

**The State of Eritrea
Office of the Auditor General (OAG)**

**Communication Policy for the Office of the Auditor General (OAG)
of Eritrea**

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to enable a coherent view within the SAI of Eritrea regarding all aspects of communication, both internal and external.

Mission

The mission of the SAI of Eritrea is “To provide reasonable assurance in the management of public resources by our independent and objective public sector audit services.”

Vision

Our vision is “To be an independent, efficient and effective audit institution that promotes public accountability and transparency.”

Strategic objectives

The overall objective for the audit institution in Eritrea is to actively contribute to the efficiency of public administration. Although independent from the government, the SAI is a vital part of the public control mechanism.

Main objectives for communication

- To promote the successful implementation of OAG’s Mission, Vision, and Goals and Objectives
- To support staff members in the best possible way in their work to acquire the capability required to fulfill their obligations
- To promote the effectiveness of the organization in order to increase its capacity to provide value adding services to the public.
- To promote transparency and accountability in the public sector.

Organizational values

The OAG’s strive for increased efficiency of the public administration must be reflected within the values of the organizations itself. The core values independence, integrity, objectivity, professionalism, commitment, teamwork, innovation, and continuous development must therefore be present in the OAG’s communication, routines, and organization and recruitment criteria.

Criteria for Communication

All communication activities in the OAG shall be of high quality and be based upon the following principles:-

- Correct and understandable
- Well structured and easy to access
- Current, timely, prompt and relevant
- Transparent, consistent and coherent

- Adapted to different target groups
- Facilitate dialogue and trust

The short history of the Supreme Audit function in Eritrea and the consequences this have for the general control environment only emphasize the need for outstanding institutional and personal integrity.

Main message

In order to provide reasonable assurance in the management of public resources by its audit works, the OAG should be able to cultivate a coherent view within itself regarding all aspects of communication both internal and external. It should also strive for and be committed to increased transparency of public spending as well as safeguarding high quality of the financial processes and reports within the public institutions.

External communication

Communication goals

In order to achieve the main objective, it is important that our SAI successfully can communicate that transparency of public spending, quality of the financial processes and reports within the public entities are necessities in order to increase public efficiency. The SAI of Eritrea must also establish its role as an independent auditor in the eyes of the general public.

Success is based upon OAG's ability to establish:

- a positive public awareness for increased transparency of public spending and high quality of the financial processes and reports within the public institutions,
- a positive demand by all concerned for increased transparency of public spending and high quality of the financial processes and reports within the public institutions, and
- a general acknowledgement of our SAI as a role model of public administration.

Our SAI's role in society which affects the communication

Active role

The goal is to actively contribute to the transparency of the audited government organizations, not merely to observe and report. This must be taken into consideration when forming the foundation for our SAI's relations with the auditees and the relevant institutions. Although the SAI of Eritrea does not play the role of a policy maker, whenever the audit findings indicate that existing policies are insufficient, the OAG has an obligation to advise the relevant institutions of this situation.

Clarity of the SAI role

General knowledge of the auditing process itself and its purpose is not enough. The OAG must therefore have this in mind when communicating with the auditees, the relevant institutions, the media representatives and the general public.

Legislative development

Another area of interest for the OAG is to identify when the existing legislation in the area under audit does not lead to intentions expressed by the State of Eritrea (SoE). The OAG should in these cases initiate a dialogue with the State of Eritrea.

Plan for external communication

In order to succeed, the OAG of Eritrea must:

- codify its efforts and prioritized areas in a plan for external communication,
- codify a structured approach for the introduction of new auditors and how the OAG is acting to enable sharing of information and experiences within itself.
- have a defined communication function in the organization, to be used both as a strategic resource for, or as a part of, the OAG management and as a liaison to the auditors.

Target groups

The OAG has the following target groups for its communication activities.

Primary

- Auditees
- Relevant institutions (for example National Assembly, Ministry of Finance and other concerned ministries and public institutions)
- Media (media could be a target group, but and could also be a tool used for communication to the general public)
- General public

Secondary

- Overseas:
AFROSAI E, IDI, INTOSAI, INTOSAI members, permanent and standing committees, working groups and bodies and regional associations.
- In the country:
International organizations and institutions placed and operational in Eritrea.

Different channels for different recipients.

The **auditors** are the main channel of communication regarding the auditees during the audit process. The **auditor** must, in interaction with the auditee, ensure that the audit work not only meet required standards to ensure that the findings are correct, but also function as a way to transfer knowledge in order to help the auditee improve its effectiveness of their processes and reporting standards.

The **reports** are the main channel in OAG's communication with the relevant institutions.

The **web** is a fast and cost effective way of making reports accessible, regardless of target groups. However, the OAG would need to establish its own website to communicate what it achieves and share other vital information with others. So far, the OAG has not yet reached the stage where it can make its reports public and publish them for public utility.

The most obvious channel that the OAG can use in order to reach the general public is the **media**. This can be done by press conferences, communiqués, personal contacts, and even specific seminars in order to help the media representatives understand what the OAG achieves.

Printed material in the form of brochures, flyers, memos, and other easy understandable materials that can be useful in a variety of situations. These are especially suitable for long term information, like the role of the OAG in the Eritrean public sector, the difference between the OAG's objectives and other institutions in the State of Eritrea.

Internal communication

Main objective

The main objective for the internal communication is to contribute to OAG's ability to achieve the main objective and promoting effective internal work processes.

Success is based upon the use of internal communication as the primary tool in order to:

- To feed top management with relevant, timely and accurate information that will help them in decision process
- establish a thorough understanding for the role of the institution and the employees individual role,
- create an organization which promote the employees' ability to contribute in the exchange of knowledge, experience and development of direct communication,
- achieve a high level of motivation and the development of the OAG, and
- to provide the employees with the information they need in their daily work.

Internal target groups

- All employees within the OAG
- Employees within the specific departments
- Department management
- Top management

Internal channels

- Reports
- Weekly/Monthly executive letters
- Printed information about policies, guidelines
- Staff meetings
- Seminars and workshops

Division of responsibility

The main principle concerning external communication is a centralized responsibility. For internal communication the principle is a decentralized responsibility in that sense that the Head (or similar responsible) for a specific department also has the responsibility for the internal communication for that department.

Auditor General

The Auditor General is the spokesperson for all of the external communication, with one exception – the communication with the auditees during the auditing process. During this process the team leader of the audit team is the spokesperson, a responsibility which does not include presentation of the produced report.

The Auditor General has the overall responsibility for the internal communication with the managerial level, as well as providing the means for a well functioning internal communication.

Management

The managerial level, including the Heads of the departments as mentioned above, are responsible for a well functioning internal communication within their departments and that relevant information is easily accessible for the employees within his or her department.

Employees

Each individual employee has a personal responsibility to be proactive in the communication process, to use the information and to take part in constructive internal dialogues when so needed.

Head of communication

The head of communication is the resource used by the Auditor General to develop and evaluate the external and internal communication.

This function must:

- act as an advisor to the Auditor General as well as to the managerial level – both at strategic and operational level,
- initiate and coordinate activities within this area,
- secure and develop the channels of communication and
- have the full operational responsibility for activities such as press conferences.

So far, in the OAG there is no such function and may be required to be incorporated in our next strategic planning development. Up to that point, the responsibilities of this function can either be part of the Auditor General and the Department Heads responsibilities. It is also possible to add parts of the responsibility to some existing function within the OAG.

Evaluation

This policy shall be revised every third year. The plans for external and internal communication shall be revised annually. The plans for external and internal communication have to be aligned with this policy and shall be seen as operational tools only.

This revised version is approved by the Auditor General

03/01/2015