

Commission for Gender equality

Information Technology and Communications Committee Report to Plenary

May 2015

1. Introduction

This report covers the period January – March 2015, and speaks to key issues and developments before the attention of the ITC Committee, including recent developments for Plenary's information. The ITC Committee held two meetings during this quarter, on 28 January and 30 March.

2. Current issues before ITC Committee

2.1 IT infrastructure upgrade

The CGE had experienced challenges in the tender bids process, in that bid requirements were not met. The Adjudication and Evaluation committee assessment and recommendation was to adopt the approach of issuing requests for quotation (RFQ), which was issued. The ITC Committee requested and monitored the process and timeframes outlined in this regard, and can report that for the three core components of the upgrade, namely Servers, Network Equipment and WAN, the evaluation and adjudication committee processes have been completed and service providers have been appointed.

The IT Department and CIO have met with all the service providers, and a project implementation plan and set of timeframes has been developed, with a view towards full completion by 9 July 2015. The plan is inclusive of a skills transfer component during implementation, for IT and the entire staff CGE. The CGE has established a project team to monitor the implementation of this plan, and meets weekly in this regard. The ITC Committee has requested that a provincial implementation plan be developed to ensure provincial office components are included in planning and monitoring, for oversight purposes.

The ITC Committee has also requested monthly reporting (May, June and July) from the secretariat, inclusive of financial statements, to monitor this process. We have requested information on the total cost of bids accepted, with a view to being assured that this is in line with the approved budget for this project, and then for monthly reports to include financial reports capturing budget vs actual

spend against these. We have shared this information with the Finance Committee Chairperson, to support our joint monitoring of this project.

Accordingly, three of five APP targets in relation to audit findings have been met, amounting to 60% performance. The CGE has met all governance requirements, and has received a green face from AGSA in this regard :).

2.2 Risk management

The ITC committee is monitoring closely the take up of risk and AGSA findings in relation to ITC departments. We have requested a disaggregated break down of the risk register, with timeframes for addressing individual components, and receives quarterly updates on progress. We are pleased to note that all risks and findings have been addressed, save those relating to the IT infrastructure upgrade, which are all work in progress, and will be addressed by project end date of 9 July. As noted, we are pleased that a key risk component relating to IT governance has been successfully addressed.

We note with concern a new risk element, namely exposure of the CGE system to viruses. The CGE info email line was infected by a trojan horse virus. The Secretariat notes that this is a public email address, and accordingly is an exposed account, vulnerable to junk mail which needs to be filtered. IT is currently investigating this incident and addressing damage caused.

The ITC Committee has requested a report on the outcome of this investigation at our next meeting, has proposed that this be included in the IT risk register, and requested for MANCO to propose a strategic response in relation to security. The ITC Committee will take report back from the Secretariat on this at our next ITC committee meeting.

2.3 CGE database

The Committee is monitoring the updating of the CGE database, an item within our APP, and has been advised that this should be completed and shared by 7 May. We will engage with this further at our next meeting.

2.4 CGE laptop policy

The ITC Committee has engaged with the Secretariat on the existence of a laptop policy in response to lost or damaged laptops, and remedial action to follow in this regard. No such policy is in place as yet. The Secretariat has accordingly developed a draft policy in this regard and submitted this to

MANCO for consideration. The ITC Committee is anticipating engaging with this at our next meeting, whereafter we will bring this to Plenary for consideration.

2.5 Telephone and 3G usage

The ITC Committee is monitoring telephone and 3G usage as a budget risk item. We have become aware that some CGE users have exceeded the limit of two gigs, and are concerned that there is no policy or guideline in place to alert users to the fact that they are exceeding limits, with remedial measures then initiated. The Secretariat is addressing a shortcoming in our old contract with our service provider in this regard, namely ensuring that we received monthly detailed reporting to assist in monitoring usage, but has agreed that this should be informed by policy. We have requested that this be raised with MANCO and prioritised for development.

2.6 Communications strategy

The ITC Committee raised with the secretariat feedback from the previous Plenary discussions in relation to enhancing the CGE's communication strategy. The review of this strategy is included in the APP for 2015/16, with an initial phase in relation to media audit currently near completion. The CGE is on track in terms of APP targets in this regard. The ITC Committee will monitor and input into the review of the Communication strategy, and ideally would seek to engage with this through a warm body process.

The ITC Committee noted that the Communication department is experiencing constraints in terms of human capital and finance, but is performing well and meeting and even exceeding targets. The Committee will now prioritise working with the Communications Department on these issues, and has requested a detailed synthesis of key issues to inform discussion in this regard at our next meeting.

3. Recommendations for Plenary

In summary, we wish to put the following issues before Plenary for consideration:

- 3.1** The forthcoming communications strategy review process, noting the Committee's desire to engage with this through a warm body meeting, and the possible inclusion of all Commissioners in deliberations.

- 3.2** The revised timeframes for the IT infrastructure upgrade, and the detailed provincial implementation plan, for Commissioners to note for monitoring in their provincial oversight work.
- 3.3** Ongoing engagement with the Finance Committee in our joint monitoring of the implementation of the IT upgrade project.

7 May 2015