisements in newspapers, to register on the database of suppliers. The Directorate is exploring the procurement of a more efficient information system that will enable it to produce monthly information to monitor expenditure. With the assistance of the Department of Trade and Industry, the Directorate hopes to have a database that will monitor the key elements of BBBEE-compliant companies.

Refining efficiency remains a focus, especially with regard to the turnaround time of procurement processes. This is achieved through the daily capturing of statistics of the work received and processed to the satisfaction of the line-function client.

Progress is promoted by the level of understanding by GCIS officials of government's financial guidelines. The consistent monitoring of adherence to procedures by financial officials, with the assistance of Internal Audit, has improved compliance within the department. It, however, still remains a great challenge to further improve on turnaround times.

DIRECTORATE: INFORMATION MANAGEMENT AND TECHNOLOGY

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (IT)

IT is responsible for the maintenance, support and provision of Information and Communications Technology in GCIS.

During the period under review, the collaboration environment was further improved by upgrading and installing new video conferencing equipment at the GCIS Parliamentary Office in Cape Town and at Head Office in Pretoria.

Within the desktop environment, all equipment has been upgraded in line with their end-of-life cycle. The desktop operating system and office automation tools at Head Office have been upgraded in line with the Microsoft Enterprise Licensing Agreement.

On the Wide Area Network (WAN), IT is establishing a Virtual Private Network (VPN) with the State Information Technology Agency (SITA). The VPN will improve the efficiency of the WAN by providing more security and speed. A VPN for GCIS' regional offices and MPCC structures is also envisaged. This will provide communication officers in MPCCs with access to the GCIS systems via remote access, through a Telkom link, which was not possible previously.

IT upgraded the server room in Head Office – an off-site recovery site will be capacitated in the next period. IT maintained Internet and e-mail security through the use of the latest anti-virus, content scanning and filtering software and the renewal of servers. Redundancy has been built within the web server environment hosted by SITA by procuring additional servers.

An application server has been acquired to complement the development server and further enhance the in-house systems development environment. In-house development has been

completed for the Information Centre and Training Service Management systems and IT started on a filing system and a distribution system for the Communication Service Agency.

A server has been procured for a video library system. The service has been installed and is awaiting the commissioning of the video library software in the next reporting period.

IT continues to maintain its supplier relationships with SITA and other IT service-providers through the use of service level agreements.

A shortfall in the completion of the IT project for the video library software was the underestimation of the cost of the project. Projects for security and disaster recovery also took priority to meet the requirements of the Auditor-General.

The video conferencing enhancements were made possible through partnerships with the Department of Public Works and the upgrade of the facilities at GCIS in Cape Town.

ELECTRONIC INFORMATION RESOURCES (EIR)

EIR is responsible for the development, maintenance and updating of the South Africa Government Information Portal and GCIS websites. It advises and supports government departments and provincial legislatures on developing, redesigning or maintaining their websites and evaluates new and existing government websites on request. A hosting service is provided for some government departments.

During the period under review, EIR improved the comprehensiveness and accessibility of government information on the Internet by means of the South African Government Information Portal. Approximately 1 613 new documents and 4 826 speeches and statements were added to the Portal, while 403 government and national events, special days, press conferences and conferences were announced.

The number of subscribers to the e-newsletter for speeches and press statements increased from 2 854 to 3 062. Usage statistics for the Portal increased from 6 129 803 page views in the previous reporting period to 10 295 577.

During 2004/05, the Government Information Portal was thoroughly reviewed, and improvements subsequently implemented. The revamped website was launched in November 2004. New features

include an extension of information in some categories, improvement of the arrangement of information and navigation structure, and a more consistent interface with the user. The branding of the Portal was also changed to be in line with government's corporate identity.

The 'Events' category on the Information Portal was improved through the development of a database and a content management system for the updating of data. Furthermore, the Government's Programme of Action has been available on the Government Information Portal since April 2004. This allows the public to continue to follow progress in implementation of the Programme.

An initiative started during the previous financial year, namely to improve the search functionality on the Government Information Portal, was implemented during this review period. Improvements include, among others, the availability of both simple and advanced search options, improving the user's options to enter search terms and an improved results interface. An additional e-newsletter was also developed to inform users of all new items that are being posted on the Information Portal during a 24-hour period.

During 2004/05, EIR became involved with the Batho Pele Gateway Portal managed by the Department of Public Service and Administration. Assistance was provided with the finalisation of the branding and navigation scheme of the Gateway Services Portal. The Content Management Policy and Guideline Document was compiled, and a process to procure services for the translation of the Portal's content was initiated. Resources and processes were put in place to manage the Portal's content. Business ownership of the Portal was transferred to GCIS with effect from 1 April 2005.

Support was provided to The Presidency in planning and developing its website. Other EIR output included assistance with the 16 Days of Activism project. Support was given to the Directorate: National Liaison regarding a page for the Government Communicators' Awards, while improvement of the Government Communicators' Forum website commenced.

An initiative to improve the web infrastructure and to implement a business continuity solution for the GCIS web servers commenced in 2004/05. It will be implemented early in the new financial year.

DIRECTORATE: PROJECT DESK

The Project Desk serves as a professional delivery mechanism for meeting government's communication needs through mobilising GCIS expertise and setting up project teams. As a gateway for client requests, the Project Desk allocates resources to projects and implements capacity-building initiatives in GCIS to deepen project management culture and practices in the department. It develops and maintains the Project Information and Management System (PIMS).

Giving greater direction to government communication through the development and implementation of the Government Communication Programme (GCP)

Project Desk drafts the GCP each year, for approval by the GCIS Secretariat in February. The GCP outlines the key campaigns of government for the 2005/06 financial year and project teams to implement these campaigns.

Project Desk organised regular reference team meetings for each Communication Cluster to assess the progress of projects in all the main GCP themes and assisted in developing about 36 communication strategies. These included key projects such as 10 Years of Freedom (The Presidency), Youth Month (National Youth Commission), Women's Month (The Presidency), National Orders (X 2) (The Presidency), Municipal Infrastructure Grant (Department of Provincial and Local Government), Community Development Workers (Department of Public Service and Administration [DPSA]), Batho Pele Gateway (DPSA), Human Settlement Programme (Department of Housing), Release of Crime Statistics (South African Police Service), 16 Days of Activism (Department of Justice and Constitutional Development), National Address System (Department of Communications), Anti-Corruption Summit (DPSA), 2010 Soccer World Cup (Sport and Recreation South Africa), and New Partnership for Africa's Renewal/African Union (Department of Foreign Affairs). The strategies assisted government in communicating its messages to the public.

In 2004/05, Project Desk provided focussed project management support to 38 project teams. It assisted National Liaison in facilitating processes for developing communication strategies for all five clusters, and developed Power Point presentations of the strategies for FOSAD clusters and Cabinet Committees.

Project Desk monitored GCP implementation and continued to set up and co-ordinate new project teams as and when required. More than 66 project team meetings were organised in 2004/05.

Improving and maintaining project management capacity in GCIS

Project Desk commissioned the University of Pretoria to present a basic project management course to 50 GCIS staff members (40 of them based in the regions). The course was critical in expanding the project management capability in GCIS' regional offices. About 20 GCIS staff members were also trained in MS Project 2002, and are now able to use the software for better project planning and management.

GCIS, together with National Treasury and the DPSA, hosted about three project management indabas in which project management experiences and lessons were shared with other public-sector project management communities.

Improving and maintaining the Project Information and Management System to facilitate better storage, retrieval and utilisation of project information

Project Desk facilitates the submission of weekly reports to Secretariat on active projects. It also facilitates the submission of monthly communication environment reports to Indibano. Project Desk facilitated and drafted about 15 exit reports to the Secretariat, detailing lessons learnt from completed projects. The PIMS was reviewed to be fully in line with user needs.

Handling, processing and managing the allocation of resources to new requests from client departments

In the reporting period, Project Desk received and processed 98 requests for GCIS assistance, covering, among others, invitations to meetings or workshops and the facilitation of communication strategies. It developed over 20 scope briefs on complex requests for approval by the Deputy CEO to guide the quicker processing of some of the requests. It assigned resources to assist departments in consultation with line managers.

Establishing and providing regular project management support to sub-project desks in GCIS

Project Desk provides regular project management support in GCIS. Sub-project desks have been established at Provincial and Local Liaison, IT, and Policy and Research, and support has been given to them through training and assistance in the development of project plans.

An overall sub-project desk maintenance and roll-out strategy was developed and incorporated in the Enterprise Project Management Initiative (EPMI) document. A detailed action plan will be developed in line with EPMI implementation.

The Project Desk managed to deal with larger volumes of work in 2004/05 despite staff shortages at various critical intervals. The maturing level of project management in GCIS is making a positive impact.

DIRECTORATE: INTERNAL AUDIT

The GCIS Internal Audit is an independent and objective assurance and consulting activity designed to add value and improve the GCIS' operations. It helps GCIS to accomplish its objectives by bringing a systematic and disciplined approach to evaluate and improve the effectiveness of risk management, control and governance processes.

Consulting services

As part of its mission to promote a systematic and disciplined approach to risk management, the Directorate facilitated the development of the GCIS Enterprise Wide Risk Management Strategy. This involved conducting workshops with all business units in GCIS and road shows for all GCIS staff based in regional offices to promote awareness and sound governance principles across the entire organisation. The Directorate facilitated workshops for the development of the Risk Management Strategy for the GCIS' public entities, the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA) and International Marketing Council (IMC).

The Directorate is responsible for co-ordinating audit committee meetings for GCIS, the IMC and the MDDA. Three audit committee meetings for GCIS and the MDDA and four for the IMC were held during the year under review.

Assurance services

The Directorate updated its three-year strategic plan and developed an annual operational plan for the reporting period, based on the risks identified in the GCIS Enterprise Wide Risk Management Strategy. The Directorate implemented its annual operational plan, with 12 of the 13 planned audit projects conducted and reports presented to senior management and the Audit Committee.

The Directorate has developed good customer relationships over the years, ensuring that its annual plans are implemented effectively and efficiently. This despite the fact that the Deputy Head of Internal Audit (Assistant Director level) became vacant more than once due to resignations as the incumbents received better offers outside. The upgrading of this post to Deputy Director with effect from 1 April 2005 will ensure stability at the middle-management level.

The Directorate enhanced capacity through multi-skilling by rotating staff and exposing them to functions at junior- and middle-management level. This helped them to fully appreciate teamwork and the importance of project management in carrying out audit projects, within the context of the reporting structures that exist, including the Internal Audit Committee and the Audit Committee. The Unit is continuing to build capacity in specialised areas. The recent introduction of Information Communications Technologies, in terms of risk management and governance as well as Internal Audit working papers software, will enhance the Unit's efficiency.